

LAH4602/LAH5934: **The Conquest of Amazonia: Spring 2024**

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 12:30-1:30 and Thursdays, 1:30-3:30

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Course Description: This course is designed to offer a historical analysis of the Amazon region from before contact with Old World peoples down to our own times. It was designed to be a useful contribution to the established and increasing efforts to understand Amazonia at the University of Florida. It is intended to be taken by undergraduates with backgrounds across the disciplines. It is not intended as a course at the higher level of undergraduate training in history, which often requires a research paper, based partially on primary sources (e.g., unpublished sources or contemporary published sources, etc.). Instead, students will be writing a term paper in the form of a historiographical essay (see below).

The instructor will assume no previous knowledge of Latin American history; indeed, the course is designed precisely to provide that to students interested in the historical background to the issues confronting the region today. It also attempts something of a novelty in Amazonian studies, in that it will strive to link the tendencies and forces affecting the region to larger ones affecting the nations dividing the region today. It will not only put Amazonia back into time, but back into Latin America. Thus, students will be learning something of general Latin American history and of the specific history of the nations in which the region lies, all as a way of understanding the region's past and its historic role in the efforts and vision of outsiders as well as the lives of those native to it.

The **Canvas** site for the course will contain, in Files, a copy of this syllabus, the criteria for the term paper, and optional topics and online sources for the undergraduates' term paper. Students unfamiliar with Canvas might find the following useful: <https://elearning.ufl.edu/keep-learning/>

Grades for undergraduates will derive from the average of three grades: the grade on the midterm examination, the grade on the final examination, and the grade on the term paper. Grades for graduate students will be based largely on the term paper (70%), but will also depend upon their ability to volunteer their expertise/experience in response to issues arising in the lectures, as well as their ability to respond to questions posed during the course lectures, questions based on their reading and their particular expertise (30%).

Course Objectives: The course is designed

1. To acquire and to share the historical knowledge described above.
2. To emphasize the basic skills critical to the discipline of history, skills useful to the citizen and in any number of professions after graduation: comprehension of research from a variety of disciplines, writing clearly, research skills using the library and online resources, critical analysis of sources in terms of approach, bias, and success.

In regard to the undergraduate students, the acquisition and comprehension objectives will be achieved through their mastery of the material in the map handout, the lectures and assigned readings, and measured through the map examination and two essay examinations (a midterm exam and a final exam). See below for details on all three examinations.

In regard to all students, the acquisition of the skills listed will also be measured through the students' writing of a term paper; this paper will be in the form of a historiographical essay (again, see below for details).

Course Requirements: All students are expected to complete the weekly readings detailed below in a timely manner.

1. Undergraduate students will also take a **map examination** in the second week of class, during the first twenty minutes of the second session. **Note that, if a student fails to pass the examination, s/he must pass it before the midterm to avoid the penalty of a drop of one grade for the student's course grade.**
2. All students will also undertake a **historiographical essay** (the essay's criteria are accessible online at the instructor's website: users.clas.ufl.edu/jneedell/). The essays will be typewritten, double-spaced, in formal

academic style and format, with footnotes or endnotes when appropriate (parenthetical-style notes are not permitted), using the models of the *Chicago Manual of Style*. The undergraduates' essays are limited to up to ten pages in length; the graduate students' essays are limited to up to fifteen pages in length.

3. The **undergraduates'** essay can be on one of the topics made available on the file LAH4602 On-Line Accessible Optional Historiographical Essay Topics, one of the files in the **Canvas Files** set up for this course.
4. **All graduate students, and those undergraduate students who prefer to work on a topic of their own choosing, should decide upon that topic in consultation with the instructor, preferably in the first four weeks of the semester.**
5. For undergraduate students, the research for this essay will be limited to 300 to 400 pages of reading done in the works of four different historians. As noted just above, I have listed in the essay topics file, under several optional topics, pertinent scholarly monographs accessible on the shelf or online through the Smathers Library catalog and/or articles (accessible through the same catalog) from scholarly journals (*e.g., The Hispanic American Historical Review, The Journal for Latin American Studies, The Latin American Research Review, etc.*).
6. For graduate students, the research for this essay must analyze all of the scholarly work accessible online or in the Latin American and Caribbean Collection covering a subject in English, Portuguese, or Spanish (if the subject is so poorly studied that the works in more than one of these languages must be included in order to make a respectable effort, exceptions may be made).
7. **The undergraduate paper is due at the beginning of the last session of the eleventh week; the graduate paper is due at the beginning of the last session of the fourteenth week.**
8. Guidelines for the historiographical essay, including the criteria which must be employed in analysis, are posted on the instructor's website (accessible via the department's website faculty list). As noted, the instructor expects students to follow a format for this paper which includes either footnotes or endnotes to the sources used; no bibliography is required, assuming the student cites each work at least once. Parenthetical notes in the body of the text are not acceptable in History. The format reference for footnotes or endnotes in this course is the *Chicago Manual of Style*. When completed, the paper is to be submitted to the instructor as a Word document at the beginning of the session noted above. Penalties (see below) will be levied against papers that are of an inappropriate length or submitted late.
9. As noted above, undergraduate students will also take two **regular examinations**: a midterm and a final exam. **Both are based on the course lectures, supplemented by the required reading.** The midterm examination will take place during the class session, probably either the week before Spring Break or the week after. The final takes place either as noted in the *Schedule of Courses* or at an earlier date if the instructor can manage it and students so desire. Both examinations will be made up of essay questions, which will be selected before the examination by the professor from a list of possible questions distributed to students a week before as a study guide.

Course Grades: Undergraduate students' grades will be computed from the average of three grades: those of the two regular examinations and the historiographical essay. Note the penalty for failure to pass the map examination, stated above and in the **Penalties** section of the syllabus, below. Graduate students' grades, as noted above, will be computed on the basis of the term paper (70%) and their ability to volunteer their expertise/experience in response to issues arising in the lectures, as well as their ability to respond to questions posed during the course lectures, questions based on their term-paper reading and their particular expertise (30%).

Assigned Reading:

There are three required readings:

1. A selection of required articles and chapters in a photocopy packet designed for the course, available at Target

Copy, across from the university campus before NW 13th Street, on West University Avenue (just east of Chipotle restaurant).

2. Two chapters (7 and 10) from Henry Walter Bates, *The Naturalist on the River Amazons* (1863, available online through Smathers or the 1988 paperback on Reserve at Library West)
3. Hemming, John. *Tree of Rivers: The Story of the Amazon* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2008), available for purchase in hardcover or the 2009 paperback edition.

Lecture and Reading Schedule (Roman numerals refer to weeks of the term; names refer to authors of the excerpts photocopied in the packet or to Bates -- see above. Students should read Hemming as indicated below, in the order which best coincides with the lectures):

- I. Earth and Water. Hemming, ch.11; Cleary, "Environmental."
- II. The Debate over the Native Peoples. Hemming, ch.9; Roosevelt, pp.373-84.
- III. Contact with Castile, 16th and 17th Centuries. Hemming, ch.1.
- IV. Portuguese Conquest, 17th and 18th Centuries. Hemming, ch.2; Boxer, chs.10&11.
- V. Iberian Catholicism and Native Policy. Alden, "Slavery."
- VI. Iberian Conquest and Native Policy. Hemming, ch.3
- VII. The Role of Colonial Rivalry, 1650-1770. Hemming, ch.3 (cont.)
- VIII. Review and Midterm Examination.

SPRING BREAK

- IX. The Enlightenment, Science, and Amazonia, ca. 1750-1870. Hemming, ch.5; Bates, chs.7&10.
- X. The Amazon and State Policy, ca.1750-1870. Hemming, ch.4; Alden, "Cacao."
- XI. The Commerce in Rubber and State Policy, ca. 1870-1920. Hemming, ch.6; Tambs.
- XII. The "Rubber Boom" and Regional Catastrophe, 1870-1945. Hemming, ch.7; Wagley, chs.2&3.
- XIII. "Modernization" and Dictatorship. Stone, chs.5&6.
- XIV. Development, Human Rights, and Ecology. Hemming, chs.8&10; Stone, chs.7-9.
- XV. The Current Predicament and Final Review.

Advice:

Prudent students will note that the assigned reading, when combined with the additional reading for the term paper, demands disciplined, constant attention. It will be apparent that students who have not begun reading material for their term papers or who do not have a research topic worked out with the instructor by the date of the midterm risk a crisis in meeting their responsibilities. If an undergraduate opts to research a topic of his/her own, unless they are familiar with Amazonian history, few come up with a topic quickly. **The instructor does not expect you to develop a term-paper topic on your own. He invites you to consult with him at your earliest possible convenience.** If you have a scheduling conflict with the office hours, contact the instructor to make other arrangements.

Course Penalties and University Policies:

1. Please note the map examination penalty noted above. Note, as well, that there **are severe penalties for missing the deadline of the term paper** (it must be turned in at the beginning of the session indicated). If it is turned in during the session, it is penalized a half grade; if it is turned in within the twenty-four hour period following the deadline, it is penalized a full grade; if it is turned in within the second twenty-four hour period, it is penalized two full grades; and so on. "Turned in" means submission of the paper at the beginning of the class session. It will be returned to you marked and graded as quickly as possible.
2. **All components of the course must be submitted to the instructor and a grade for each component recorded by the instructor in order to earn a course grade.** Thus, students who have completed everything else but do not have a recorded grade for one item will fail the course.
3. The instructor will not tolerate **cheating**. The instructor will not tolerate **plagiarism** (the use of others' materials without appropriate citation, credit, or permission). A student guilty of either will fail the course and the matter will be referred to, and recorded by, the appropriate university authority. **Please see the university's policies in this regard, below.**
4. **Class attendance and make-up policy:** The instructor does not keep records of **attendance or penalize students who do not attend**. It is his assumption that adults are the best judges their interest in this regard, and students missing lectures never do well in the examinations.
5. As life has been arranged so that **unexpected catastrophes** occur for which even the prudent and virtuous student cannot prepare, the instructor will be willing to review student petitions for a make-up examination or a waiver of penalty (or lessening of penalty) in regard to late assignments. Such waivers will be granted at the discretion of the instructor, and are most likely to be granted in those cases in which the instructor deems that the catastrophe is credible and reliably documented. There is no **extra credit** option or possibility in this course.
6. **Disability accommodation:** Students requesting classroom accommodation because of a **disability** must first register with the Dean of Students' Office: Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/). That office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide that same documentation to the instructor when requesting the appropriate accommodation.

The instructor is obliged to provide other information in regard to taking the course -- information on grading, cheating, and evaluation of the instructor.

1. For the university's policies with regard to grades, [Grades and Grading Policies < University of Florida \(ufl.edu\)](#)
2. Regarding university policy on matters of honor, such as cheating or plagiarism 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 specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. [Click here to read the Honor Code](#). 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 in this class.
3. Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. [Click here for guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner](#). Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals or via ufl.bluer.com/ufl/. [Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students here](#)