Course: HIST 3390 Christianity in Latin America
CRN: 22855
Class time: MW 3:00 pm – 4:20 pm
Classroom: Liberal Arts Building (LART) 210
Instructor: Dr. Eric Rodrigo Meringer
Office Hours: MWF 11:30 – 12:30; T TH 10:00 am to 11:00 am; and by appointment
Email: ermeringer@utep.edu

UTEP Dates and Deadlines
Jan 17 First day of classes
Mar 13-17 Spring Break – no classes
Mar 30 Spring drop/withdrawal deadline
Mar 31 Cesar Chavez Day – no class
Apr 7 Spring Study Day – no class
May 5 Dead Day – no class
May 8 Final Exam Monday, May 8, 1:00 pm – 3:45 pm

Course Description and Objectives:

Acculturation is the process of cultural modification in which one group adapts to or borrows traits from another culture. The adoption of Christianity in Latin America by African and Amerindian peoples in the colonial period is an example of such a process. This course traces the evolution of Christianity in Latin America from the spiritual conquest of native populations by Spanish missionaries in the sixteenth century to more recent waves of Protestant conversion in the twentieth century. The process of acculturation is presented here as a two-way street in which Christianity, as the dominant spiritual force, is nonetheless infiltrated by indigenous and African religious influences.

Learning goals addressed in this course include, but are not limited to the following: historical mindedness; construction of historiography; interdisciplinary awareness; comparative perspectives. Historical mindedness in terms of awareness of both individuals and social groups as creators of history will be addressed in class discussions on the spiritual conquest and the role of religion in forming national identities and national histories. Construction of historiography will be addressed in topics including the historical debate relating to the origins of Mexico’s national devotion to the Virgin of Guadalupe. This course promotes interdisciplinary awareness in that it draws on anthropology and religious studies to consider parallels in pre-Columbian indigenous and Catholic cosmologies as well as continuity of indigenous tradition in Catholic ritual. Finally, students gain comparative perspectives through their consideration of Liberation Theology as a counter-hegemonic force in the 1970s and
1980s as through their study of indigenous cultural revitalization movements and their impact on regional politics in more recent years.

**Course Requirements:**

Your final grade will be determined according to the following model:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 reading quizzes (25 points each)</td>
<td>250 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 team presentation</td>
<td>200 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mid-term exam</td>
<td>200 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>final exam</td>
<td>200 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>150 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Points Possible</strong></td>
<td><strong>1000 points</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grading Scale:**

- 900-1000 A
- 800-899 B
- 700-799 C
- 600-699 D
- Below 600 F

**Reading quizzes** (25% of grade): There will be 10 quizzes based on the various readings. These are worth 25 points each and will account for 250 points toward your final grade. Quizzes consist of five to ten multiple choice questions drawing directly from the weekly readings. These will be made available by mid-week and due by the end of the week (Sunday night). You can take reading quizzes twice with only the highest grade being counted. Late quizzes receive half credit – so make sure you do them before class.

**Exams** (40% of final grade): There will be two exams, one mid-term and one final. The mid-term is worth 200 points and the final exam is worth 200 points. Exams will consist of multiple-choice questions and a number short answer questions. Test questions will draw on information presented in the powerpoints, discussions and the various reading quizzes. **Make-up exams** in cases of unavoidable scheduling conflicts must be arranged prior to exam date. Exceptions for unanticipated medical or family emergencies will require written documentation from the student.

**Presentations** (20% of grade): Working in groups of three, students will present short (min 20 minute) audio visual presentation on any of a number of suggested topics. Options for presentation topics are provided below. Groups can sign up for any of the suggested topics by providing a group name, names of group members and by inserting the topic of your choice in the Google document linked to here as **Presentation Sign-In Google Doc**. You will want to check the assignment schedule to see when each topic is due. If you see a topic of particular interest and want to claim that topic before another group, you will want to sign up early. Presentations must include references to scholarly works (see suggested readings below) or at least one article from a scholarly journal. Presentations should also include at least one question for the audience.
Participation (15% of grade): This portion of your grade is based upon your participation in class discussions, in the student presentation and basically by the instructor’s level of familiarity with each student at the end of the semester. If you are not naturally inclined toward speaking out in class it might be a good idea to otherwise get to know your professor by visiting him during office hours or whenever you are in the LART building.

Suggestions for presentation topics:
- Religious Aspects of Aztec Sacrifice
- Historiography – The Florentine Codex as an Indigenous Sources (or other indigenous sources, i.e. El Inca Garcilaso, or Guaman Poma)
- Parallels in indigenous and Christian belief systems
- Corpus Christi or other examples of Catholic acculturated religious festivals
- Imposing sexual norms
- Religious rebellion - choose one of the following:
  - Pueblo Revolt
  - Caste War of Yucatan
  - Taki Onkoy
- Canonization of Juan Diego
- Candomble in Brazil
- Benito Juarez and anti-clericalism of La Reforma or the Mexican Revolution
- Be a Patriot, Kill a Priest – El Salvador’s war on religious activism
- Leaders of Liberation Theology

Bibliography (some resources for student presentations):


Sources for Scholarly Journal Articles
Use UTEP Library Website to access academic journal articles: http://libraryweb.utep.edu/
In the middle left side of the page select tab “Articles and Databases”. Try one of these recommended sites:
   JSTOR
   Academic Search Complete (EBSCO)

Special Accommodations
Students with physical or other challenges who require accommodation(s) in order to participate in this course should contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (Union Building, East, room 106). Telephone: +1.915.747.5148.
To better serve students during the pandemic, UTEP’s Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) has launched AIM, the Accessible Information Management system. AIM serves as a virtual front desk where UTEP students with a disability or a temporary disability can request an accommodation. Contact CASS at cassportal.utep.edu or https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/cass/. It is your responsibility to speak with a counselor in order to receive necessary help. Within the first week of the beginning of the semester, you must provide documentation from CASS in order to receive any accommodation(s). Failure to contact CASS and provide documentation in a timely manner may delay such accommodation(s) being made.
Academic Integrity

“Academic Integrity is a commitment to fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. From these values flow principles of behavior that enable academic communities to translate ideals into action.” Specifically these values are defined as follows:

- **Honesty**: advances the quest for truth and knowledge by requiring intellectual and personal honesty in learning, teaching, research, and service.
- **Trust**: fosters a climate of mutual trust, encourages the free exchange of ideas, and enables all to reach their highest potential.
- **Fairness**: establishes clear standards, practices, and procedures and expects fairness in the interaction of students, faculty, and administrators.
- **Respect**: recognizes the participatory nature of the learning process and honors and respects a wide range of opinions and ideas.
- **Responsibility**: upholds personal responsibility and depends upon action in the face of wrongdoing.

For more on Academic integrity and scholastic dishonesty visit the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution website at [http://sa.utep.edu/osccr/academic-integrity/](http://sa.utep.edu/osccr/academic-integrity/)

Coronavirus Updates

For more information on the University Coronavirus-related policies see the Health and Safety heading on the Blackboard homepage.

---

**HISTORY 3390: Class and Assignment Schedule**

This is a general outline of weekly lecture topics and scheduled due dates for assignments and tests. Reading assignments are denoted by the book symbol ☐ and are to be completed during the week indicated on the schedule. Minor changes and adjustments to this schedule may be made over the course of the semester.

**Week 1 Jan 17 – Introductions and Pre-Columbian America**

Topics: Syllabus; Aztec Sacrifice; Pre-Columbian Indigenous Societies

☐ Reading: Victims – from *Aztecs: An Interpretation* read only pp. 121-141 (available on Blackboard as “1-Clendinnen on Aztecs”)

► Reading Quiz 1 for the Aztecs reading will be posted in the module on Friday and due on Monday Jan 23 by 2:30 pm.

**Week 2 Jan 23 – Pre-Columbian Civilizations: Aztecs and Andean Societies including Early Examples of Acculturation**

Topics: Aztec and Inca Society; Mesoamerican and Andean religious traditions

☐ Reading: Inca Ideology - Terence D’Altroy from *The Incas* chpt 7 (available on Blackboard as “2-D’Altroy – Incas”)

► Reading Quiz 2: due by Wednesday’s class at Jan 25 at 2:30 pm.
Week 3 Jan 30 – Bartolome de Las Casas and the Black Legend of Spanish Barbarism
Topics: Las Casas; Black Legend; Columbian Exchange

📖 Reading: A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies by Bartolome de Las Casas, chapters 1 and 2. (available on Blackboard “3 – Las Casas”)
► Reading Quiz 3: before class on Monday Jan 30. The online quiz closes at 2:30 pm – right before class
► Small group presentation: Wednesday Feb 1 – Student groups sign up for presentation using the Google sign in doc. Students can choose their dates but if no one signs up then topics will be assigned.
  • Aztec sacrifice
  • The Las Casas – Sepulveda Debate on Indigenous Humanity

Week 4 Feb 6 – Mythologizing Indian History
Topics: Narratives of Conquest

📖 Reading: “Burying the White Gods” by Camilla Townsend (available on Blackboard “4 – Townsend”)
► Reading Quiz 4: due Monday Feb 6 by 2:30 – right before class time
► Presentation: Wednesday Feb 8 – Suggested choices:
  • Historiography Florentine Codex or other “indigenous sources”.
  • The Las Casas – Sepulveda Debate on Indigenous Humanity

Week 5 Feb 13 - Spiritual Conquest
Topics: Accommodation and Contestation

📖 Reading: Images and Prophets - D.A. Brading from The Indian Community of Colonial Mexico (available on Blackboard “4 – Brading”)
► Reading Quiz 5: finish online quiz by Monday Feb 13 (remember that online quizzes always close at 2:30 before class)
► Presentation: Feb 15 – Suggested topics:
  • Parallels in Christian and Indigenous belief systems

Week 6 Feb 20 - Extirpation of Idolatry
Topics: Practice and effectiveness of extirpation

📖 Reading: Extirpation - Kenneth Mills from Idolatry and Its Enemies (available as “5-K. Mills”)
► Reading Quiz 6: due before class on Monday Feb 20
► Presentation: Feb 22 – Suggested topics:
  • Imposing sexual norms (indigenous and Spanish views on sexuality)
  • Diego de Landa’s Mayan Inquisition

Week 7 Feb 27 – Resistance and Rebellion
Topics: Indigenous Rebellions and Millenarian Movements

📖 Reading: Ramon Gutierrez from Franciscans and the Pueblo Revolt, (excerpt from When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Away, Sexuality and Power in New Mexico 1500-1846)
► Reading Quiz 7: by Monday Feb 27
Presentation: Wednesday March 1 – Suggested topics:
- Caste War of Yucatan
- Pueblo Revolt
- Taki Onkoy Rebellion of the Andes

Week 8 Mar 6 – Mid-Term Exam
Topics: Mid-term review mid-term exam
- Mid-Term Exam: In class Wednesday March 8

Week 9 Mar 13 – Spring Break
Topics: No topics, just relax time Mar 13 – Mar 17

Week 10 Mar 20 – Accommodation and Continuity in Public Spaces
Topics: Cofradias (religious confraternities); acculturated practices in present day
Film – The Devil’s Miner

Week 11 Mar 27 – Legitimizing Creole Christianity and Roots of a National Symbol
Topics: Criollismo and Our Lady of Guadalupe
- Reading: Conclusions – Stafford Poole from Our Lady of Guadalupe (available as “6-Stafford”)
- Reading Quiz 8: by Monday Mar 26
- Presentation: Mar 28 – Suggested topics:
  - Canonization of Juan Diego

Week 12 Apr 3 – Liberal Challenge to Catholic Church
Topics: Anti-clericalism; Mexico’s Liberal Reform
- Reading: The Juarez Law and the Lerdo Law pp. 97-100 (Problems in Modern Latin American History; Mexico section from Church and State in a Liberal World chapter in New Worlds by John Lynch.
- Presentation: Apr 5 – Suggested topics:
  - Benito Juarez and La Reforma

Week 13 Apr 10 – Religion in Revolutionary Mexico
Topics: Anti-clericalism in the Revolution; Cristero Rebellion;
- Reading: Church in Red Mexico – Butler from Journal of Ecclesiastical History Vol. 55 (See Blackboard “7 Butler”)
- Reading Quiz 9: Apr 10
- Presentation: Apr 12 – Suggested topics:
  - Cristero Rebellion
  - The Anti-clericalism of the Mexican Muralists
Week 14 Apr 17 – Christianity and the Cold War
Topics: Spiritual Socialism in Allende’s Chile; Dirty Wars and the proliferation of military dictatorship
📖 Reading: *Mental State of Torturers* – Mark Osiel (See Blackboard)
► Reading Quiz 10: Apr 17
► Presentation: Apr 19 – Suggested topics:
  - Be a Patriot, Kill a Priest – El Salvador’s war on religious activism
  - Leaders of Liberation Theology

Week 15 Apr 24 – Christianity and the Cold War (continued)
Topics: Argentina’s Dirty War
Film – “La Historia Oficial” or “Romero”

Week 16 May 1 – Liberation Theology
Topics: Liberation Theology
📖 Reading: Church Base Communities – Dominique Barbé from chapt 12 of *Liberation Theology: An Introductory Reader*
► Presentation: May 3 – Suggested topics:
  - Leaders of Liberation Theology

Week 17 May 8 – Finals Week
► Final Exam – finish exam by Friday Dec 11 at midnight.