

History 511/411  
The Spanish Conquest  
Spring 2022

Instructor: Dr. John R. Bawden

Meets: TR 2-3:15 UMOM 309

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Office Hours: MW 9-12, 1-3, UMOM 303

### Course Overview

The Spanish conquest of the Americas had massive consequences for the world system and millions of people. It is a fantastic story, cataclysmic, violent, and frequently misunderstood. Students will study life in Spain and the Americas prior to 1492, read eyewitness accounts of what happened, interpret events, and consider the degree to which different native peoples retained their independence.

### Course objectives

1. Contextualize Iberia and the Americas before 1492.
2. Develop knowledge of the Spanish Conquest, its themes, and controversies.
3. Analyze primary and secondary sources, identifying and evaluating their central arguments.
4. Appreciate ambiguity in historical argument and presentation.

### Student Learning Outcomes

1. Students will practice effective communication, both orally and in writing.
2. Students will develop analytical skills while doing original research.
3. Students will gain global awareness.
4. Students will learn effective use of primary and secondary sources.

### Required Texts

Bernal Díaz, *The Conquest of New Spain*, Penguin Classics, 2002 ISBN-10: 0140441239

Miguel Leon-Portilla, *The Broken Spears*, Beacon Press, 2006 ISBN-10: 9780807055007

Matthew Restall, *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest*, Oxford Press, 2021 ISBN-10: 0197537294

### E-Reserves (available on Canvas)

Charles Mann, "The Artificial Wilderness" in *1491*.

The Origins of the Incas – Garcilaso de la Vega

Taxation and the Incas – Pedro de Cieza de Leon

*History of the Inca Empire* - Bernabé Cobo,

William D. Phillips Jr and Carla Rahn Phillips, "Spain in the Fifteenth Century" in *Transatlantic Encounters*.

Inga Clendinnen, "Explorers" in *Ambivalent Conquests*.

Hernando Cortés, excerpts from the *Second Letter to Charles V*, 1520.

John F. Guilmartin Jr., "The Cutting Edge: an analysis of the Spanish invasion and overthrow of the Inca Empire, 1532-1539" in *Transatlantic Encounters*.

Robert Charles Padden, "Cultural adaptation and militant autonomy among the Araucanians of Chile" in *The Indian in Latin American History*.

Lope de Aguirre's Letter to Phillip II

### Course Assessment

Quizzes: 25%

Participation: 25%

Journal Entries: 25%

Research paper: 25%

## **Grading**

A: 100-90% B: 89-80% C: 79-70% D: 69-60% F: 59-0%

## **Graduate Level**

Students taking History 511 will make a presentation to the class about scholarly debates related to a research topic about the Spanish Conquest. This assignment will be assessed along with your research paper.

## **Environmental Studies**

Students who wish to receive ES credit for this course must write their research paper on some aspect of environmental history.

## **Quizzes**

There is no midterm or final exam in History 411. Instead, three short quizzes will test your understanding of terms and concepts from lecture and discussion.

## **Participation**

Your participation grade is determined by your participation on Thursdays. When there is no journal due, you will be expected to come to class with two written comments or questions about the assigned readings. Everyone will be expected to speak, and I reserve the right to collect your discussion comments/questions.

## **Research Paper**

Instead of a final exam, you will write a research paper, 6-8 pages, using at least two primary sources (sources created during the period under study) and at least two scholarly sources (books or articles written by academics). You may write on any subject related to the Spanish Conquest, but it is important to narrow the focus to a specific time, place, and topic. The introductory paragraph of your paper must ask a “how” or “why” question and then answer it with a succinct thesis. The more specific your question, the more easily you can focus on your topic and develop a good argument. I will distribute an extensive bibliography of appropriate primary and secondary sources on a range of topics. Your research paper must be numbered, double-spaced, with a 12-point font, and 1” margins and have a title that reflects the subject of the paper and your argument. Finally, the paper must be footnoted according to the Chicago Manual of Style. The thirteenth week, students will receive my feedback on the introduction of their research paper and a bibliography for my review and comment. indicate which primary and secondary sources they intend to use for the assignment. During class time students will share why they selected the research topic, what source material they have located, and respond to questions or comments from classmates.

## **Course Schedule**

### **WEEK 1**

January 11 – Course introduction

January 13 – Latin America and its incredible sixteenth century

### **Discussion**

Charles Mann, “The Artificial Wilderness” in *1491*

### **WEEK 2**

January 18 - Indigenous people in the Americas

January 20 - The Aztec Empire

### **Discussion**

Miguel Leon-Portilla, “Introduction” in *The Broken Spears (xxviii-xlviii)*.

Review: Annual tax receipts of the Aztec Empire (classroom handout)

### WEEK 3

January 25 – Maya Civilization

January 27 – The Inca Empire

#### Discussion

Excerpts from *The Peru Reader*

### WEEK 4

February 1 – Medieval Spain

February 3 – *Reconquista*

#### Discussion

William D. Phillips, Jr., and Carla Rahn Phillips, “Spain in the Fifteenth Century”

Journal #1 due 2/3

### WEEK 5

February 8 – Columbus and Spain

February 10 – First encounters

#### Discussion

Read: [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/15th\\_century/colum.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/15th_century/colum.asp)

Read: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/columbus1.asp>

Read: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/columbus2.asp>

Quiz #1 on 2/10

### WEEK 6

February 15 – From Cuba to the mainland

February 17 – Spaniards in Mexico

#### Discussion

Inga Clendinnen, “Explorers” in *Ambivalent Conquests*

Bernal Díaz, *The Conquest of New Spain*, 15-106

### WEEK 7

February 22 – Veracruz to Tenochtitlán

Read: Hernando Cortés, excerpts from the *Second Letter to Charles V*, 1520

February 24 – From the “Sad Night” to the fall of Tenochtitlán

#### Discussion

Bernal Díaz, *The Conquest of New Spain*, 107-277

Journal Entry #2 due 2/24

### WEEK 8

March 1 – Conquest outside of the Valley of Mexico

March 3 – Nahuatl perspectives

#### Discussion

Miguel Leon-Portilla, *The Broken Spears*, 91-164

Read Ida Altman’s introduction to *Contesting Conquest*, 1-20

## WEEK 9

March 8 – Atahualpa and the Inca Empire

March 10 – Spaniards consolidate their position

### Discussion

John F. Guilmartin Jr., “The Cutting Edge: An Analysis of the Spanish Invasion and Overthrow of the Inca Empire”

## WEEK 10

March 15 - The Crown and the conquistadors

March 17 – The New Laws (1542)

Review: The Florentine Codex (<https://www.wdl.org/en/item/10096/>) and Felipe Guaman Poma's *Nueva corónica y buen gobierno* (<http://www.kb.dk/permalink/2006/poma/info/es/frontpage.htm>)

Quiz #2 on 3/17

### Discussion

The Florentine Codex and Felipe Guaman Poma

## WEEK 11

March 22 – The Spiritual Conquest

March 24 – Conquest outside of imperial heartlands

Watch: *The Mission*

### Discussion

## SPRING BREAK

## WEEK 12

April 5 – The unconquered: Araucanians

April 7 - The unconquered: Apaches

### Discussion

Robert Charles Padden, “Cultural Adaptation and Militant Autonomy among the Araucanians of Chile”

Journal Entry #3 due 4/7

## WEEK 13

April 12 – Conquest Cinema: *Aguirre the Wrath of God*

April 14 – Conquest Cinema: *Aguirre the Wrath of God*

### Discussion

Lope de Aguirre’s Letter to Philip II (e-reserve)

Research paper introduction with bibliography due 4/14

## WEEK 14

April 19 – Legacies of conquest

April 21 – Myths of conquest

### Discussion

Matthew Restall, *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest*, 1-130.

Chapters One and Two in Miguel Leon-Portilla, *The Broken Spears*

Journal Entry #4 due 4/21

## WEEK 15

April 26 – Historiographical perspectives

April 28 – Final quiz and research paper forum

Quiz #3 4/28

Research paper due Thursday, May 5 at 8 am

### **Disclaimer**

I reserve the right, after written announcement, to change course requirements or the method of assessment.

### **Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty**

To claim as one's own the ideas or words of another is plagiarism. Plagiarism is defined as the following: using the exact words of another person's work/writing without acknowledgement of your source through the use of quotation marks and correct citation/documentation; rephrasing a passage of another writer without giving proper credit; using someone else's facts or ideas without acknowledgement; using a piece of writing for one course that was already used in a previous course (or in courses in which you are simultaneously enrolled) without express permission from both instructors to do so; presenting fabricated or falsified citations or materials. An assignment on which plagiarism or cheating has occurred will receive no credit, i.e. a "zero," and an Academic Dishonesty Incident Form concerning the incident will be kept on file in the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs. A plagiarist/cheater is also subject to failure in the course and/or appearance before the Justice Council.

### **Disability Policy**

The University of Montevallo provides equal opportunity to qualified students. If you have a disability (medical, physical, learning, psychological, etc.) and wish to request disability-related accommodations to complete course requirements, contact Disability Support Services (located in Main Hall, rear entrance; 665-6250). Course requirements cannot be waived, but reasonable accommodations may be provided based on disability documentation and course objectives. Accommodations cannot be made retroactively.

### **ForUM Email**

You are responsible for monitoring and managing your account regularly, even during breaks. You are responsible for all announcements, requests, and/or sensitive information delivered to your UM e-mail account, including information related to this course. You may electronically forward your UM e-mail to another e-mail address (e.g., @gmail.com, @hotmail.com), but at your own risk. The University is not responsible for the handling of forwarded e-mail. Having e-mail forwarded does not absolve you from the responsibilities associated with communication sent to your official UM e-mail address. If you have any questions regarding or problems with your UM email account, you should contact the Solution Center (205-665-6512). The Solution Center is available Monday – Thursday, 8:00 am-7:00 pm; Friday, 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. If you are unsure of how to formally communicate with a professor, please consult the following article:

<https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2015/04/16/advice-students-so-they-dont-sound-silly-emails-essay>

### **Journal Assignments**

On four occasions you will respond to questions about the assigned reading materials. All journal assignments are due at the beginning of class. Your responses must be typed, double-spaced, and in 12-point font.

### **Journal Entry #1 due 2/3**

After reading Phillips, "Spain in the Fifteenth Century", discuss the factors which made fifteenth century Spain so primed and ready for imperial expansion? Comment on what made medieval Spain distinctive from the rest of Europe and on anything else you found especially interesting or historically important. (2 pages)

**Journal Entry #2 due 2/24**

Using Bernal Díaz's testimony identify major turning points in Hernan Cortés' ultimately successful conquest of Mexico between 1519 and 1521. Focus your analysis on the events leading up to the Spanish arrival in Tenochtitlán. Next, what does the memoir reveal about indigenous peoples during the sixteenth century? You are also free to discuss the limitations of Spanish testimony. (4-5 pages)

**Journal Entry #3 due 4/7**

After reading Robert Charles Padden's article, you will write an essay that outlines some of the salient factors that made it possible for Araucanians in southern Chile to maintain their political independence from the Spanish Empire. What, in your estimation, mattered most? (2 pages)

**Journal Entry #4 due 4/21**

Write a formal review Mathew Restall's book *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest*. A good review must identify the author's purpose, approach, and principal arguments. You may also comment on the book's style, sources, and relationship to the historiography. (4-5 pages)