



HIST 483/583, The Spiritual Conquest Spring 2016

**Professor Robert Haskett
Tues & Thurs, 2-3:20, 185 Lillis Hall
CRN 36091/36092**

Note: This is a preliminary syllabus. The precise details may change by the beginning of spring term, but the basic structure will remain the same.

Imagine for a moment that you are a zealous member of the Catholic clergy. You are contemplating the vast new human landscape of potential Christians just revealed to you because of the Spanish invasion of the Americas. All of a sudden God has presented you, His spiritual representatives, with the arduous yet joyous task of creating a new body of pure Christian believers free of the heresies and distortions that plague the Faith in Europe. Surely this signals the beginning of the final conversion of all the world's peoples to Christianity, an act that will trigger the second coming of Christ on earth. Heady times, indeed. But what if the conquered multitudes turn out to be human beings with their own ways of thinking, rather than malleable lumps of clay? What would you do then?

Now imagine that you are an indigenous inhabitant of the land the newcomers persist in calling "America." All of a sudden you are being told that your cherished religious beliefs are at best nothing but ignorant superstitions, at worst terrible lies foisted upon you by some previously unknown malevolent being called the "devil." You are being asked, even forced, to give up your old ideas and to believe only in deities called God, Jesus, Mary, and saints. What happens now?

GOALS FOR HIST 483

Students in HIST 483/583 should be able to give nuanced answers to the questions posed, above, by the end of the term. More specifically,

- If you can begin to imagine these feelings, these ways of looking at

the spiritual world, you can start to understand the complex process initiated by what has traditionally been called the "spiritual conquest" of Latin America's indigenous people.

- You will learn that what was once described by western scholars in one-sided, heroic terms as the triumph of the Catholic faith over superstition, this "conquest" turned out to have been much less clear-cut than its traditional label would suggest.
- You will come to understand that, while it is true that most Latin Americans today consider themselves to be Catholics, the descendants of Aztecs and Incas among them did not necessarily become the "pure" believers that the optimistic sixteenth-century clergy hoped to create.
- You will learn that this is because the process of Christian evangelization begun by Catholic friars at the dawn of the sixteenth century was a dialogue rather than a monologue. The friars wielded tremendous moral authority, backed with equally potent temporal force provided by colonial governments, but the indigenous people were not without their own spiritual resources.
- Rather than seeing them as being overwhelmed by Catholicism, we will examine the ways in which they were able to mediate its entry into their lives and beliefs.

Does this mean Christianity was never implanted among the peoples of Spanish America? Did a "spiritual conquest" really ever take place? We will explore these and other important questions during the coming term. Answers might not be as easy to find as you expect. We will seek these answers in the fascinating stories of dedicated friars and priests, of willing converts and stubborn "idolaters," in the daily life of agrarian towns as well as precarious frontier missions, in apparitions, miracles, devotion, and resistance.

READING

The following books are required for all undergraduates enrolled in HIST 483/583. They can be found for sale at the University of Oregon bookstore. In addition, I have placed a copy of each of these books on reserve in the Knight Library. It might be possible to obtain used copies of at least some of them at some of the used book stores here in Eugene, or from Powell's City of Books in Portland (they have a good website). Amazon.com is another possibility, but the UO bookstore is obviously the most convenient source.

Burkhart, Louise, ed. *Aztecs on Stage: Religious Theater in Colonial Mexico*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011.

Christian, William A., Jr. *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989.

Laso de la Vega, Luis. *The Story of Guadalupe: Luis Laso de la Vega's Huei Tlamahuizoltica ["through a great miracle"] of 1649*. Translated and edited by Lisa Sousa, et al. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998.

Nesvig, Martin Austin, ed. *Local Religion in Colonial Mexico*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006.

The following books are recommended for all students enrolled in HIST 483. Those marked with a * are required of graduate students enrolled in HIST 583. Copies of each can be found on reserve for our course in the Knight Library.

Carrasco, David. *The Aztecs: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.

*Christensen, Mark Z. *Nahua and Maya Catholicisms: Texts and Religion in Colonial Central Mexico and Yucatan*. Stanford and Berkeley: Stanford University Press; The Academy of American Franciscan History, 2013.

*Cobo, Bernabé. *Inca Religion and Customs*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990.

Harrison, Regina. *Sin & Confession in Colonial Peru: Spanish-Quechua Penitential Texts, 1560-1650*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014.

Lopez Austin, Alfredo. *The Rabbit on the Face of the Moon: Mythology and the Mesoamerican Tradition*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1996.

Mills, Kenneth. *Idolatry and Its Enemies: Colonial Andean Religion and Extirpation, 1640-1750*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997.

Schroeder, Susan, and Stafford Poole, eds. *Religion in New Spain*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2007.

*Schwaller, John F., ed. *The Church in Colonial Latin America*. Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources Books, 2000.

Sell, Barry D., and Louise Burkhart, eds. *Nahuatl Theater, Vol. 1: Death and Life in Colonial Nahua Mexico*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004.

Sell, Barry D., and Louise Burkhart, eds. *Nahuatl Theater, Vol. 2: Our Lady of Guadalupe*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006.

Sell, Barry D., and Louise Burkhart, eds. *Nahuatl Theater, Vol. 3: Spanish Golden Age Drama in Mexican Translation*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008.

Sell, Barry D., and Louise Burkhart, eds. *Nahuatl Theater, Vol. 4: Nahua Christianity in Performance*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009.

Taylor, William B. *Shrines and Miraculous Images: Religious Life in Mexico before the Reforma*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2010.

*Taylor, William B. *Marvels and Miracles in Late Colonial Mexico: Three Texts in Context*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2011.

PAPERS AND PROJECTS

All students enrolled in HIST 483/583 will be asked to complete several pieces of written work, outlined in brief below. More detailed information about these assignments will be made available at the appropriate time during the quarter. Everyone will endure an in-class midterm exam focused on European Christianity in comparison with the indigenous faiths of Mesoamerica and the Andes. This exam is scheduled for **Tuesday, April 19**, and is worth **25%** of your course grade.

All students will also develop a research project devoted to some topic or issue relevant to the course. Use of relevant required books listed above is mandatory, as is consultation with other useful materials (books, articles, and the like) obtained through research at the Knight Library, through the Summit or Inter-Library Loan systems, or on the web. Undergraduates should aim for a length of at least 10 pages; graduate students should expect to write from 15 to 20 pages. Research papers are due in my office, 355 McKenzie Hall, by 5:00 p.m. on **Wednesday, June 8**, during finals week. The research paper is worth **40%** of the course grade.

Everyone must complete a third assignment, which is worth **25%** of your course grade, choosing at least **ONE** of the following: **1)** A 5-page essay

devoted to the discussion of the nature of post-contact indigenous Christianity, or idolatry and resistance. **2)** A "performance" option that might appeal to those of you with a flair for the dramatic. Volunteers perform dramatic readings of at least one of two evangelical plays, one telling the story of the apparition of the Virgin of Guadalupe, and the other dramatizing the story of the "Sacrifice of Isaac," both of which were originally written in the Nahuatl (aka Aztec) language and presented in Mexico in the Colonial period (these plays have been translated into English; no one is required to participate in both plays, but you are certainly welcome to do so). Performances will take place in class on **Thursday, May 12, and Tuesday, May 17**. The actors must also submit a 2-page analysis of their play's role in the process of Christian evangelism, as well as its possible reception by the indigenous audience. **3)** Members of our 483/583 audience may elect to write a 5-page paper about one or both plays. Due dates are as follows: Indigenous Christianity, **Tuesday, May 10**; actor and audience papers, **Thursday, May 26**; idolatry and resistance, **Tuesday, May 31**. Remember that you can decide to tackle more than one of these papers and activities. Please discuss this with me if you'd like to do so. You must still take the midterm, and complete the final paper, if you decide to take on this extra work to bolster your grade, out of intrinsic interest, etc. **Graduate students** enrolled in HIST 583 must write at least 2 of these 3 papers.

The gods and saints will smile upon you if you get your work in on time. But malevolent forces take over if it comes in late! All work turned in after the end of class on the relevant due date will be assessed a fine of 3 points. Five (5) points will be deducted for each additional day after this, including weekends. This kind of thing can rapidly plunge your grade into the infernal depths of hel..., well, you know where.

PARTICIPATION

Class meetings will often include both lecture and discussion. Your participation is worth **10%** of the course grade. For this format to work, everyone must prepare for class and come ready to participate. Roll will be taken for each class meeting, as well. The aim is for everyone to attend, take part in, and enjoy the course. Depending on the number of graduate student enrolled in HIST 583, I may establish reading and discussion meetings (a kind of "mini seminar") with them outside of the regular class times.

GRADING SUMMARY

Midterm 25%

Essay 2/Play 25%

Research Paper 40%

Participation 10%

Grading scale: 100-93 = A, 92-90 = A-, 89-87 = B+, 86-83 = B, 82-80 = B-, 79-77 = C+, 76-73 = C, 72-70 = C-, 69-67 = D+, 66-63 = D, 62-60 = D-, 59 and lower = F.

SOME RULES FOR THE CLASSROOM

1. Please turn off your cell phones and put them away in your backpacks, bags, etc., during class meetings.
2. Laptops may only be used by permission, and users must sit in the first row of seats in the classroom. It is assumed that you will use your laptops for note taking, only. Otherwise, we will rarely if ever have occasion to go online for anything related to the course during class meetings.
3. Please let me know if you need to leave class early for any reason. Otherwise, please do not leave and the classroom during our sessions, as this is disruptive.

COURSE CALENDAR

March

WEEK 1

T 29 Introduction to the Course

TH 31 The Rise of Expansionist Christianity

April

WEEK 2

T 5 Faith and Life in Early Modern Spain

Th 7 Religion and Society in the Americas

WEEK 3

T 12 Religion and Society in the Americas, continued

Th 14 Discussion: Truth or Myth? Assessing Religious Beliefs in Spain and the Americas

WEEK 4

T 19 **IN-CLASS EXAM:** Pre-contact Religions in Europe and the Americas

Th 21 Conquistadores without Swords

WEEK 5

T 26 An Age of Miracles

Th 28 A New Kind of Christianity?

May

WEEK 6

T 3 Discussion: The First Stages of Evangelization

Th 5 The Virgin of Guadalupe

WEEK 7

T 10 Evangelical Theater, Music, and Indigenous Society

INDIGENOUS CHRISTIANITY ESSAY DUE

Th 12 The Play's the Thing, 1

WEEK 8

T 17 The Play's the Thing, 2

Th 19 Discussion: Evangelical Theater and Indigenous Religiosity

WEEK 9

T 24 Idolatry and Extirpation

Th 26 Soldiers of the Virgin: Millennialism and Resistance

ACTOR OR AUDIENCE ESSAYS DUE

WEEK 10

T 31 Short Presentation and Discussion: Martyrs, Traitors, and Idolaters, or, Was There Really a Spiritual Conquest?

RESISTANCE AND IDOLATRY ESSAYS DUE

June

Th 2 Final Paper Workshop

Finals Week

W 8 RESEARCH PAPER DUE IN 355 MCKENZIE BY 5:00 P.M.