**SPN 4520**  Spanish American Culture I  Prof. Maida Watson

**Prerequisites:**

Intermediate to Advanced Level of Spanish. Most of all readings, tests and papers are in Spanish.

**Course Objectives:**

With renewed interest in global learning at US universities, inquisitive students of culture often ask: what is the difference between the culture of Spain and that of the different Latin American countries and the differences between these Hispanic cultures and the United States? what is the difference between the culture of areas such as Miami with a large Hispanic population and Spain or Argentina or Mexico? Why are these cultures different? What historical reasons caused both the culture and its reflection in the Spanish spoken in these areas to be so different that the same word can have widely differing meanings? What caused racial mixtures to differ from one area of Latin America to another? Why are societies stratified in different ways in different parts of Latin America? and what is the nature of this stratification? This course, taught in Spanish, will examine the concept of Spanish America, as different from Latin America which would include French speaking and Portuguese speaking Caribbean and South American countries by studying the aspects of the cultures that produced Spanish America, both before 1492 when Spain began its colonization of the area and up till the end of the 19th century. The main course objective is to give students an understanding of the complexity of these situations, as well as the ability to engage in a multi-perspective analysis of issues and/or problems dealing with Spanish America within this period. Students will analyze these events, synthesize them, compare them to events taking place within different time periods and with events in the 20th century and come to a general evaluation in answer to several questions.

This seminar in Spanish American culture is designed for Spanish majors who have already acquired an advanced knowledge of Spanish so that they can read texts in Spanish and write essays of a complex nature. It can fulfill a requirement for majors or can count as a Spanish minor course or an elective for other majors. It also satisfies the upper division global learning requirement.

**Major topics:**

After a general survey of the three main pre-Colombian cultures: Aztecs, Incas and Mayans which existed or had previously existed when the Spaniards arrived in America in 1492, we will survey Spanish culture from 700 to 1492 with an emphasis on the Reconquest of Moorish Spain by the Christian kingdoms. We will examine competing theories as to the nature of the society that produced the Conquistadors, the Spaniards who travelled to America and in about 60 years conquered a very large territory. We will study the particular nature of this conquest and how it differed from the French, English and Dutch colonizing experiences in North and South America. We will study the particular nature of the economy and society of the Spanish Colony which took place in Spanish America from 1492 to the early part of the 19th century in most of the Americas. The course finishes with a study of the social and political institutions that existed in Spanish America at the end of the 19th century. Throughout the semester we will also explore the following sociological and political issues:

(1) What kind of society was created in Spain by 1492 as a result of the 700 year struggle between the Christian and Muslim kingdoms? (2) What kind of societies were created in the Aztec, Inca and Mayan areas of dominance in America before 1492?
(3) What relationship existed between the kind of fighting men created by the Spanish Reconquista in Spain and the nature of the Conquistadors? To what extent did the existence of a frontier in Spain between warring Muslims and Christians create manners and mores which were transported to America and influenced the development of a frontier in Colonial America?

(4) Was the Independence movement from Spain in the early 19th century really a break with the Spanish Colonial past? How did society and culture in varying part of Spanish America change according to the extent of influence from other countries besides Spain?

**Class format and schedule:**

The regular class format will consist mainly of PowerPoint presentations and video and film excerpts, intermixed with class discussions, debates, and global learning activities. There are reading and homework questions to research before each class. Some questions will be discussed in class – you must be present for the entire class and have prepared the questions beforehand to receive full participation points. Written work must be handed in on time to get full credit. There will be two exams, as noted on the syllabus.

In addition to regular class activities, this course will use special case studies based on fictional accounts of inhabitants during the Spanish colony which will be distributed to you in written form and are taken from a history text. These case studies are based on economic and political realities of the Spanish colony and will be discussed in class in relationship to the class lectures. Music from the various cultures and historical periods will also be presented and studied in relation to the history of the period. Medieval Christian Spanish romances and Arabic and Sephardic Jewish songs from Medieval Spain will be discussed in small groups. Each small group will have to take notes, discuss their findings, and present an oral report to the entire group at the end of the session. Songs called “cielitos” from the early 19th century Independence movement will also be examined in this context. Finally, students will study the food of the different historical periods through Spanish medieval cookbooks and texts about food customs in both Aztec and Inca cultures and prepare some of these dishes.

The course will also use a teaching methodology called “Socratic Circles” during the course to discuss certain key essays assigned to read for the course. On the day before the Socratic circle, the teacher hands out the text.

2. Students should spend that evening, as homework, reading and analyzing the text.
3. The next day during class, students are randomly chosen to be either in the inner or outer circle.
4. The students that form the inner circle read a passage of the text out loud and then engage in a discussion of the text for 10 minutes. Students in the outer circle observe silently and take mental notes.
5. After the inner circle concludes their discussion, the outer circle assesses the performance and gives feedback on the group or on an individual.
6. Students in the inner circle exchange positions and roles with the outer circle.
7. The new inner circle holds a ten-minute discussion and then receives feedback from the new outer circle,

**Learning outcomes:**

(1) **Global Perspective:** Students will be able to analyze a complicated cultural situation such as the Christian Reconquest of Muslim Spain and the Spanish Conquest of America in terms of multiple cultural perspectives.

(2) **Global Awareness:** Students will be able to analyze the interconnections between historical events, political regimes, and linguistic changes that led to the development of a particular culture in Colonial Latin American as expressed through its art, food, music and literature.
(3) **Global Engagement:** Students will be able to demonstrate an openness (and an ability to convince others to be open) to the cultural differences found in the 1492 encounter between American Indian cultures and the Spanish.

**Grades:**

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two exams</td>
<td>60%</td>
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<td>Class reports on case studies</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>Class participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>Small essays</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 long essay</td>
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**Texts:**

All readings, assignments, and class presentations will be available on FIU’s Blackboard Learning System, a course management system for web-assisted courses.

**Book:**

*The Penguin History of Latin America (1st Edition)*

Edwin Williamson

Penguin (1993)

ISBN-10: 0140125590


**WEEK SYLLABUS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

**WEEK 1**

- Read *Así vivían los aztecas*
- Read *El mundo azteca*
- Watch *Películas aztecas*

Create student homepage. Please introduce yourself in Spanish and post a picture

**WEEK 2**

- Read *Así vivían los aztecas #2*
Watch Los aztecas Ppt

WEEK 3:
Read La época prehispánica
Read El imperio
Read Culturas de centroamérica y los andes septentrionales

Escribir un ensayo de 150 palabras comentando la función que tuvo en la sociedad de los incas la costumbre de momificar a los reyes muertos y como esto afectó el imperio de los incas.

WEEK 4:
Watch Los incas PPT
Read Moche Culture
Read Los incas
Read Articles in El incario folder
Watch Películas incas

Take part second day of the class in a Socratic Circle on the Reading Los Incas and the movies on the Incas. The topic will be the Inca custom of mummifying the royal dead and its effect on the Inca Empire and its need for expansion

WEEK 5:
Read Mayan Life
Watch Mayan movies
Watch Maya PPT

WEEK 6:
Read La cultura de España I and II
Read La España antes de 1492
Read La España Medieval
Read Los judíos. A socratic circle will take place based on the realtions between the three religions in Medieval Spain
Read Raíces de España
Read España: su geografía y Su historia. La Reconquista
Listen to the three songs

Escuchar las tres canciones que se encuentran bajo los audios medievales y escribir un ensayo de 150 palabras sobre uno de estos temas:
La Boda Estorbada: En este romance (canción medieval) se cuenta la historia de la separación de los condes a causa de una guerra. Sin embargo, la condesa antes de casarse
con otro va a buscar al conde.
Describa ese encuentro entre los esposos y explique qué ocurre con la segunda novia del conde. ¿Qué nos dice esta canción sobre el papel de la mujer en la Reconquista de España y después en la Conquista de América?

**WEEK 7:**

- Watch *Europe in the Middle Ages*
- Watch the audios and documentaries of Spain before 1492
- Watch th PPT on Spain

**WEEK 8:**

- Watch *The Conquista and the Reconquista* versus Reconquista Powerpoint
- Read Cultura hispanoamericana I,II, and III
- Read *El conquistador hispano*

*A socratic circle will take place on the nature of the Spanish conquistadores*
- Read *Descubrimientos y descubridores*
- Read *Los viajeros*

The long essay (600-900 words) is due. This is the topic: Según Carlos Fuentes existe una continuidad en lo que se refiere a la Reconquista de la Península Ibérica y la Conquista de América. ¿Qué similitudes o diferencias encuentra usted en el desarrollo de estos dos eventos históricos? Base su argumentación en el material estudiado en este curso y en los documentales. Existe un powerpoint en el curso que compara la Reconquista en España con la Conquista en América. No utilice ningún otro texto diferente a los provistos por este curso. Le recomiendo que lea el archivo titulado El conquistador hispano cuyo autor es Francisco Solano y todo el material relacionado con los conquistadores.

**WEEK 9:**

- Read *La esclavitud africana en América*

*A Socratic circle will take place based on the nature of the slave society and its relationship to the Spanish and Indian societies*
- Read *Descubrimiento y conquista de América*
- Read *La economía I and II*
Read La sociedad indiana I, II, and III  
Read La población I and II  
Read La colonización

WEEK 10:  
Read La comida I and II  
Watch the audios and the documentary called La edad de oro.

WEEK 11:  
Read The Terror  
Read Siglo XIX parts I and II  
Read Patron y peon  
Read Estanciero

WEEK 12:  
Watch “Camila”  
A Socratic Circle will take place based on the question of what the movie Camila reflects about the events that are described in the readings The Terror, Patron y peon and Estanciero

WEEK 13  
Continue discussion on 19th century  
Escribir un ensayo de 150 palabras sobre el poder del dictador Rosas en la Argentina del siglo 19 y como esto se refleja en la película "Camila"

WEEK 14:  EXAM no. 2