

# LAH3130: Colonial Latin America

**Semester:** Fall 2025 | 3 Credit Hours | 20275

**Meeting Times:** Tuesdays: Periods 2 & 3 (8:30 am-10:25 am), Thursdays: Period 3 (9:35 am-10:25 am)

**Location:** FLI 101 (Keene Flint Hall, room 101)

**Instructor:** Austin Nelsen

**Email:** [austinnelsen@ufl.edu](mailto:austinnelsen@ufl.edu)

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:40 am – 11:40 am, FLI 232

**NOTE:** This course complies with all UF academic policies. For information on those policies and for resources for students, please see UF's "Academic Policies and Resources" web page.



Convent of Santo Domingo, constructed over the temple of Coricancha. Cuzco, Peru. By Diego Delso, CC BY-SA 4.0

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## Course Description

This survey course will examine the titanic collision of forces that is the history of colonial Latin America, and serve as an introduction to the region, its people and institutions, while tracing important changes taking place across the hemisphere from roughly 1000 CE through the Age of

Revolution in the early 19th century. Through lectures, discussions, and close reading of primary sources, students will explore the complex social, cultural, political, and economic transformations that shaped colonial societies. In order to better understand the human dimensions of the enormous geographic and temporal scope encompassed by the subject of colonial Latin America, this course places special importance on viewing events from sources produced during the times and in the locations being discussed wherever possible. Additionally, we will emphasize the experiences of those most marginalized during this period, in an effort to undo silences in the popular understanding of the subject. Finally, we will probe the invisible nature of imperial power by often examining instances (large and small) where historical actors came into conflict with the state, society, and one another.

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## Course Learning Goals

By the end of the semester, students will be able to:

1. Identify and explain major events, processes, and actors in Colonial Latin American history.
  2. Analyze primary sources within their historical context.
  3. Interpret historical scholarship and evaluate differing historical arguments.
  4. Communicate historical analysis clearly in written and oral form.
  5. Recognize the legacies of colonialism in modern Latin America.
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## Required Texts

1. Mark A. Burkholder & Lyman L. Johnson, *Colonial Latin America*, 10th Edition (Oxford University Press) — **Available for purchase or rental**
  2. Kenneth Mills (ed.), *Colonial Latin America: A Documentary History* — **Available free via UF Libraries Website**
  3. Additional primary sources and articles — **Provided on Canvas**
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## Assignments & Grading

### 1. Workshop Discussion Participation — 15%

Workshop Discussion Participation, Over the course of the semester we will have eight “workshops”. These are in-class discussions centered around an important primary source or two related to the week’s theme. 2-3 days before a workshop, I will circulate a set of discussion questions asking you to think critically about the source we are reading for that week’s workshop. You are expected to come to class on workshop days having read the assigned reading

and thought about how to answer that week's discussion questions. Your participation in these workshops is essential, and will count as 15% of your overall grade.

- **Workshops:** Weeks 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 13.

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## 2. Workshop Response Essays (4 total) — 40% (4 × 10%)

Out of the 8 total workshops scheduled during the semester, you will select 4 workshops to write a short response paper. Your essay must answer one of the discussion questions for that week's workshop and be between 1.5 - 2 pages in length. In order to get full credit, your response must cite at least two of the readings from that week. These essays are due in class on the day of the workshop. You can select which workshops you want to write responses to, but you must complete at least one before week 6. Each response is worth 10% of your grade. Our first workshop takes place at the end of week 4

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## 3. Hegemony Paper — 15%

During weeks 10 and 11 we will discuss how colonial societies in Latin America participated in cultural hegemony as related to categories such as race, class, and gender. You must select one such social category we have discussed and write a paper examining how one of the primary sources we have read in the class is related to your selected category. Your essay must cite your source using quotes or footnotes at least 4 times. Your essay must be at least 3 pages in length. This essay is worth 15% of your grade.

- **Length:** Minimum 3 full pages (double-spaced, Times New Roman font size 12. Chicago or Turabian style citation).
- **Due:** 11/11 by 11:59 pm on Canvas

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## 4. Draft of Hegemony Paper — 5%

Bring a **1.5+ page draft** of your Hegemony Paper to class on 11/4. Instead of a workshop, we will do **peer feedback**. Credit is given for bringing a complete draft.

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## 5. Reading Quizzes — 5%

During the semester we will take 12 short multiple choice reading quizzes of only a few questions about the reading assigned for that lecture. The bad news is that these quizzes are not scheduled and can show up any day, so you need to do the reading. The good news is that they will be very simple to answer if you read that day's assigned readings. Out of the 12 quizzes we take, I will drop your lowest two scores). Combined, these quizzes are worth 5% of your grade.

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## 6. Final Exam — 20% total

### *Part 1: Identifications (10%)*

Our Final Exam will be in person and consist of two parts. In the first section you will be given a list of 10 important people, places, ideas, or events that we have discussed in class. Of those 10, you must select 5 and write a one paragraph ID defining that person, place, idea or event, explaining its significance using the knowledge you have gained from our lectures, readings, or assignments. These IDs will be worth 10% of your final grade.

### *Part 2: Essay (10%)*

The second part of the final exam is an essay, where you will be given two prompts and must select one to respond to. Your response essay must fully answer the entirety of the prompt you have selected, including sufficient detail or evidence to support your argument. There is no minimum length requirement, only a strongly-suggested one page minimum. This essay is worth 10% of your final grade.

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### Grade Breakdown:

- Workshop Discussion Participation – 15%
- Workshop Response Essays (4 × 10%) – 40%
- Hegemony Paper – 15%
- Draft of Hegemony Paper – 5%
- Reading Quizzes – 5%
- Final Exam – 20%
- Total – 100%**

Letter Grade	Number Grade
A	100-92.5
A-	92.4-89.5
B+	89.4-86.5
B	86.4-82.5
B-	82.4-79.5
C+	79.4-76.5
C	76.4-72.5
C-	72.4-69.5
D+	69.4-66.5
D	66.4-62.5
D-	62.4-59.5
E	59.4-0

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### Procedure for Conflict Resolution

Any classroom issues, disagreements or grade disputes should be discussed first between the instructor and the student. If the problem cannot be resolved, please contact Joseph F. Spillane ([spillane@ufl.edu](mailto:spillane@ufl.edu), [352-273-3355](tel:352-273-3355)). Be prepared to provide documentation of the problem, as well as all graded materials for the semester. Issues that cannot be resolved departmentally will be referred to the University Ombuds Office (<http://www.ombuds.ufl.edu>; [352-392-1308](tel:352-392-1308)) or the Dean of Students Office (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu>; [352-392-1261](tel:352-392-1261)).

## Course Schedule

Date	Lecture Topic / Activity	Assigned Reading
8/21	Syllabus discussion & expectations; Conceptualizing Latin America and Colonialism	—
8/26	Tears in the Rain: Indigenous Civilizations, 1000–1492 (Parts 1 & 2)	<i>Burkholder &amp; Johnson, 10th ed</i> pp. 1–23. Guaman Poma: The First New Chronicle and Good Government, 259-266. (Canvas)
8/28	Iberian Worldviews and Society	<i>Burkholder &amp; Johnson, 10th ed</i> pp. 23–31 Nicholas V: Dum Diversas 1452 (Canvas)
9/2	Early Atlantic Exploration & African Contact; Comparisons & Contrasts (Iberia/Americas/Africa)	<i>Burkholder &amp; Johnson, 10th ed</i> pp. 32–49 Azurara: Chronicle of the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea (Canvas)
9/4	“We Came to Serve God and to Get Rich”: Mexica Conquest (case study)	<i>Burkholder &amp; Johnson, 10th ed</i> pp. 50–73 Selections from the Florentine Codex (Canvas) Diaz: The Conquest of New Spain, 234-238. (Canvas)
9/9	Consequences of Conquest: Columbian Exchange; <b>Workshop 1</b> (Cortes’ Second Letter and Portilla: The Broken Spears, 25 - 31.)	<i>Burkholder &amp; Johnson, 10th ed</i> pp. 75–87
9/11	Imperial Machinery: State Institutions of Control	<i>Burkholder &amp; Johnson, 10th ed</i> pp. 88–100 Eissa-Barroso: The Spanish Monarchy and the Creation of the Viceroyalty of New Granada (1717–1739) 23-45. (Canvas)
9/16	Spiritual Conquest: The Catholic Church; <b>Workshop 2</b> (Letter of Lope de Aguirre and The Extirpation of Idolatry in Peru)	<i>Burkholder &amp; Johnson, 10th ed</i> pp. 101–118 Aguilar-Moreno: Evangelization and Indigenous Religious



Date	Lecture Topic / Activity	Assigned Reading
		Reactions to Conquest and Colonization, 87-100. (Canvas)
9/18	Labor Drafts and Tribute System	<i>Burkholder &amp; Johnson, 10th ed</i> pp. 119–129 Fray Pedro de Gante's Letter to Charles V (Canvas)

9/23	Las Casas & the Search for New Labor; <b>Workshop 3</b> (Las Casas: A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies)	<i>Burkholder &amp; Johnson, 10th ed</i> pp. 130–138 The New Laws of 1452 (Canvas)
9/25	Slavery in Medieval Iberia & West African Society	<i>Burkholder &amp; Johnson, 10th ed</i> pp. 139–151 Thornton: Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 95-102. (Canvas)
9/30	Early Slave Trade Between Africa & America; <b>Workshop 4</b> (Biographical Sketches of Juan Garrido, Esteban, John Graweere, and Jan Rodrigues from <a href="http://www.enslaved.org">www.enslaved.org</a> )	Green: The Rise of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, 185-189 (Canvas)
10/2	Mining & Plantation Agriculture, Part 1	<i>Burkholder &amp; Johnson, 10th ed</i> pp. 151–169 Lane: Potosi: The Silver City that Changed the World. 67–91. (Canvas)
10/7	Mining & Plantation Agriculture, Part 2; <b>Workshop 5</b> (Acosta: Natural and Moral History of the Indies, 205-219 and André João Antonil: Cultura e opulência do Brasil por suas drogas e minas)	<i>Burkholder &amp; Johnson, 10th ed</i> pp. 170–189 Schwartz: Sugar Plantations in the Formation of Brazilian Society, 106-119. (Canvas)
10/9	Shift from West Africa to West Central Africa: Visualizing Mass Trafficking	Eltis and Richardson: Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade (Canvas)
10/14	Cui Bono? Beneficiaries of the Middle Passage; <b>Workshop 6</b> (Rediker: "History from Below the Water Line: Sharks and the Atlantic Slave Trade." and The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database)	Williams: Capitalism and Slavery, 85-105. (Canvas)
10/16	Globalism 1.0 & Maritime Predation	Schwartz: Early Brazil, 109-116. (Canvas)
10/21	Pandora's Box: The Silver Age of Piracy; <b>Workshop 7</b> (Rediker: "Under the Banner of King Death")	Lane: Pillaging the Empire, 176-202. (Canvas)

10/23	What is Cultural Hegemony? Understanding Social Hierarchies	Benn: Power in Society, 114-118. (Canvas)
10/28	Race, Limpieza de Sangre, & Calidad; Class & Mobility in Latin America	<i>Burkholder &amp; Johnson, 10th ed</i> pp. 189–215 Bryant: Rivers of Gold, Lives of Bondage 96-108, 157-163. (Canvas) Twinam: Purchasing Whiteness, 151-166. (Canvas)
10/30	“Transvestite Soldiers or Fighting Nuns?”: Gender in Latin America	<i>Burkholder &amp; Johnson, 10th ed</i> pp. 216–239 Catalina de Erauso. Lieutenant Nun: Memoir of a Basque Transvestite in the New World. (Canvas)
11/4	Colonial Art & Cultural Hegemony; <b>Hegemony Paper Circulation</b>	<i>Burkholder &amp; Johnson, 10th ed</i> pp. 240–280 Selections of Colonial Art (Canvas)
11/6	Enlightenment for Europe, Stagnation for the Americas	<i>Burkholder &amp; Johnson, 10th ed</i> pp. 304–336 Cromwell: The Smuggler’s World, 33-49 (Canvas)
11/11	<b>No Class — Holiday ***Hegemony Paper Due on Canvas by 11:59 pm***</b>	—
11/13	Reform Attempts & Growing Discontent	<i>Burkholder &amp; Johnson, 10th ed</i> pp. 337–352
11/18	“Continental Conflagration”: Age of Revolution; <b>Workshop 9</b> (Simon Bolivar’s Declaration of Total War)	<i>Burkholder &amp; Johnson, 10th ed</i> pp. 353–381 Hobsbawm: Age of Revolution, 109-112 (Canvas)
11/20	Lasting Economic & Developmental Consequences of Colonialism	<i>Burkholder &amp; Johnson, 10th ed</i> pp. 382–388 Schwartz: The Colonial Past: Conceptualizing the Post Dependencia Past. (Canvas)
11/25	<b>No Class — Holiday</b>	—
11/27	<b>No Class — Holiday</b>	—
12/2	Social Consequences of Colonialism; Final Thoughts	—

Final Exam: In Person Week 17.