

HIS 3942
The Conquest of Mexico
Fall 2023

Class Meetings: MWF Period 4 (10:40-11:30)
Instructor: Dr. Deardorff | deardorff.max@ufl.edu
Office Hours: Wednesday (12:30-2:30) | Friday (8:15-9:00 on Zoom)

TA: Kelsey Zelinsky | [reach via Canvas]



"The Conquest of Tenochtitlán," from the *Conquest of México* series, second half of seventeenth century, Library of Congress

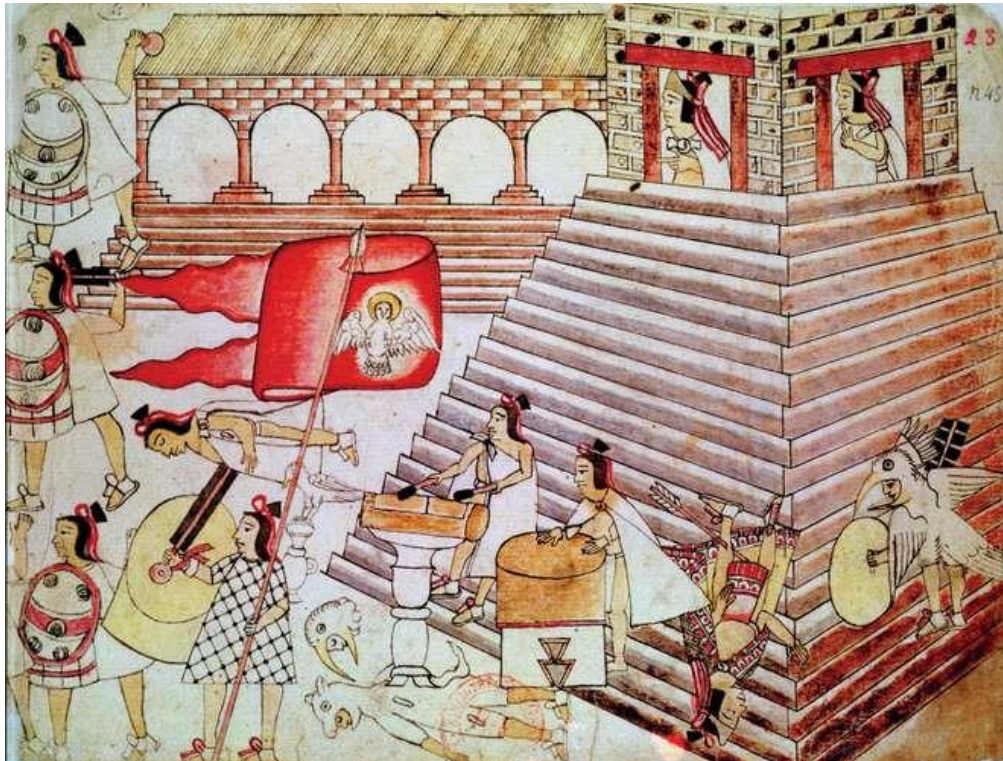
The History Practicum – Introduction and Objectives of the Course:

In 1521, the great imperial city of Tenochtitlan fell to a small group of Spanish conquistadors, ending Aztec rule in Mesoamerica. For the duration of the semester, we will be exploring the history of that event, its social and cultural context, and its aftermath. As we do, we will strive to answer a number of related questions. For instance, how did so few men bring down such a great empire? Do Spaniards deserve all the credit? As students dig for the truth, they will engage with the tools of the historian. What evidence, we will ask, exists in Spanish sources, on one hand, and native sources, on the other?

Do different sources tell different stories about who was responsible for the Aztecs' defeat? And what factors – military, social, environmental, and cultural—might have played a role in the outcome?

As students become more comfortable with the traditional narrative of these events and the sources available to historians to study them, they will propose their own plan for a research project.

This course is designed to help students develop fundamental skills in critical reading, analytical thinking, historical research, and argumentative writing, all of which are needed to succeed in the major and which will serve students well in their future endeavors, no matter what profession or occupation they pursue after graduation. These practical skills emphasize three areas: a) critical reading; b) research and evidence; and c) editing and peer assessment.



“Aztec warriors defending the temple of Tenochtitlán,” Mexico, BNP Paris

Required Texts:

Clendinnen, Inga. *Ambivalent Conquests: Maya and Spaniard in Yucatan, 1517-1570*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 2003). ISBN-13: 978-0521527316.

Schwartz, Stuart & Tatiana Seijas, *Victors and Vanquished: Spanish and Nahua Views of the Fall of the Mexica Empire*, 2nd ed. (Bedford, 2018) ISBN-13: 978-1319-094850

Townsend, Camilla. *Malintzin's Choices: An Indian Woman in the Conquest of Mexico* (UNM, 2006) ISBN 978-0826334053

Rampolla, Mary. *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, 9th Edition (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2018) ISBN-13: 9781319113025

[any edition of **Rampolla** 7th edition or later is acceptable]

Recommended Ancillary Resource:

Patrick Rael, *Reading, Writing, and Researching for History: A Guide for College Students* (Brunswick, ME: Bowdoin College, 2004) [available @ <https://courses.bowdoin.edu/writing-guides/>]



A 'cacique' from Tepetlaoztoc complains to 'encomendero' Miguel Díaz de Aux in the late 1520s about the latter's brutal treatment of the local community; Kingsborough Codex, fol. 11b

Course Goals:

- Students will develop a familiarity with pre-Hispanic Mexico, early modern Spain, and the character of the first interactions between their peoples
- Students will learn to read primary texts and secondary sources in a critical fashion, with an eye to understanding how and why those texts were produced
- Students will practice the basics of historical research and writing, including
 - **evaluating primary and secondary sources**
 - **devising research questions**
 - **identifying and avoiding plagiarism**
 - **conducting library-based and online research**
 - **producing analytical writing**
 - **providing peer editing and feedback**

- Students will better understand the range of careers available to students of history

Class-related Communication

The professor will send out class announcements via Canvas. You will be held responsible for all amendments to reading or writing assignments posted there. "I don't check Canvas" will not be considered a valid excuse for failure to complete an assignment or follow instructions. In addition, the professor and TA will also use the message feature in Canvas to communicate with you individually in regards to assignments. You are expected to check your Canvas Inbox at least once every 24 hours during the Monday-to-Friday workweek.

Attendance policy and expectations

Students will normally attend three classes each week. Students are expected to attend class regularly and arrive for lecture or discussion section promptly. Unexcused absences will be penalized in the following manner:

Three absences: no penalty (to cover illness or personal days)

Each subsequent absence: Attendance and Participation grade lowered by 15 points

Poor attendance (40% or more of the semester) is grounds for failing the course.

History classes are most rewarding when students interact with the texts, each other, and the instructor on a sustained basis. Readings provide the raw material for class discussion, where much of the learning takes place. Effective class participation is therefore essential. Students can expect a respectful atmosphere in which to express their opinions.

Please attend class having read the day's materials and bring a copy with you. Spotty attendance, unpreparedness, or failure to bring readings to class will certainly lower your grade and poor attendance is grounds for failing the course; excellent attendance and especially energetic and informed participation will raise final grades.

*Student grades for participation will default to match the student's overall grade on written work. **Regular, informed contributions to classroom discussion will raise participation grades.** Irregular contributions, repeated unpreparedness, or excessive absence will lower participation grades.*

Excused Absences: Students unable to attend *for extended periods of time* because of personal or family medical issues should provide notification via email justifying their absence (medical documentation is required in the case of extended absences). Students who have other conflicts that will prevent them from being able to complete an assignment on time or who will incur absences due to UF-sanctioned activities (such as participation in UF teams, etc.) must notify the professor in advance.

Laptop/tablet policy

All cell phones must be turned to vibrate at the beginning of class. **Laptops and tablets** are **permitted** in class **solely** for the purpose of **accessing digitalized readings**. Note-taking must be done the old-fashioned way, with paper and a writing instrument. Social science research has repeatedly shown that students who write their notes (rather than type them) demonstrate better understanding of material and better recall. Internet websurfing, texting, checking of email, or other tasks unrelated to readings for discussion or other classroom activities is not permitted. Any student

found engaging in these activities during class may be asked to leave the classroom. A second violation will result in disciplinary sanction.

Group Assignments: At the beginning of the semester, you will be assigned to a group (Tenochca, Tlatelolca, Tlaxcalteca, Maya, Conquistadors, Friars).

1. Groups will rotate responsibility for developing “discussion-starter” questions
2. **Digital History Report:** Student groups will investigate and report on digital history websites linked to pre-Hispanic Mexico and the conquests of the sixteenth century. On my website, **Iberia Plus Ultra** (<https://www.maxdeardorff.org/digitalhistorylinks>), there are dozens of options to choose from. Student reports should give a summary of the selected website’s content, communicate who is responsible for creating and maintaining the website, highlight some of the website’s best features, and tell how the website might relate to the content of the class. Reports should be no shorter than five (5) and no more than ten (10) minutes in length. Digital History Reports will be given starting on the fourth week of the semester.

Late Work: Late work will be accepted up to three week days following the assigned due date. It will be assessed a penalty of 10%/day, which begins to accrue one minute after the submission deadline. After three weekdays, late work will not be accepted. [Justified absences will extend the submission period and override some or all late penalties.]

Assignments & Grading:

Syllabus quiz:	5%	[50 points]
Exercises (x10):	40%	[400 points]
Research Project:	30%	[300 points]
Group Work	10%	[100 points]
Attendance & Participation:	15%	[150 points]

Grading Scale for this Course:

94-100	A	86-84	B	76-74	C	66-64	D
93-90	A-	83-80	B-	73-70	C-	63-60	D-
89-87	B+	79-77	C+	69-67	D+	<u>Below 60 - Failing</u>	

1. Introduction to the Course and Discipline

Wed 8/23, Fri 8/25

Weds: Course Introduction, overview, and class expectations
Assignment: Read the Syllabus

Fri: Why (and how to) study history?
Methodology: **Rampolla**, “Introduction: Why Study History?” (pp. 1-5)
Assignment: Syllabus quiz (on Canvas)

2. The Historical Profession / The Deep History of Mesoamerica

Mon 8/28, Wed 8/30, Fri 9/1

Mon: Introduction to the Historical Profession

Methodology: **Wineburg**, "Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts"
Exercise: **Exercise 1 (Historical Thinking) due**

Weds: Skills and Responsibilities of the Trade - Academic Honesty, Taking Notes, etc.
Methodology: **Rampolla**, "Reading Actively in History" (p. 26-30); "Writing about reading" (31-32)
Student Working Groups Assigned

Fri: Who were the Aztecs?
Methodology: **Rampolla**, "Identifying historical sources" (8-12); "Evaluating secondary sources (18-21); Using secondary sources (42-45)
Secondary Readings: **Thomas**, "Ancient Mexico" in *Conquest*, 3-51
Exercise: **Exercise 2 (Evaluating Secondary Sources) due**

3. The Background - Who were the Aztecs? The Spaniards?

Mon 9/4 [Labor Day], Wed 9/6, Fri 9/8

Weds: Who were the Spaniards?
Secondary Readings: **Altman et al.**, "Spain in the Era of Expansion," 27-52

Fri: Spaniards, from Caribbean to the Yucatán
Secondary Readings: **Townsend**, *Malintzin's Choices*, intro & chap. 1 (1-29)

4. Encounters, Omens, Reactions

Mon 9/11, Wed 9/13, Fri 9/15

Mon: Primary and Secondary Sources
IN-CLASS DISCUSSION – Bernal Díaz's Account
Methodology: **Rampolla**, "Analyzing primary sources (13-17)
Primary Readings: *Victors and Vanquished*, chap. 2, doc. 5 (38-56)
Exercise: **Exercise 3 (Single Source Analysis #1) due**

Weds: Cultural Encounters
Secondary Readings: **Townsend**, *Malintzin's Choices*, chaps. 2-3 (30-84)

Fri: PRIMARY SOURCE DISCUSSION
Primary Sources: *Victors and Vanquished*, introduction to chaps. 3 & 4, plus docs. 10, 12, 13 (73-82, 96-104)

5. Hernán Cortes. Tlaxcala. Tenochtitlán (1519-1521)

Mon 9/18, Wed 9/20, Fri 9/22

Mon: From Yucatán to Tenochtitlán
Secondary Reading: **Townsend**, *Malintzin's Choices*, chap. 4 (85-108)
Exercise: **Exercise 4 (Single Source Analysis #2)**

Weds: Cortés and Moctezuma
Secondary Reading: **Townsend**, *Malintzin's Choices*, chap. 5 (109-125)

Fri: Tenochtitlán – Things Fall Apart
Secondary Readings: Clendinnen, "'Fierce and Unnatural Cruelty:' Cortés and the Conquest of Mexico," *Representations* 33 (1991): 65-100
Exercise: **Exercise 5 (Collecting Knowledge) due**

6. Consolidation of Conquest

Mon 9/25, Wed 9/27, Fri 9/29

Mon: Discussing primary sources
Primary Sources: *Victors and Vanquished*, chap. 5, doc (108-137); chap. 6, docs. 18-20 (138-148)

Weds: The Siege and Fall of Tenochtitlán
Secondary Reading: Townsend, *Malintzin's Choices*, chaps. 6-7 (126-171)

Fri: Doña María's Epilogue [DISCUSSION on *Malintzin's Choices*]
Secondary Reading: Townsend, *Malintzin's Choices*, chaps. 8-9 (172-214)

7. Historiography – Thinking Critically about the Conquest

Mon 10/2, Wed 10/4, Fri 10/6 [Homecoming]

Mon: Questioning Narratives
Prescott, *The History of the Conquest of Mexico*, excerpt TBA
(<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~Hyper/PRESCOTT/toc.html>)

Weds: Writing Workshop
Methodology: **Rampolla**, Chapter 4 ["Following Conventions of Writing in History"] (50-76)
Exercise: **Exercise 6 (Outlining an Argument) due**

8. Invading Guatemala

Mon 10/9, Wed 10/11, Fri 10/13

Mon: Servants to Spaniards or Forgotten Allies? Historical Investigators Employ Visual Sources
Secondary Reading: Yannakakis, "Allies or Servants? The Journey of Indian Conquistadors in the Lienzo of Analco" *Ethnohistory* 58:04 (2011): 653-682

Weds: *Indios conquistadores?*
Secondary Reading: Restall & Asselbergs, chap. 1 in *Invading Guatemala*, 1-20
Exercise: **Exercise 7 (Historiographical Interventions)**

Fri: Library Activity
Exercise: **Exercise 8 (Exploring the Library Catalog), due following the meeting with UF's librarian**

9. The Spiritual Conquest

Mon 10/16, Wed 10/18, Fri 10/20

- Mon: War, Conquest, and Political Change
Secondary Reading: Clendinnen, *Ambivalent Conquests: Maya and Spaniard in Yucatan, 1517-1570*, chaps. 1-4
- Weds: Grounds for Conflict
Secondary Reading: Clendinnen, *Ambivalent Conquests: Maya and Spaniard in Yucatan, 1517-1570*, chaps. 5-8
- Fri: The Old Gods and the New - DISCUSSION
Secondary Reading: Clendinnen, *Ambivalent Conquests: Maya and Spaniard in Yucatan, 1517-1570*, chaps. 9-12

10. Organizing a Postconquest Society

Mon 10/23, Wed 10/25, Fri 10/27

- Mon: **RESEARCH TOPIC WORKSHOP**
Methodology: Rampolla, Writing a Research Paper (77-98); The Project Statement
- Weds: Spanish Violence and the Debate about the Legal Justification of Conquest
Secondary Reading: Carrasco, "The Exaggerations of Human Sacrifice," and "Human Sacrifice/ Debt Payments From the Aztec Point of View" (439-447 & 458-465)
Sepúlveda, excerpt from Valladolid debate, on natural slavery (unnumbered)
- Fri: Building a New Society out of the Old
Primary Source: Zorita, "The Brief and Summary Relation of the Lords of New Spain," in *Life and Labor in Ancient Mexico*, 180-185, 200-218

11. Law and the Transformation of Aztec Culture

Mon 10/30, Wed 11/1, Fri 11/3

- Mon: Indigenous Intellectuals and the Appropriation of History
Secondary Reading: Schwaller, "The Brothers..." in Yannakakis & Ramos, *Indigenous Intellectuals*, 39-59
Project statement due (Friday by 11:59)
- Weds: Continuity and Change -- Discussion
Primary Source: 6.10 "Excerpts from Chimalpahin's *Diario*, 1604-1614" in *Mesoamerican Voices*
Methodology: Rampolla, Plagiarism (99-105), Quoting and Documenting Sources 111-118
Exercise: Exercise 9 (Quoting and Citing Sources)

Fri: Law, Land, and the Home
Primary Sources: Docs 5.1-5.3 in *Mesoamerican Voices* (96-102), 5.6 (106-113)
Secondary Reading: Kellogg, "Legal Documents as a Source for Ethnohistory" in James Lockhart, Lisa Sousa, and Stephanie Wood, eds., *Sources and Methods for the Study of Postconquest Mesoamerican Ethnohistory*, Provisional Version (2007)
<http://whp.uoregon.edu/Lockhart/index.html>
Cline, "The Testaments of Culhuacan," in James Lockhart, Lisa Sousa, and Stephanie Wood, eds., *Sources and Methods for the Study of Postconquest Mesoamerican Ethnohistory*, Provisional Version (2007):
<http://whp.uoregon.edu/Lockhart/index.html>

12. Law and the Transformation of Aztec Culture, cont.

Mon 11/6, Wed 11/8, Fri 11/10 [Veterans Day]

Mon: Land Rights and the Creation of Maps
Secondary Reading: Mundy, "Mapping Babel: A 16th Century Indigenous Map from Mexico," *The Appendix: A new journal of narrative & experimental history* (October 2013). [access via [her university website](https://www.fordham.edu/info/22091/faculty_and_staff/5114/barbara_e_mundy/1) @ https://www.fordham.edu/info/22091/faculty_and_staff/5114/barbara_e_mundy/1]
Methodology: Rampolla, Evaluating online sources (19-21)
Exercise: **Exercise 10 (Evaluating Online Sources)**

Weds: Student Presentations

13. Student Presentations

Mon 11/13, Wed 11/15, Fri 11/17

Mon: Student Presentations

Weds: Student Presentations

Fri: Student Presentations

14. Student Presentations

Mon 11/20, ~~Wed 11/22 [Thanksgiving]~~ Fri 11/24

Mon: Student Presentations

15. Presentations & Peer Review

Mon 11/27, Wed 11/29, Fri 12/1

Mon: Student Presentations

Weds: Student Presentations

Fri: Peer Review
Methodology: Rampolla, Quoting and Documenting Sources (106-152)

16. Presentations & Course Wrap-up

Mon 12/4, Wed 12/6

Mon: Student Presentations

Weds: Student Presentations

RESEARCH PROJECT: Prospectus (4-6 pages, double-spaced with Calibri 11 pt or Times New Roman 12 pt font); timeline; & annotated bibliography. Annotated bibliography should include the following: three relevant books, three relevant articles, and two types of primary sources, all of which you would use for this project. Presentation will form part of the grade for the final project.

[RESEARCH PROJECT DUE MONDAY DECEMBER 11TH BY 11:59 PM]

Grading Criteria:

If you believe an error has been made in grading your work, please bring it to the instructor's attention, and he will review the situation. Once it has been verified that no error has been made, *GRADES ARE NON-NEGOTIABLE.*

A Work that goes beyond instructor's expectations: is careful, thoughtful, original, and thorough. Truly outstanding work – even for a “good” student.

A- Very good work with most of the attributes of “A” work but either deficient in some technical aspect, in thoroughness and care or not as strikingly incisive, original, or creative as “A” work. Excellent.

B+ Better than good, competent work, even for the typical student at this university. Some aspects are very strong, but not uniformly excellent.

B Good competent work, which meets all requirements the instructor could specify in advance. Reasonably thorough. Alternatively, work with some excellent aspects that are balanced by serious deficiencies.

B- Almost up to specifiable standards. Often characterized by vagueness and signs of lack of effort or insufficient engagement with the material. Sometimes the result of correctable misunderstanding. Talk to instructor.

C+ Below the specifiable standards for good work. Talk to instructor.

C Minimally passing work, showing serious misunderstanding or lack of effort or engagement. Talk to instructor

C- or below: Talk to instructor immediately.

Plagiarism policy

Please familiarize yourself with the University's academic honor code. Unintentional plagiarism results in an "F" for the paper. Intentional plagiarism results in an "F" for the course, or worse. All plagiarism charges will be reported to the University administration.

The Writing Studio

The UF Writing Studio
2215 Turlington Hall
Office phone (352) 846-1138

<https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>

The Writing Studio also offers online tutoring hours, which vary from term to term. Please check the website to see available time slots, and then choose from either daytime, evening, or online tutoring.

The University of Florida Honor Pledge: UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Honor Code (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

How to avoid the (unintentional) appearance of plagiarism

Make sure that all quotations from primary and secondary sources are always in quotation marks, and cite the source.

Always cite sources for ideas that are not your own. If the source is a book not assigned in the course, a lecture, or a conversation with a friend, or something said by another student in a discussion section, say so in a footnote or endnote.

The papers in this course are not research papers – they ask you only to think about material already assigned. So you do not need to consult readings other than what is assigned (if you happen to have read something not assigned that you think is relevant, feel free to use it, but with a proper citation). If someone has helped you with this paper (by reading it for clarity and grammar, or by listening to you talk about it) state in an acknowledgement who that person is, and how he or she helped you. It is fine to get help, as long as your helper does not in any way write the paper for you, or provide you with the argument(s) of the paper. It is best to get help from someone who is not taking the course.

AI Policy: In certain limited instances (to be clarified by professor in class), students will be allowed to use LLM's (ChatGPT, Bing, Bard, etc.) to complete assignments. Whenever students use LLM's to complete assignments, they are required to cite and detail their use (in order to avoid plagiarism penalties). However, all uses of LLM's not expressly authorized by the professor's policies are prohibited and will be subject to punitive assessment.

Students Requiring Accommodation

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

Counseling and Wellness Center

Students facing difficulties completing the course or who are in need of counseling or urgent help should call the on-campus Counseling and Wellness Center (352-392-1575); <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/>).