



History 130-62910  
Latin American History  
to Independence  
Paul Rittman, Instructor  
Fall 2017  
Mon-Wed, 12:45-2:10 PM  
30-17  
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### **Course Description:**

A political, social, and cultural history of the Americas both North and South, from earliest origins to 1822. This course deals with the pre-Columbian and colonial era up to and including the wars for independence.

### **Textbook:**

Latin America and Its People, Volume 1 (3rd Edition). Cheryl E. Martin and Mark Wasserman. Pearson, 2011.

### **Availability:**

We can communicate before and after the class meets, or via email. **When you email me, please let me know your class number, 130.** This way I can know which file to open up to look up any information you are requesting. **I usually don't respond to requests for information contained in the syllabus.**

### **Withdrawal Policy:**

September 10 is the last day to drop this class without receiving a W grade. October 14 is the last day to be dropped for excessive absences, and receive a W grade. Excessive absences (at any time in the semester) will result in the student being dropped. **If you are going to be absent from class for two or more class periods in a row, please email me beforehand. Students who arrive tardy should confirm their attendance at the end of that class period with the instructor. BECAUSE OF ABUSES IN THE PAST, STUDENTS WHO ARE DROPPED FROM CLASS FOR EXCESSIVE ABSENCES WILL NOT BE REINSTATED.**

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

Upon completion of the course the student can:

1. Develop analytical skills in relation to colonial Latin America, cause and effect.
2. Identify and discuss transformational people, institutions and events that have been the basis for the political, economic, social and diplomatic development of colonial Latin America.
3. Critically analyze how inter-group relationships have affected the social, economic and political development of colonial Latin America.
4. Critically analyze Pre-Columbian societies and their downfall as well as European motivations for colonization and conquest of Latin America.

**Grading:**

Final grades will be allotted according to the following percentage scale:

A	90%
B	80%
C	70%
D	60%
F	below 60%

Class assignments have the following weight:

Exams	40% (20% each for the midterm and final)
Essays	40% (20% each for the first essay and second essay)
Participation	15%
Essay outline	5%

**PENS NEEDED FOR WORK WRITTEN BY HAND:** Written work (exams, reflections, and the essay outline assignment if it is not printed from a computer) needs to be done in pen (blue or black ink; no light colors allowed). Work not written in pen will be returned to the student, for them to copy it out in pen, before being graded for credit.

**Exams**

The two exams are both written, usually a mixture of short and long responses. Long responses (one- or two-pages in length) are at least 80% of the exam grade. Although page length is a guide, when I ask for one or two page responses, I am talking about the usual 8.5x11 inch pages (if you are using the smaller blue books, you should double the number of pages that you write out). Usually, the final will cover only the material since the midterm. On the exams, I will not be grading your spelling, punctuation, or paragraph or essay structure, so much as the ideas you are expressing (obviously your spelling and writing has to be clear enough to be understood by me—I don't give credit for what I cannot understand).

On the exams, **if you answer more than the requested number of questions, be sure to cross out the ones you don't want me to grade**; if that isn't indicated, I will determine which responses are read and scored.

**When writing out the exam questions, write out the short answer terms and underline them; for the long responses, simply give the number of the question and circle it.** This will be made clear in the instructions for the exam. Any student that correctly does this for ALL short and long responses will be given one additional (percentage) point for that exam.

No electronic media are allowed at all during tests; all books and papers will need to be placed below the desk. If a student is caught looking at printed materials, or on another student's exam, their test will be given an automatic zero, regardless of whether they choose to continue taking that test or not.

**Once I pass out the midterm or final, students must remain in the room to take it. If or when they leave (to answer a cell phone, go to the bathroom, or for any other reason) the test is considered finished and must be turned in to the teacher.** Such students will not be allowed to make up the exam at a later point. **If a student feels that a medical (or other) condition might require a student to use the restroom during an exam, they can choose to do the midterm makeup**—but once the exam has been given, they have to finish it (they can't look at the test and then decide to do the midterm makeup).

### **Blue Books**

You need to bring a Blue Book to class for both the midterm and final (8.5 x 11 inch size recommended—a few students have filled up more than one of the small Blue Books). Page length recommendations for exam responses are calculated in terms of the 8.5 x 11 inch blue books. **NO EXAM RESPONSES WRITTEN IN ANYTHING OTHER THAN A BLUE BOOK THAT HAS BEEN APPROVED BY ME PRIOR TO BEING WRITTEN IN, WILL BE ACCEPTED.** If you would like you use one blue book for both the midterm and the final, you can—just make sure there is enough room in that blue book, to write out all of your responses (or bring in a backup blue book to the final exam).

### **Essays**

There will be two essays assigned during the semester. Both essays need to be 1600 words (roughly five pages) long. A recommended division of the essay is a half-page introduction, a four-page body, and a half-page conclusion. Essays need to be typed in 12-point type and double-spaced (so that they are easy to read); don't use decorative or script fonts. You do not have to use direct quotations, but if you do, **direct quotations in excess of 200 words will not be applied to the 1600 word count.**

Essays are an excellent way to learn more about a topic that you are personally interested in. Additionally, essay writing develops your critical thinking skills—you learn to discern what points and issues will support your main thesis, as well as (possibly) examine different explanations, and decide which is most valid. Finally, the reading and writing involved in these essays will help develop these same skills, which the vast majority of you will put to use as you advance in college and work, as well as in becoming an informed citizen.

The essays are **research** essays—assignments whereby you research your topic, and combine the information you have gleaned, with your own opinions and conclusions. As such, essays written essentially of your own opinions or beliefs will be severely downgraded. The idea here is to develop research skills, including not only reading, but also the assimilating different bits of information and viewpoints. If you simply write five pages on everything you already know about your topic, you don't develop those skills.

### What to write about

The essays need to cover a person that lived, or a specific event that occurred, within the content area and time frame of this class: **Latin America (Mexico south to Chile, along with the Caribbean), from the first migration from Siberia (roughly 12,000 BC) to Latin American independence in the early 1800s. Keep in mind that even though we might go outside of these boundaries in class lectures and readings, you will still need to observe these parameters for your two essays.**

The subject of the essay has to be either a person, or a specific event. When students write on broader topics, they typically lose focus and the essay wanders all over the place. The emphasis on specific people and events eliminates myths and legendary characters as subjects of your essays.

**If you are in any way unsure as to whether your topic fits these parameters, ask the instructor.**

If you choose to write an essay on a topic covered in class, make sure that your essay goes well beyond what was covered in class; essays that simply repeat classroom lectures or readings will be downgraded to the degree that this happens.

### Format

I do require both 5-page essays to be turned in digitally via Blackboard (see link at top of first page). For the purposes of keeping everything organized, I will NOT accept a hard copy of the essay. The day it is submitted digitally to me is the day it is turned in.

Both 5-page essays will be given one additional percentage point if they: (1) are uploaded to Blackboard on time; (2) do not need to be re-uploaded because of improper subject matter or for any other reason; and (3) have the same arrangement as the essay template on my website: name *only* on cover page, and a works cited page in back of essay.

If you are uncertain how to upload a file on Blackboard, go to the Blackboard web address given in the top of the first page. Click on the link to this class. Then click on the Announcements section on the left side of that page. That will show you a link to a PDF file that explains how to upload a document. **Upload the files by attaching them into the Blackboard interface; do NOT paste the file into a text field.**

One of the reasons for insisting on a digital copy is for catching plagiarism. **I will accept digital copies in one of the following formats: Word (.doc or .docx), Rich Text Format (.rtf), OpenOffice (.odt), or Word Perfect (.wpd).** Essays not in one of those formats will be returned to the student, to be resubmitted in a proper format, and will be penalized.

As research essays, they need to reference IN THE TEXT OF THE ESSAY ITSELF at least 3 different books or articles, in MLA format. Place your full citations on their own page, at the end of your essay (in the same document)—do not create a new document for your works cited. Essays that place the works cited on a separate document will be penalized. These three sources are not to include class handouts, notes, the textbook, or Wikipedia (or any of its derivative websites).

If students are unaware of the MLA format, they can go to a page on my history site, and scroll down to a section that is entitled "Classroom Handouts." You can visit two links listed there, both of which explain the MLA format. One is the Purdue OWL site, the other is maintained by Victor Valley College. Both of those pages have sample essays written in MLA format, so you can see exactly what you are being asked to do.

Essays written before this semester started, or submitted to other classes, are not acceptable.

### **Essay Outline**

For the essay outline assignment you will turn in **two forms**. One is the outline form itself; the other, a document from the Writing Lab (that they will give you) signifying that you have gone there and consulted with them. Before going to the Lab, fill out the essay outline form with the subject matter for your first essay, including small paragraphs in the spaces allotted for them. Then, have them look it over and make suggestions. This visit to the Lab has to be with the first (not the second) essay. While you can feel free to use this outline form for your own benefit when you write the second essay, you will not need to turn in an outline form with that second essay, or take that essay to the writing center.

The writing lab form will not be given credit unless it is turned in at the same time as the essay outline form. Neither of these forms can be turned in later than the first essay itself.

Staple the writing center form to the essay outline form, to prevent them from being separated after they are (allegedly) turned in. That helps out both you and me.

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism and other forms of cheating are not permitted, and can result in receiving a 0 on the assignment, without the option to submit the assignment again, and additionally, any allowable penalty as explained in the student handbook or in accordance with VVC policy.

### **Participation**

The participation grade will consist of some short readings (sometimes primary source), and a one-page response by the students that are done in class, referred to me as reflections. These are rather unstructured, and the idea here is simply to expose you to historical documents and ideas, and get you to think about them. At the end of the semester, I will average the grade for each reflection assignment, and that will constitute the participation portion of the final semester grade. The lowest reflection grade will be dropped and will not count against the grade.

### **Quizzes**

**I reserve the right to give short quizzes throughout the semester.** These quizzes, if and when they are given, would be given at the beginning of class. Quizzes must be turned in when the instructor asks for them; they cannot be made up later on in that class period, nor on any other day. Once I am done passing out quizzes I will not pass any out later on in the class period, even if students come in late to that class. Any quizzes that are given out will be averaged in to the participation grade (as if they were reflections).

**Late Work and Makeup Work Policy**

The only assignments that can be turned in late are the essay outline, and the two five-page essays. Late work has to be turned in no later than seven days after the original due date and will be given 80 percent credit (that is, 80 percent of what the grade would have been, had it not been turned in late). This 80 percent credit policy will be implemented regardless of the reason for the assignment being late. The only exceptions to this one-week extension are any assignments that fall due the last week of class—no work can be turned later than the day of the final exam.

If a student is not present to take the midterm as scheduled, the midterm can be taken at a future date, for full credit, by taking it in the Communications Center. The makeup midterm will be different from that taken in class, but it will still be based on the study guide. Midterm makeups need to be taken BEFORE the last week of class.

Reflections (and quizzes) are based on class lectures and discussions and cannot be made up (or turned in before or after the assignment is done in class).

**The essay outline will be collected at the beginning of the class period of the day it is due. Any essay outlines turned in from that point onward (including later on in that class period) will be assessed the late penalty.**

**Extra Credit or Re-doing Assignments**

Apart from the special instructions for emailing essays and writing out your exams, there is no extra credit offered; the only assignments that can be re-done are essays that are returned because of unacceptable subject choice, improper file format, or some other condition, **at the discretion of the instructor**. Sorry, but plagiarism or otherwise improper use of sources or other people's work doesn't constitute a reason for making up the assignment.

***Out of consideration for the rest of the class, if you do come in late, please walk in through the back door; and don't walk up to the front of the class to sit down. Find a seat in the back.***

**Classroom Behavior**

Being mean or inconsiderate (as defined by instructor) in class will make you liable to any penalty allowable under VVC policy and the Penal Code of the State of California, including but not limited to: academic penalties, imprisonment, fines, citations, and torture (up to but not including violations of the Eighth Amendment) to the fullest extent permitted by law.

## Class Schedule

**Assignments listed below are due the Wednesday of the given week**

Aug 28-30	Class introduction; Ch. 1 "The First Peoples of the Americas": Early Amerindian Society; Olmec culture
Sep 6 (Sep 4 is Labor Day)	Ch. 1, cont.
Sep 11-13	Ch. 2: "Americans and Iberians on the Eve of Contact" Aztec civilizations
Sep 18-20	Ch. 2, cont. Inca Civilization
Sep 25-27	Chs. 2, cont. and 3 "The European Conquest of America" Spanish society <b>Essay outline form</b>
Oct 2-4	Ch. 3, cont.
Oct 9-11	Ch. 4 "The Iberians' New World" Colonial government <b>first essay</b>
Oct 16-18	Midterm review; <b>midterm</b>
Oct 23-25	Ch. 5 "The Amerindians' Changing World" Life for Amerindians in the colonial era
Oct 30-Nov 1	Ch. 6 "A New People and Their World" The making of a multiethnic society
Nov 6-8	Ch. 6, cont.
Nov 13-15	Ch. 7 "The Shifting Fortunes of Colonial Empires" Decline of Spain and the Bourbon Reforms
Nov 20-22	Ch. 7, cont.
Nov 27-29	Ch. 8 "The New Nations of Latin America" Independence
Dec 4-6	Ch. 8, cont. <b>Second essay</b>
Dec 11-13	Final exam review; <b>final exam</b>