Mesoamerican and Andean Catholicisms, 1492-2015

Fall 2015 Course Syllabus

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**Course Description**

This course is about the remarkable spiritual and religious encounter between Amerindians, Africans, and Iberians starting in the late 15th century. In the centuries that followed, a new kind of hybrid Christianity took form, one that was recognizably Catholic but also distinctly a product of New World interactions. Together, we will explore issues of conversion, coloniality, spiritual adaptation, gendered faith, secularism, and hybridity with an eye to understanding the distinctiveness and novelty of the New World religious experience from the moment of colonial encounter to our own time.

**Learning Goals**

1) By the end of the semester, with diligent engagement, you will be able to give complex, nuanced answers to the following questions:

1. Was the so-called Spanish conquest also a "spiritual conquest?"
2. Can we speak of a coherent, corporate Christian identity in Spanish America?
3. Do modernity and secularization go hand-in-hand in Latin America?
4. How does understanding the history of Christianity in Latin America help us to understand present conflicts?

2) Additionally, you will learn to think like a historian. Historians learn to accept the contradictions and paradoxes that characterize every society. We acknowledge the complexity, ambivalences, and unintended consequences of events in the past. We seek to understand why people did what they did without projecting modern or ethnocentric norms onto the past. Historians use their imagination and empathy to try to see the past through the eyes of their historical subjects.

3) Finally, you will learn to read and write like a historian. We will be dealing with both secondary sources and primary sources, and you will learn how to closely read and analyze both. You will then learn to create an argument around those readings.

**Course Requirements**

**Participation** (25%)**:** Given that participation makes up 25% of your grade, your success in this course depends on your active engagement with the material and with your classmates. Participation goes beyond completing the readings/assignments. You must be able to ask questions, make comments, and demonstrate that you have actively considered the material of the day. Besides participation in full class discussions, I will also pay attention to your participation in small group work. If you are concerned about speaking in class, please see me in office hours so we can discuss alternative options. In general, coming to my office hours shows me that you are engaged and interested in doing well in the course. Also included in your participation grade is:

*Attendance*

Because you often learn from each other in this course, it is vital that everyone be present. However, students are allowed three absences over the course of the semester without a grade deduction. Each absence thereafter results in a reduction of a third of a letter grade. Students are also excused if they present official documentation from either the health or athletics center.

*Self-assessments*

I will ask you to self-assess your participation twice during the semester. These assessments help keep us on the same page about expectations and encourage you to think about how you might more deeply engage with the course. The assessment sheet is posted on Collab for you to view at any time. Assessments are worth 2 pts based on completion.

**Assignments**:

*Short essays* (50%)*:* You will be writing three short essays over the course of the semester. The first (10%) and second (20%) will be four-page historiographical essays. That is, you will write about themes that tie together two to three of the monographic (secondary source) works we read in the first two units. You should assume that I have also read the works, and so your analysis should include very little summary.

The third essay (20%) will be a three-page primary source analysis of any one of the major primary texts we have read in class. You may use any other secondary or primary sources to provide context and make connections, but your primary source should be the focus of the essay. This is an exercise in close reading, so you will include direct and short quotes as evidence.

I will hand out rubrics for all writing assignments at the start of every unit and ask you to write a short self-assessment of your paper according to the rubric. You may choose to revise and resubmit any one paper per semester if you would like to improve your grade, along with a paragraph on how you directly addressed my feedback.

*Final* (25%): The final project will be a group effort, though each individual will turn in her or her own 7-9 page report. Because the past continues to live in the present, historians are sometimes called upon to provide context for a conflict in order to help politicians make better informed decisions and policies. This project asks you to think historically about a current conflict.

*The scenario*: You are a historian, and the State Council on Culture and Art of Puebla State in Mexico comes to you because the Council has been receiving pressure from archeologists and indigenous activist groups to remove a historic church, Nuestra Señora de los Remedios in Cholula, in order to excavate the pre-Hispanic pyramids below. Their argument is that the Catholic Church forced its faith onto the indigenous people of central Mexico, and the church building is a symbol of that domination and, therefore, should be removed. As part of their investigation into the matter, the government would like to understand the historical context within which this church was built, as well as the church's institutional role in the area over the past 200 years.

*Logistics*

* + I will provide you with four sets of readings from which you should draw your evidence, though you may also look elsewhere for information, including our other course readings. You will be in a group of four, and I recommend that you split up the readings (not by set) and report back to one another. The sets will be:

1) A set of primary source documents.

2) A set of secondary source essays and book excerpts.

3) A set of journalistic articles.

4) A set of articles about memory and memorials.

* + You will be turning in a two page bibliographic document summarizing main findings and arguments of your readings, due Week 12 (3%).
  + You will be turning in a rough draft by Week 14 on which you will receive feedback from me. (15%)
  + You will also hand in a number of self and group-assessment with your final paper:

1) A pre-project group contract.

2) A post-project group participation evaluation.

3) A rough draft self-assessment using the final rubric as a guide.

4) A paragraph about how you addressed my feedback on you rough draft, turned in with your final paper. (All assessments = 2%)

* + Final paper due \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (5%)

*Final Paper Components*:

Your paper should...

* + Explain the conflict and varying points of view.
  + Include the particular history of the church, the indigenous population there, and circumstances that led to the construction of the church.
  + Address the concept of "coercion" and "spiritual conquest."
  + Address the notion of indigenous and/or "local" Christianity.
  + Acknowledge the symbolic effect of memorials and public memory.
  + While your group will not be making a policy recommendation, you should include one to two paragraphs on the possible political consequences of the historical interpretation you've provided.

**Course Schedule:**

**Unit 1**

*Was there a spiritual conquest in Spanish America?*

Week 1 Readings: Robert Ricard, *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico: An Essay on the Apostolate and the Evangelizing Methods of the Mendicant Orders in New Spain, 1523-1572.* Excerpt on Collab.

Ramón Gutiérrez, *When the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500-1846*. Intro, Part 1, Chapter 2.

Week 2 Inga Clendinnen, *Ambivalent Conquests.*

Week 3 Ed. Sabine McCormack, *Gods of the Andes: An Early Jesuit Account of Inca Religion and Andean Christianity.*

**Unit 2**

*How did indigenous, free, and enslaved people of African descent understand Christianity in Spanish America?*

Week 5 First historiographical paper due

Readings: From *Local Religion in Colonial Mexico,*

Carlos Eire, "The Concept of Popular Religion,"

Antonio Rubial García, "Icons of Devotion,"

Edward Osowski, "Carriers of Saints."

Week 6 Kenneth Mills, *Idolatry and its Enemies*.

Week 7 *The Souls of Purgatory*, Ursula de Jesús.

From *Local Religion*, Nicole Von Germeten, "Routes to Respectability: Confraternities and Men of African Descent in New Spain."

**Unit 3**

*Did secularization occur in Latin America?*

Week 8 Second historiographical paper due

Pamela Voekel, *Alone Before God: The Religious Origins of Modernity in Mexico.* Intro, Chapter 3 and 4.

From *Local Religion*, Brian Larkin, "Confraternities and Community: The Decline of the Communal Quest for Salvation in Eighteen-Century Mexico City."

Week 9 Edward Wright-Rios, *Revolutions in Mexican Catholicism: Reform and Revelation in Oaxaca, 1887-1934.*

Week 10 Laura Roush, "Santa Muerte, Protection, and Desamparo: A View from a Mexico City Altar." Article [here](https://muse.jhu.edu/login?auth=0&type=summary&url=/journals/latin_american_research_review/v049/49.S.roush.html).

[Our Lady of Guadalupe, discussion with Alicia Gonzalez](http://www.laits.utexas.edu/onda_latina/program?sernum=000536362&term=)

**Unit 4**

Week 11 Primary source analysis due

Discussion of sets 1 and 2, bibliographies due

Week 12 Discussion of sets 3 and 4, bibliographies due

Week 13 Writing week and Thanksgiving, no class

Week 14 Final draft due

Final and self/group-assessments due \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Policies**

**Technology:** I ask that you leave laptops in backpacks as the use of computers in class tends to pull us away from the central purpose of our section, which is to engage with one another around the seminar table. Cell phones are also prohibited except in the case of emergencies. If I see a student using their phones, that student will lose participation points for that day. If it becomes a problem, I will begin to mark students absent for the day.

**Accommodation Policy:** If you have specific disability needs, make sure to submit all necessary Student Disabilities and Access Center (SDAC) paperwork to me so that I can help you receive the support that you need. It is best to do this as early in the semester as possible. Please also be sure that you are reaching out to me throughout the semester to make necessary arrangements for exams.

**Classroom Environment:** This class takes seriously the University of Virginia’s commitment to a scholarly community of trust. This means that we honor each other’s right to a rigorous education, and that we pledge not to lie, plagiarize (see resources for more on plagiarizing), cheat, or steal to or from each other. Furthermore, the effectiveness of this course is dependent upon the creation of an encouraging and safe classroom environment. Exclusionary, offensive, or harmful speech and sexual misconduct will not be tolerated and in some cases is subject to University harassment procedures. *You should be aware that as a faculty, I am a responsible employee, which means that by federal law, I must report anything I know about an incident of sexual misconduct.* That being said, if you are in any type of distress, I am here to support you, stand with you, and direct you to confidential employees and further resources.

We are all responsible for creating a positive and safe environment that allows all students equal respect and comfort. I expect each of you to help establish and maintain a scholarly environment where you and your peers can explore ideas freely.

**Resources**

**The Writing Center:** Offers hour-long appointments with graduate students (even future and former history TAs). <https://virginia.mywconline.com/>

**American Academic English:** If you are a non-native English speaker in need help with grammar and sentence structure, I will recommend that you visit the American Academic English tutors within the Writing Center. See link above.

**Source Dorks:** Walk-in and by-appointment help with finding relevant, peer-reviewed sources for your paper. Located in Clemons Library.  <http://www.library.virginia.edu/services/sourcedorks/>

**Purdue OWL Guide to Avoiding Plagiarism:** A guide to avoiding accidental plagiarism.

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/02/>

**Chicago Manual of Style Quick Guide:** A fast guide to correct citation. <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html>

**Zotero:** A free, very easy to use citation software that writes your footnotes and bibliography for you. [https://www.zotero.org](https://www.zotero.org/)

[**SARA** (Sexual Assault Resource Agency](http://saracville.org/)): (434) 977-7273 (24 hours), an off-campus sexual assault crisis agency that provides free services to all residents of Cville. SARA maintains a of confidentiality.