

Hist 4990  
Spring 2000

Seminar: The Conquest of  
Mexico and Peru

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Objectives: This seminar is designed to continue the development of each student's ability to understand and practice historical research, analysis and exposition, and to demonstrate those skills by researching and writing a formal paper. The latter will focus on the theme of the Spanish conquest of Mexico and/or Peru, in the 1520s and the 1530s respectively.

Requirements: Each student must attend the formal seminar, meet and consult with the instructor on an individual basis as needed, and produce an acceptable formal paper on a valid theme within the general subject of the Conquest. In addition to essential reading in applicable secondary literature, the student must research, interpret, and incorporate primary sources as well. These will mainly include early chronicles written by the Conquistadores themselves. Specific guidelines and requirements as determined by the Department are laid out on an attached sheet, "The Senior Paper."

Evaluation: 75 percent of the final grade will be based on the quality of the final paper, to be judged in terms of appropriateness of topic, proper contextual setting, thoroughness of research, substantive coverage, organization and logic of presentation, methodological rigor, literary style, and proper citation and bibliographic format. The remaining 25 percent of the final grade will be based on participation in classroom discussion and demonstration of serious commitment to the class and to the paper.

Readings: Every student will be responsible for reading Cortés's Letters (the Pagden translation is the best), Bernal Díaz del Castillo's Conquest of New Spain, and John Hemming's Conquest of the Incas. In addition, the student must read, and hopefully master Strunk and White, The Elements of Style (3rd edition), Kate Turabian, A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations (3rd Edition), and Bruce Ross-Larson Edit Yourself.

## Class Schedule

Week of	
10 Jan	Introduction
17 Jan	Discussion of Cortes's <u>Letters</u>
24 Jan	Discussion of Bernal Díaz
31 Jan	Discussion of Hemming
7 Feb	Discussion of Style: Strunk and White, Turabian, Ross-Larson
14 Feb	Individual Appointments to Discuss Paper Topics (A)
21 Feb	Individual Appointments to Discuss Paper Topics (B)
28 Feb	Bibliography Due
6 March	Spring Break
13 March	Outline Due
20 March	Discuss progress of papers
27 March	First Draft of paper due; exchange for classmate critiques
3 April	Present classmate critiques (turn in notes to instructor)
10 April	Final Draft Due
17 April	no class meeting
24 April	Papers Returned; final discussion
1 May	no class meeting

Department of History  
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THE SENIOR PAPER

1. Topics chosen for research will be sufficiently broad to insure that the student will pursue a line of inquiry that meets the criterion of “worthiness”; in other words, the study should (as opposed to topics that are highly parochial, overly esoteric, or purely pedantic) contribute to a better understanding of the historical discipline.
2. Topics chosen for research must be confined in scope, however, to insure that the student can do a thorough job of research within the limits of available sources, allotted time, and the intellectual assimilation of the material researched.
3. All papers will involve the use of some primary--source material; this requirement should be viewed within the broad context of professional standards and may therefore include the study of published works, literary sources, quantifiable data, or any other sources and methods acceptable to practicing scholars; critical inquiry will serve as the guiding principle in historical research; and any departure from use of primary sources must be justified on this basis; historiographical studies may be acceptable in some instances, but syntheses of secondary sources qualify only in those instances where they constitute a unique contribution and where they harmonize with the principle of critical inquiry.
4. Each paper must represent the independent work of the student; it must be fully and properly documented; and it must give credit to, and properly acknowledge, every source used. The instructor will work closely with individual students, carefully approving topics, scrutinizing notes at frequent intervals, critically reading a preliminary draft of the paper, examining each student orally on his or her work, and evaluating the final product in terms of the quality of the research, its presentation, and its style and form.
5. The paper shall be of appropriate length to indicate that the student has sufficiently explored and researched a topic and produced a coherent and complete historical narrative or analysis that stands on its own as an independent study. Normally, the paper will fall within the range of 18-25 pages when typed in double-spaced lines with standard margins, and it must include an evaluation of the sources utilized (e.g., in a bibliographical essay or an annotated list of primary and secondary works consulted and employed as background and evidential information). Stylistic matters and bibliographic form must conform to William Strunk, Jr. and E. B. White, Elements of Style and Kate L. Turabian, A Manual for Writers (3rd ed.). All papers will be typed and submitted in duplicate, one copy of which will be retained in the permanent files of the Department.
6. Every paper will be formerly presented before the fully assembled seminar group.