

**HIS 508**  
**Latin America and the Caribbean: Selected Topics**  
**The Caribbean: Conquest to Plantations**

**Fall 2008**

Tu/Th 11:00-12:15  
Classroom: Moore HRA 3204

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*Office hours: Thursdays 3-5 pm and by appointment (Moore HRA 2106)*

**Overview**

This upper level course, designed for advanced history majors, examines the changing Caribbean over two hundred years, from the eve of European conquest in 1492 through the end of the seventeenth century. Major topics include the development of European empires, the emergence of new colonial societies, the role of pirates and privateers, the rise of slavery, and the consolidation of plantation economies. We will analyze the development of political and economic power structures and also the unequal interactions between the diverse peoples who formed these developing societies and cultures. To paraphrase Trinidadian historian Eric Williams, the Caribbean was the cockpit of the early modern world. In addition to mastering the basic historical narrative, students will be expected to develop proficiency in analysis of relevant primary documents, and to become versed in some of the major historiographic debates.

This course is also open to graduate students.

**Readings**

The following books are required and can be purchased in the UNCG bookstore:

Bartolomé de las Casas, *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*. Penguin, 1992 (1552).

Phillip Curtin, *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex*, Second Edition. Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Richard Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves. The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713*. UNC Press, 1972.

Alexander O. Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*. Dover, 2000 (1678).

Kris Lane, *Pillaging the Empire. Piracy in the Americas, 1500-1750*. M. E. Sharpe, 1998.

If you order your books elsewhere make sure you get the right edition.

Most weeks there will also be articles posted on e-reserves, accessible via the course Blackboard site.

Always bring a hard copy of the assigned reading to class.

**UNIT I: CONTACT AND CONQUEST****Week 1 (August 26-28): Before Columbus**

*Reading:* Jalil Sued-Badillo, "The Indigenous Societies at the Time of Conquest, pp. 259-274"

*Primary Document:* "Letter of Columbus to Various Persons"

**Week 2 (September 2-4): Iberian Expansion**

*Readings:* S. Phillips, "The Outer World of the European Middle Ages;" J. H. Parry, "The Tradition of Conquest" and "Islands and Mainland in the Ocean Sea"

*Primary Document:* "Vespucci's Letter from Seville"

**Week 3: (September 9-11): Conquest and Demographic Disaster**

*Readings:* Alfred Crosby, "Infectious Disease and the Demography of the Atlantic Peoples" Patricia Seed, "The Requirement: A Protocol for Conquest"

*Primary Documents:* "The Sermons of Friar Antonio de Montesinos" and "The Requirement"

**Week 4 (September 16-18): The Spanish Sea**

*Readings:* Ruggiero Romano, "The Initial Linkage with America;" Frank Moya Pons, "The Establishment of Primary Centers and Primary Plantations"

*Primary Document:* Las Casas, *A Short Account*, pp. 3-31

**Week 5 (September 23-25): The First Great Debate over New World Slavery**

*Readings:* Jalil Sued-Badillo, "The Indigenous Societies at the Time of Conquest, pp. 274-end;" L. N. Rivera-Pagán, "Freedom and Servitude: Indigenous Slavery and the Spanish Conquest"

*Primary Document:* Las Casas, *A Short Account*, pp. 80-104 & 127-130

**Paper 1, Analysis of Bartolomé de las Casas, *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, is due in class on Tuesday, September 30.**

**UNIT 2: CHALLENGING SPANISH HEGEMONY****Week 6 (September 30-October 2): Religious Conflict and Changing European Geopolitics**

*Reading:* Dunn, "Calvinism vs. Catholicism in Western Europe;" E. Cameron, "The Power of the Word: Renaissance and Reformation"

*Primary Documents:* "The voyage made by the worshipful M. John Hawkins;" "English Corsairs to Certain Spaniards"

**Week 7 (October 7-9): The Early Corsairs and Privateers**

*Reading:* Lane, *Pillaging the Empire*, Chapters 1-3

*Primary Document:* Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*, pp. 25-85

**Week 8 (October 14-16): Piracy and Illicit Trade**

*Reading:* Lane, *Pillaging the Empire*, Chapters 4-5

*Primary Document:* Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*, pp. 89-163

**\*\*\*\*\* NO CLASS ON TUESDAY, OCTOBER 21: FALL BREAK \*\*\*\*\***

**Week 9 (October 23): The Emergence of New Imperial Spheres**

*Reading:* Anne Pérotin-Dumon, "French, English and Dutch in the Lesser Antilles: From Privateering to Planting" (e-reserves)

*Primary Document:* Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*, pp. 167-233

**Paper 2, analysis of Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*, is due in class on Tuesday, October 28.**

**UNIT 3: THE PLANTATION COMPLEX****Week 10 (October 28-30): Origins of the Plantation System**

*Readings:* Curtin, *Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex*, chapters 1, 2, & 4; Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, Chapter 1

*Primary Document:* Excerpts from Ligon, *True and Exact History of Barbados*

**Week 11 (November 4-6): The Planter Class**

*Readings:* Curtin, *Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex*, Chapter 6; Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, Chapters 2-5

*Primary Document:* Excerpts from Ligon, *True and Exact History of Barbados*

**Week 12 (November 11-13): Commodities**

*Readings:* Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, Chapter 6; E. Stols, "The Expansion of the Sugar Market in Western Europe"

*Primary Documents:* TBA

**Week 13 (November 18-20): Enslaved Labor**

*Readings:* Curtin, *Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex*, Chapter 3; Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, Chapter 7; Palmer, "The Slave Trade, African Slavers and Demography"

*Primary Documents:* TBA

**Week 14 (November 25): Life and Death in Caribbean Plantation Society**

*Readings:* Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, Chapters 8-10

*Primary Documents:* TBA

**\*\*\*\* NO CLASS ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 27: THANKSGIVING BREAK \*\*\*\***

**Week 15 (December 2-4): The Caribbean in the European Imagination**

*Readings:* Martin-Fragachan, "Intellectual, Artistic and Ideological Aspects of Cultures in the New World;" Burke, "America and the Rewriting of World History;" Lowood, "The New World and the European Catalogue of Nature"

*Primary Documents:* European maps and images of the Caribbean, 1492-1700 (handouts)

**Paper 3 is due in class on Thursday, December 4.**

**Requirements and Grading (Undergraduate Students)**

**\*\*Note: Requirements and grading are slightly different for graduate students. Please see the relevant handout.**

**Papers (each 20% of grade: 60% total):** There are three papers for this class, 5-7 pages each, one for each of the course units. Papers are due in class on the Tuesday after the conclusion of each unit. Late papers will be accepted only in exceptional circumstances and only after prior consultation with the professor. You will receive details about the corresponding assignment at the beginning of each unit.

**Blackboard Discussion (20% of grade):** Each week students will discuss the assigned readings via the Discussion Board of the class Blackboard site. You must engage in the discussion for at least 10 of the 14 weeks of the course, and you must post at least three weeks per unit. Other than that, it is entirely your choice which weeks you participate. Late postings will not be counted, and there will be no exceptions granted for any reason. Plan wisely. Initial postings are due by 10 pm each Tuesday, with discussion continuing through 10 pm Wednesday. Posting beyond the minimal number of weeks will be counted as extra credit. You are expected to read and think about your fellow students' postings, and to come to class prepared to continue the discussions that begin on Blackboard whether or not you have posted that week.

**Specifications:**

- Postings should be clear and to the point. Focus on a single issue or theme and state your position or argument succinctly, with relevant references to the readings. Think through your ideas before you begin writing.
- Develop the art of articulate written conversation. Use full sentences, minimal abbreviations and acronyms, and correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Proof read and edit carefully before you hit the "send" button. This is not text messaging.
- You are encouraged to express questions, doubts, confusion, and (within reasonable limits) emotional reactions to the material and/or to the postings of your fellow students. Of course, you always will be respectful and courteous.
- Sign your first name at the bottom of every posting.

Blackboard is an important tool for this course. Check the Announcements and Course Documents regularly.

**Class Participation (20% of grade):** All students are expected to attend class, to have read and thought about the material, and to participate actively in discussions. Students will also be expected to give occasional in-class presentations.

Students are responsible for all the material that is discussed and handed out in class, as well as the readings and Blackboard postings. Cultivate networks among your fellow students so you can get copies of class notes, announcements, etc. if you have to miss class.

**Grading Scale**

A+:97-100, A:93-96, A-:90-92, B+:87-89; B:83-86, B-:80-82, C+:77-79, C:73-76, C-:70-72, D+:67-69, D:63-66, D-:60-62, F:0-59

**Policies:**

**Academic Integrity:** Enrollment in this course and submission of each written assignment constitute students' acceptance of UNCG's Academic Integrity Policy. You can find a copy of the full policy at: <http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu/complete/>. If you have any questions about this policy please consult with the professor.

**Attendance:** Attendance is required in this intense discussion seminar. Students who must miss class due to illness or emergency should contact the professor, and consult with fellow students to get up to speed. Students who miss more than a week of classes will have difficulty meeting course requirements successfully.

**Class Etiquette:** A classroom is a communal space where we all gather for a brief period to pursue a common goal via group interactions. Electronic devices, including laptop computers, cell phones, and food should only be brought to class if they will be shared by the entire group in pursuit of our collective endeavors. You are welcome to bring an individual drink.

**Communication:** We will communicate regularly in this course via the Blackboard site and our UNCG e-mail accounts. Check both regularly. The best way to communicate with the professor is via e-mail ([lmrupert@uncg.edu](mailto:lmrupert@uncg.edu)). You should expect to hear back within 24 hours, unless: 1) it is the weekend; 2) you receive an automatic "out of office" reply. It is your responsibility to make sure that the communication is successful and that all material gets in on time.

Check the Announcements and Course Documents sections of Blackboard regularly—look here for copies of the syllabus, assignments and other course documents. You can access all articles via the e-reserves link on Blackboard. We will also be using the Blackboard Discussion Board.

**Important University Resources**

**University Writing Center** ([www.uncg.edu/eng/writingcenter/](http://www.uncg.edu/eng/writingcenter/); tel: 43125): An excellent resource for help with grammar, paper structure, etc., even for graduate students.

**Office of Information Technology** (<http://www.its.uncg.edu>, tel: 6-TECH): Your source for all tech problems (including issues with Blackboard) and computer malfunctions. Please note that computer or printer problems are not a valid excuse for turning in an assignment late.

**Office of Disability Services** (<http://ods.dept.uncg.edu/>; tel: 45440): Students who have documented disabilities that require special consideration and/or accommodation should register with this office and bring the required paperwork to the professor during the first days of class so we can make the necessary adjustments. No special arrangements can be made without the approval of this office.

**Dean of Students** (<http://deanofstudents.uncg.edu/>; tel: 45514): Supports and advocates for students in crisis. No special arrangements will be made without the approval of this office.

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**Requirements for Graduate Students**

Graduate work requires active, enthusiastic participation; deep understanding and analysis of the material; engagement with classmates; and careful, timely completion of all assignments. As a graduate student you should make the most of every opportunity to develop your analytic abilities and to push beyond the limits of your current knowledge. All written work should follow rigorous standards of grammar, punctuation, spelling, and style. Clear writing showcases clear thinking. Carefully edit and proofread everything you write. Graduate students should own, and consult often, the latest editions of:

Wayne C. Booth, et al. *The Craft of Research*. University of Chicago Press (UCP).  
Kate L. Turabian. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. UCP.  
Joseph M. Williams, *Style. Toward Clarity and Grace*. UCP.

***Written Work (75% of grade)***

*Unit Papers:* Graduate students will complete the three unit papers for this class, each of which should be 8-10 pages. Follow closely the graduate specifications for each assignment.

*Book Reviews:* Each graduate student will read three additional books (one for each unit) which complement the assigned readings, and write a two to three page critical review, situating the book in the context of the material covered in the unit. You will also present the book to the class. The topics, books, and due dates will be assigned by the professor.

***Written and Oral Discussion (25% of grade)***

*Blackboard Discussion:* Graduate students will participate in the weekly Blackboard discussion by analyzing the readings and also discussing the posts of their fellow students. At a minimum, you must participate in the Blackboard discussion for 12 of the 14 weeks of the course, and at least three weeks per unit. After making an initial post, you must engage substantially in the discussion, demonstrating your familiarity with the author's approach and argument, and your ability to analyze the material critically.

*Class Participation:* Participation in class discussions also should show full understanding and analysis of the material, and an ability to make linkages with other relevant material covered. It is assumed that you will always stay on topic. Graduate students also regularly will give in-class presentations, individually and/or in groups.

**Please note that all general specifications for each assignment and for the course also apply to graduate students. Consult the syllabus.**