

HIST 3351-001: Latin America I: Colonial Era

Dr. Alexandria Castillo

Fall 2025

Contact: alexandria.castillo@tamusa.edu

Office Hours: CAB 318A, (in person) Mon/Wed 10:40am-12:00pm
(via Zoom) by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the history of Latin America from the initial contact between Europeans and indigenous Mesoamericans through Independence. It will study the social, political, and economic dynamics that influenced the lives of those in the Spanish and Portuguese colonies, as well as in Iberia. It will focus on how these experiences changed over time and the factors that sparked this evolution. It will also place colonial Latin America within a broader global context by incorporating relevant histories of other areas and peoples connected through the Atlantic exchange during this formative period of Latin American history.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

HISTORY IS A DIALOGUE that continues to evolve through those who study it, and YOU, with your unique perspective and life experiences, can contribute to this dialogue! The main objective of this course is for you to practice skills that are key to historical research (**critical thinking, analytical reading, writing, data collection, and effective communication**), as well as understand the state of historical scholarship on topics related to Latin American history. Therefore, this course is designed to help you develop **reading, analytical, and communication skills**. Formal papers will help you improve your **writing and research skills**, while in-class discussion activities will help you learn to **communicate effectively and collaborate** with your peers.

REQUIRED TEXTS

All assigned readings will be provided on the Blackboard course page.

GRADES

Attendance and Class Participation.....	20%
Primary Source Document Share 1.....	10%
Primary Source Document Share 2.....	10%
Reading Response Paper 1.....	15%
Reading Response Paper 2.....	20%
Reading Response Paper 3.....	25%

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Attendance and Class Participation are required in this course. Some class time will be devoted to lecture, but one of the benefits of smaller classes is the opportunity for more one-on-one interactions between instructor and student and between students; therefore, time will be set aside each class for discussions of the material. The aim is to facilitate a collaborative learning environment where concepts and events can be openly discussed and placed within broader contexts. Discussions will focus on the week's lecture material and assigned readings.

Primary Source Document Shares will be conducted in-class twice this semester. There are no assigned readings for Week 11 and 13. Instead, you must come to class on the Wednesday of those weeks prepared to share a specific primary source document related to Colonial Latin American history. You do not need to bring a printed, hard copy of your primary source document to class, but make sure it is accessible so you can share it with your peers. **NO TWO STUDENTS** can present the same document, so you will need to submit a full Chicago Style Citation of your chosen document (via the related Discussion Boards in Blackboard) to reserve your choice! If you do not have a primary source document, you do not post your citation to the Discussion Board before Wednesday's class, or you are not prepared to share the information listed below, you will receive a zero for this assignment. Be prepared to provide the following information: a description of the document (author, date, content summary, etc.), how it relates to our course, why you chose to present this document, and your original interpretation/analysis of this source. (See the Week 11 and Week 13 content folders in Blackboard for more details.)

Reading Responses will be completed for **THREE** specific assigned reading(s) of your choice. The *RRs* are short responses to specific writing prompts related to assigned readings included in Blackboard. These are individual assignments **due in Blackboard by the beginning of class on Wednesday the week the reading is assigned**. These *Responses* are an opportunity to practice your writing, critical thinking, and analytical reading skills, as each requires you to work with primary source documents (i.e. documents written during the past time period in question). For example, in these assignments, the primary sources provided will serve as the evidence to support the paper's argument, or thesis. The Responses must be submitted in Blackboard as a file (doc/pdf) attachment. Allowing you to choose gives you the opportunity to not only write about something you are interested in but have a due date that better fits into your overall course schedule. (See weekly schedule and Reading Response Writing Guide for further details.)

BLACKBOARD

Students access Blackboard through the [JagWire Portal](#). You will then use your Student User ID and network password to login. Once logged in, click on the Blackboard link. The course card will appear on your Dashboard. Blackboard is where you will access the syllabus, course readings, other relevant course materials, and course grades, so make sure to login to Blackboard early and often!

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is mandatory and will be taken each in-person class meeting. You are expected to arrive on-time. Documentation (doctor's notes, coaches' notes for athletic events, instructors' notes for school-related events, etc.) will be required for an absence to be considered an "excused absence." Mental attendance is also required. You cannot effectively participate if you are asleep, texting, listening to music, etc. Also, you must come to class prepared, specifically regarding the assigned readings. Assigned readings must be completed prior to class time (see the weekly reading schedule included below). If this becomes an issue, you will be marked absent and be ineligible for any class participation/attendance points for the day. The "Attendance and Class Participation" grade is the easiest way to get points in this course, do not waste this opportunity!

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT & PLAGIARISM

The written assignments will require you to work with primary and secondary sources, and you will need to specify where you're getting your information. **When in doubt, cite!** Turning in someone else's work/ideas as your own will not be tolerated and will result in an F on that assignment, as well as a report to the Department Chair, Dean of the College, and the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities. We will go over how to properly cite sources early in the course, but if you have any questions about how to cite your sources, please ask me! If you are unsure if your behavior is academically dishonest, ask! If you have any questions concerning the definition of "academic misconduct" at TAMU-SA, please review the Student Handbook: <https://www.tamusa.edu/studentengagementsuccess/documents/studenthandbook2021-2022.pdf>.

Also, as stated on Page 1 of the syllabus, writing and critical thinking are important learning outcomes of this course, therefore all written assignments should be prepared and created by you! Developing these skills is an important step in your professional development and vital for an increasingly competitive workplace. HIST 3351 assumes that all work submitted by students will be generated by the students themselves, working individually or in groups. Students should not have another person/entity do the writing of any portion of an assignment for them, which includes hiring a person or a company to write assignments and/or using artificial intelligence (AI) tools like ChatGPT. Use of any AI-generated content in this course qualifies as academic dishonesty and violates Texas A&M-San Antonio's standards of academic integrity.

IMPORTANT STUDENT SERVICES

- The Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center: The Writing Center offers free appointment-based support sessions to help with your writing such as real-time online sessions, assignment reviews, and in-person tutoring. In-person sessions will be held in either CAB 208 or Classroom Hall 304. Make appointments either by email (writingcenter@tamusa.edu) or online via the Student Services tab in JagWire.
- The Office of Disability Support Services (DSS): If you have a documented disability or chronic illness that could impact your participation in this course, you are strongly encouraged to contact DSS to ensure you are provided the necessary accommodations. You can contact DSS by phone (210-784-1335), email (dss@tamusa.edu), or in-person (CAB Suite 210) to schedule an appointment.

- Student Counseling Center (SCC): This center provides free, confidential counseling services to enrolled students by trained and licensed staff. Walk-in appointments are accepted any time Monday – Friday, 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM (Modular C, Room 166). Call (210-784-1331) or email (stucounseling@tamusa.edu) to schedule an initial appointment.

WEEKLY CLASS SCHEDULE

Week 1: Course Introduction & First Lecture

Introductions, Syllabus, Schedule, & Course Requirements
Early American Civilizations: the Olmec to the “Aztecs”

Readings: no assigned readings

Week 2: Medieval Iberia: *Reconquista*, Law, & Society

NO CLASS MONDAY (9/1)—Labor Day Holiday
Religious Crusade, Coexistence, and Evolving Iberian Identities

Readings: no assigned readings

Week 3: Early Modern Europe & Imperial Expansion

Early Modern Europe on the Eve of American Discovery
The Voyages of Christopher Columbus and Cultural Encounters

Readings: *Letter of Christopher Columbus to Luis de Santángel, 1493*

Week 4: Colonization in Mexico

The Fernando Cortes Expedition
Fall of Tenochtitlán and the Mexica Empire

Readings: *Bernal Díaz History of the Conquest, 1519-1520 & Miguel León-Portilla Broken Spears (Chapter 8)*

Week 5: Colonization in South America

The Francisco Pizarro Expedition in the Andes
The Portuguese in Brazil

Readings: *Guaman Poma de Ayala The Ages of the Indians, 1615*

Week 6: Colonial Administration & the Encomienda Issue

Establishing Colonies in the Spanish Caribbean
The Encomienda System: Tradition vs. Change

Readings: *Sepulveda vs. Las Casas Debate, 1547 & 1552*

Week 7: The Colonial Church & Holy Inquisition

Building Sacred Spaces in the Colonies
Enforcing Orthodoxy and Extirpating Colonial Idolatry

Readings: *Marina de San Miguel's Confession, 1598*

Week 8: Colonial Society: Caste, Class, and *Limpieza de Sangre*

Concepts of Race and “Purity of Blood”
Class vs Caste in Colonial Society

Readings: *Don Manuel Protests the Marriage of His Daughter, 1784*

Week 9: Colonial Society: Gender, Sexuality, and Honor

Patriarchal Values and Gendered Systems of Power

Sexuality and Perceptions of Honor

Readings: *Maria de la Candelaria Accusation of Michaela de Molina, 1696*

Week 10: The Atlantic Slave Trade & African Experiences in the Americas

American Economies and Atlantic Trade

African Experiences in the Americas

Readings: *Felipe Edimboro Sues for Manumission, 1794*

Week 11: The Colonial Economy: Products & Trade

Silver Mining and Sugar Production

Controlling New World Resources

Readings: no assigned readings

Primary Source Document Share 1, Wed. 11/5

Week 12: The Bourbon Reforms: Economic & Political Change

Absolutism and Economic Overhaul

Royal Intervention and its Impact on Colonial Politics & Colonial Identity

Readings: *Bourbon Reforms excerpts, 1760s-1805*

Week 13: The Eighteenth Century: Era of Social and Cultural Change

Enlightened Ideals and Identity

Demographic Changes and Evolving Social Hierarchies

Readings: no assigned readings

Primary Source Document Share 2, Wed. 11/19

Week 14: Independence Period: Mexico

Revolutionary Ideals and Unmet Political Promises

NO CLASS WEDNESDAY (11/26)—University "Study Day"

Readings: no assigned readings

Week 15: Independence Period: South America & the Caribbean

Rebellions in South America

Rebellions in the Caribbean

Readings: *To the Spanish Nation, 1792 & War, 1800s*

FINAL EXAM WEEK (12/6-12/12): NO FINAL EXAM