

**Spiritual Conquest: Religious Imperialism and Spirituality  
in the New World, Pre-Contact to the Present**

**History 483 – CRN: 42144  
SUMMER 2015**

Monday – Thursday, 12:00 – 1:50 PM  
285 Lillis

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**Course Description:**

History 483, Spiritual Conquest, examines the process of European evangelism and cultural imperialism in the years leading up to American-Iberian transatlantic contact (beginning roughly at 1400), during the Colonial Period, and up to the present day. Using the so-called “Spiritual Conquest” as a pivot point, we will cover the preexisting religious institutions and popular practices of Mesoamerica and Andes, Christian traditions from the Iberian Peninsula, as well as some discussion of African religious traditions at contact. We will then investigate the religious implications and outcomes of the European-Christian military campaign against the Aztec, Incan, and other indigenous societies. Then we turn to how religious officials planned to destroy diabolism and the development of new American “Catholicisms” in the Colonial Period. Later, we will look at the rise of religious proto-nationalism with independence movements in the early nineteenth century. Finally, we will spend some of our last week discussing the legacies of cultural imperialism and the persistence of local religious identity to the present.

We will ask hard questions about the role spirituality played in colonization. These include: What was Christianity before the Conquest? What were the religions of the pre-contact Americas and how did they encounter Christianity? How did African religions factor into colonialism? How did evangelism take hold, from the jungles of Brazilian Amazon to the dry heat of the Sonoran Desert? How did colonizers ‘teach in’ Christianity? How did gender roles transform, and why? What was the Spanish-American Inquisition, and how did it work? Why did the accused turn to heresy? How did they defend the charges against their immortal soul? Why did political leaders turn to religion to start revolts or independence movements in the late-colonial period?

To answer these questions, throughout the course students will delve into primary sources from Spanish, Indian, African, and mixed-race peoples, covering topics including: gods, man-gods, priests, conquistadors, elites, commoners, sinners, saints, demons, and witches. These documents problematize the easy story of a top-down Spiritual Conquest depicted by some historians, and they will allow us to interpret cultural transformations and adaptations that occurred in the daily lives of colonial peoples. This course foregrounds the historical meanings of art and culture; students will deconstruct symbol-ridden images, religious theater, architecture, and rituals that challenge our assumptions about cultural hegemony. In the end, students will

leave this course with a better understanding of the conflicting power of religion, a core human value that often weaves communities together while it also rips them apart.

This course satisfies 4 credits towards the UO Department of History's pre-1800 credit and Latin America field requirements.

### **Readings and Selected Texts:**

All course reading selections will be available online, through the course website (accessible on the course Canvas website), and physical copies will be held at Course Reserve at the Knight Library. This is a summer course. The amount of reading will generally be under 40 pages per night, and they are listed in the weekly assignments calendar (see below). To keep the reading load manageable, on occasion, we will have groups set up to discuss given chapters and review the relevant themes to the class. However, students will be expected to do their best to complete all the readings and be ready to discuss them in class on the day I have marked them on the calendar (for example, read Tuesday's readings Monday night). We will be learning from an assortment of specialists, and students will do their best to remember key examples and arguments from each work.

Besides primary sources, we will read select chapters from, but not limited to, the following:

- Martin Nesvig (ed.), *Local Religion in Colonial Mexico* (2006)
- William Christian, *Popular Religion in Sixteenth Century Spain* (1982)
- Verónica Salles-Reese, *From Viracocha to the Virgin of Copacobana: Representation of the Sacred at Lake Titicaca* (1997)
- Louis Burkhart, *Aztecs on Stage: Religious Theater in Colonial Mexico* (2011)
- James Sweet, *Recreating Africa: Culture, Kinship, and Religion in the African-Portuguese World, 1441-1770* (2003)
- Susan Schroeder and Stafford Poole, eds., *Religion in New Spain* (2007)
- David Tavárez, *The Invisible War: Indigenous Devotions, Discipline, and Dissent in Colonial Mexico* (2011)
- Joan Cameron Bristol, *Afro-Mexican Ritual Practice in the Seventeenth Century* (2007)
- John Charles, *Allies at Odds: The Andean Church and Its Indigenous Agents, 1583-1671* (2010)

### **Course Requirements and Evaluation:**

Your grade will consist of 5 elements:

- **Participation (20%)**
- **In-Class Response Paragraphs (15%)**
- **Online Research Assignment (15%)**
- **Primary Source Paper (20%)**
- **In-Class Final Exam (30%)**

Assignment Details:

- **Participation (20%)**

Attendance is not required, but participation is. I am looking forward to a vibrant debate on the core themes and topics you find in the readings and primary sources. Glazed-over stares or snoring will not be conducive to an active learning experience. Come to class to share your thoughts on what we've read. Also, be respectful of your peers and follow the guidelines in the Student Code of Conduct.

- **In-Class Response Paragraphs (3 X 5% = 15%)**

The 3 In-Class Paragraphs are designed to let students draw out and reflect on the core themes and discussion topics of the week. Students will identify key historical figures, places, and objects, as well as religio-political movements and their core ideology. Grammar and spelling will matter less than the content you bring to bear in your reflection, and **you must refer to at least one of the week's readings in your answer.**

- **Online Research Assignment (15%)**

The Online Research Assignment (minimum of 2 pages, typed, double-spaced) tasks you to search, survey and review an online source with relevance to Latin American religion, religious traditions, and/or the legacy of the Spiritual Conquest. For example: explore a set of Catholic tourist sites to determine how they promote sacred places. Survey a few news stories about religious conflict or new evangelism in Central America. Or watch Youtube clips about the Jones family's personal journey to the Basilica of the Virgin of Guadalupe, Mexico. Whichever topic you chose, make it a serious study that connects the 'magic' of the internet to our course themes. **NOTE: Students must refer to at least two (2) websites, one of which must focus directly on a spiritual place or community event in Latin America.**

- **Primary Source Paper (20%)**

This short paper (minimum of 3 pages, typed double-spaced) will prompt you to identify, investigate, and analyze primary and secondary sources, encouraging you to compare, contrast, and argue an original idea using evidence. You will give your informed interpretation, guided by the secondary sources and class discussions, regarding the historical context or and motivations behind a primary source. Primary sources and example prompts will be provided in Week 2 and 3. Although this is not an English course, I expect proper grammar and clear academic prose, thus building on your critical-thinking and written communication skills.

- **In-Class Final Exam (30%)**

The In-Class Final examination is a cumulative assessment of knowledge learned throughout the four week course. Students will have the entire class period to identify key terms and primary sources and respond to essay prompts. Test specifics and a study guide will be provided in preparation for the Final. Students are expected to bring 2 greenbook exam booklets with them to the Final.

**Policy on Late Submissions, Missed Assignments, and Extra Credit:**

Late assignments lose points at 10% per day late. There will be no make-up assignments for missed in-class assignment paragraphs and/or participation. Be sure to attend class on days that have Response Paragraphs due and get the other assignments in on time to avoid penalties.

However, there will be a few options for “extra credit points,” which will be added to or “boost” your score on the Final; all extra credit is due the day of the Final.

### **Grading rubric:**

A: Work that distinguishes itself by the excellence of its grasp of the material and the precision and insight of its argument, in addition to being well executed and reasonably free of errors.

B: Work that satisfies main criteria of the assignment, and demonstrates command of the material, but does not achieve the level of excellence that characterizes work of A quality.

C: Work that demonstrates a rudimentary grasp of the material and satisfies at least some of the assigned criteria.

D: Work that demonstrates a poor grasp of the material and/or is executed with little regard for college standards, but which exhibits some engagement with the material.

F: Work that is weak in every aspect, demonstrating a basic misunderstanding of the material and/or disregard for the assigned question.

This class is not graded on a curve.

### **Learning Objectives:**

The course assignments, readings, and lectures are designed to introduce the student to a body of historical information as well as build upon the student’s intellectual skills that apply to “real world” activities outside the classroom and your professional career path. We will learn:

- The history and legacy of cultural, social, political, and economic changes resulting from religious imperialism and confluence in the colonial period and up to the present
- The study of religious history and key scholarly arguments about cultural imperialism
- How to use primary and secondary source evidence to construct a coherent written argument
- Improved communication and writing skills

### **Course Policies:**

- 1. Attendance:** Attendance is mandatory. I will take role daily and a portion of your participation score will come from you simply sitting through class. Our classes will follow a Lecture/Discussion format with the first portion of class devoted to a contextual lecture on the day’s topic, then a brief break/intermission, followed by a group discussion. I will do my best to facilitate an interesting discussion, however, I will rely on you to bring your engaging thoughts and questions to the table.
- 2. Respect:** Mutual respect and courtesy are necessary for a safe and healthy learning experience. I want your thought provoking questions, but I and your peers will not tolerate disrespectful behavior.
- 3. Tech. Policy:** This is a tech friendly environment. Smartphones, tablets/IPads, laptops, and portable electronic devices used for note taking or course text referencing are welcome. However, this privilege will end if these devices become a class distraction.
- 4. Student Conduct and Academic Integrity:** Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Cheating will result in an F for the course and a permanent mark the cheater’s student record. All students are expected to follow the Student Code of Conduct and Plagiarism Guide for Students available through the UO website:

<https://uodos.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/AcademicMisconduct.aspx>

**Accessibility:**

The University of Oregon works to create inclusive learning environment. Please notify me if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or uoac@uoregon.edu.

**Class Schedule:**

Note: all readings are to be completed before the class for which they are assigned. All readings will be located online, in the Documents section of the course website.

<b>WEEK 1: Pre-Contact</b>	Readings:	
Mon. 7/20 Introduction; Rise of Expansionist Christianity	<b>Reading: Introduction and The Rise of Expansionist Christianity</b>  Online Articles	
Tues. 07/21 Faith and Life in Early Modern Spain(s)	<b>Reading: Faith and Life in Early Modern Spain</b>  <i>Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain</i> , Chpt 1 <b>AND one</b> of the following chapters: 2, 3, or 4	
Wed. 07/22 Afro-Iberian Religious Conversion; Religion and Society in the Americas: Mesoamerica	<b>Reading: Afro-Iberian Religious Conversion; Religion and Society in the Americas: Mesoamerica</b>  <i>Recreating Africa</i> , Chpt 4 <b>AND start</b> <i>The Rabbit on the Face of the Moon</i> , Chpts 1, 4, 9, 11, 12 16 (these are short)	
Thur. 07/23 Religion and Society in the Americas: Andes	<b>Reading: Religion and Society in the Americas: Andes</b>  <b>Finish</b> <i>Rabbit on the Face of the Moon</i> Chpts (above) <b>AND</b> <i>From Viracocha to the Virgin of Copacabana</i> , Chpt 2	<b>Discussion:</b> Religious Truths? Assessing Religious Beliefs: Iberian Peninsula, Africa, and the Americas  <b>*In-Class Reading Response 1</b>

<b>WEEK 2: Contact</b>		
Mon. 07/27 Conquistadores without Swords	<b>Reading: Conquistadores without Swords</b>  <i>Viracocha to the Virgin of Copacabana, Chpt 3 AND The Church in Colonial Latin America, Intro</i>	
Tues. 07/28 An Age of Miracles?	<b>Reading: An Age of Miracles</b>  <i>The Church in Colonial Latin America, Chpt 4</i>	<b>*Online Research Assignment Due</b>
Wed. 07/29 A New Kind of Christianity?	<b>Reading: A New Kind of Christianity?</b>  <i>Religion in New Spain, Chpt 2 OR Religion in New Spain, Chpt 4</i>	
Thurs. 07/30 The Virgin of Guadalupe	<b>Reading: The Virgin of Guadalupe</b>  <i>The Story of Guadalupe, 49-127</i>	<b>Discussion:</b> Religious Confluence: Conquest, Evangelization, and New Faiths  <b>*In-Class Reading Response II</b>

<b>WEEK 3: Confluence</b>		
Mon. 08/03 Finding the Divine in Brazil	<b>Reading: Finding the Divine in Brazil</b> <i>Recreating Africa, Chpt 6</i>	
Tues. 08/04 Evangelical Theater, Music, and Indigenous Society	<b>Reading: Evangelical Theater, Music, and Indigenous Society</b> <i>Religion in New Spain, Chpt 7</i> <b>OR</b> <i>Art and Architecture in Viceregal Latin America, Chpt 2</i>	
Wed. 08/05 To Be, Or Not To Be Christian	<b>Reading: To Be, Or Not To Be Christian</b> <i>Aztecs on Stage, Intro and Final Judgment</i>	
Thurs 08/06	<b>Reading: Recreating African Religion</b> <i>Recreating Africa, Chpt 7</i>	<b>Discussion:</b> Religious Persistence and Mixed Messages  <b>*In-Class Reading Response III</b>

<b>WEEK 4: Continuation</b>		
Mon. 08/10 Idolatry and Extirpation: Superstition On Trial	<b>Reading: Idolatry and Extirpation, Part I</b>  <i>The Invisible War</i> , Chpt 1 and <i>The Invisible War</i> , Chpt 6	<b>*Primary Source Paper Due</b>
Tues 08/11 Idolatry and Extirpation: Renouncing and Other Tactics	<b>Reading: Idolatry and Extirpation, Part II</b>  <i>Christians, Blasphemers, and Witches</i> , Chpt 4	
Wed. 08/12 Soldiers of the Virgin: Millennialism and Resistance	<b>Reading: Catholicisms and Religious Empires</b>  <i>Local Religion in Colonial Mexico</i> , Chpt 10	Discussion: Tolerance, Martyrdom, and Idolatry, or, Was There Really a Spiritual Conquest?  <b>Final Review</b>
<b>Thurs. 08/13</b> <b>Time: 12:00 -2:00PM</b> <b>Room: Lillis 275</b>	Final Study Guide available 08/07	<b>Final (Bring Greenbooks!)</b>