

**Course:** HIST 3390 Christianity in Latin America  
**CRN:** 16121  
**Instructor:** Dr. Eric Rodrigo Meringer  
**Office Hours:** Tuesdays 10 am to 12 noon; Thursdays 6 pm to 8 pm (online office hours)  
**Email:** [ermeringer@utep.edu](mailto:ermeringer@utep.edu)

#### UTEP Dates and Deadlines

Aug 24 First day of classes  
Aug 24 - 28 Late registration (fees incurred)  
Sept 7 Labor Day – University Closed  
Oct 30 Fall drop/withdrawal deadline  
Nov 26 – 27 Thanksgiving Holiday – University Closed  
Dec 7 – 11 Final Exams  
Dec 16 Grades are due

#### 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:

10 reading quizzes (20 points each)	200 points
Discussion Posts (10 @ 15 points each)	150 points
Small Group Activity 1 (Thinglink Image Analysis)	100 points
Small Group Activity 2 (Audio/visual Presentation)	100 points
mid-term exam	150 points
final exam	200 points
<u>Participation</u>	<u>100 points</u>
<b>Total Points Possible</b>	<b>1000 points</b>

### Grading Scale:

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

**Reading quizzes** (20% of grade): There will be 10 quizzes based on the various readings. These are worth 20 points each will account for 200 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.

**Discussion Posts** (15% of grade): There are ten graded discussion posts. Discussion posts require an initial response to a prompt and two replies/comments to posts made by your classmates. The initial responses are due by Friday night at midnight and the replies are due on Sundays at midnight. Posts (including replies to classmates) are worth 15 points each. In addition to these points, participation on the discussion board will also be factored into your participation grade.

**Small Group Activities** (20% of grade): Students will be randomly placed into groups of three at the beginning of the semester. These groups will collaborate on two small group activities worth 100 points each. The first will require students to identify and analyze an image using the interactive **Thinglink** program. **Thinglink** allows students to imbed labels, videos and other images into a single larger image. The second activity will be one short (20 minute) audio/visual presentation on one of a number of suggested topics. This presentation can be screencast video or a narrated powerpoint. **Yuja** is a software available on our Blackboard course page that allows for easy screencast recording. Yuja is recommended as a convenient option to both create your presentation and to share it on the discussion board. In both activities, students will share a final grade and be required to submit a peer evaluation in which group members will allot a certain number of points to teammates based on individual levels of participation.

**Exams** (35% of final grade): There will be two exams, one mid-term and one final. The mid-term is worth 150 points and the final exam is worth 200 points. Exams will consist of multiple-choice questions and one essay. 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.

**Participation** (10% of grade): This portion of your grade is based upon your participation in discussion boards and on the small group activities. This grade will be determined by peer evaluations of individual participation in the small group activities and by student participation in the discussion forums.

**Presentation 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 one question for the audience.

**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
- 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):**

Abercrombie, Thomas A. *Pathways of Memory and Power: Ethnography and History Among an Andean People*. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998.

Berryman, Phillip. *Stubborn Hope: Religion, Politics and Revolution in Central America*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994

- Clendinnen, Inga. *Aztecs: An Interpretation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2006.
- Cobo, Bernabe. *Inca Religion and Customs*. Austin, University of Austin Press, 1990.
- Cook, Noble David. "*Secret Judgements of God*": *Old World Disease in Colonial Spanish America*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992.
- Dean, Carolyn. *Inka Bodies and the Body of Christ: Corpus Christi in Colonial Cuzco, Peru*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1999.
- Diaz, Monica. *Indigenous Writings from the Convent: Negotiating Ethnic Autonomy in Colonial Mexico*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2010.
- Gutierrez, Ramon. "Did Franciscans Invite Martyrdom?" In *What Caused the Pueblo Revolt of 1680*, edited by David Weber, 39 – 53. Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 1999.
- Harrison, Regina. "The Theology of Concupiscence: Spanish-Quechua Confessional Manuals in the Andes." In *Coded Encounters Writing, Gender, and Ethnicity in Colonial Latin America*, edited by Francisco Javier Cevallos-Candau, Jeffrey Cole, et al, 135-150. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1994.
- Lavrin, Asuncion. *Brides of Christ: Conventual Life in Colonial Mexico*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008.
- Lockhart, James. *The Nahuas After the Conquest*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992.
- Poole, Stafford. *Our Lady of Guadalupe: The Origins and Sources of a Mexican National Symbol, 1531 – 1797*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1995.
- Ruiz de Alarcon, Hernando. *Treatise on the Heathen Superstitions that Today Live Among the Indians Native to this New Spain*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984.
- Silverblatt, Irene. *Moon, Sun, and Witches: Gender Ideologies and Class in Inca and Colonial Peru*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987.
- Silverblatt, Irene. *Modern Inquisitions: Peru and the Colonial Origins of the Civilized World*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2004.
- Salomon, Frank. "Testimonies: The Making and Reading of Native South American Historical Sources." In *Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas Vol. III South America Part 1*, edited by Frank Salomon and Stuart Schwartz, 20 – 95. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

### 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](http://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/>

### 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 Aug 24 – 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”)

▶ **Introductions – see discussion board for instructions. Submit by Friday.**

### Week 2 Aug 31 – Andean Societies and Early Examples of Acculturation

Topics: Inca Society; Andean religious traditions


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

▶ **Discussion Post #1:** Initial post by Friday (**Sept 4**). Two responses to classmates by Sunday.

▶ **Reading Quiz 1: Sept 6**

### Week 3 Sept 7 – 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”)

▶ **Discussion Post #2: Initial post by Friday (Sept 11).** Responses to two classmates by Sunday.


▶ **Reading Quiz 2: Sept 13**

▶ **Small group presentation: Sept 13** – Student groups sign up for presentation using the [Google sign in doc](#). Students can chose 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 Sept 14 – Mythologizing Indian History

Topics: Narratives of Conquest

 Reading: “Burying the White Gods” by Camilla Townsend (available on Blackboard “4 – Townsend”)

▶ **Discussion Post #3: Initial post by Friday (Sept 18).** Two responses to classmates by Sunday.


▶ **Reading Quiz 3: Sept 20**

▶ **Small group presentation: Sept 20** – Suggested choices:

- Historiography Florentine Codex or other “indigenous sources”.
- The Las Casas – Sepulveda Debate on Indigenous Humanity

### Week 5 Sept 21 - 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")

- ▶ **Discussion Post #4:** Initial post by Friday (Sept 25). Two responses to classmates by Sunday.
- ▶ **Reading Quiz 4: Sept 27**
- ▶ **Small group presentation: Sept 27** – Suggested topics:
  - Parallels in Christian and Indigenous belief systems

### Week 6 Sept 28 - Extirpation of Idolatry


Topics: Practice and effectiveness of extirpation

 Reading: Extirpation - Kenneth Mills from *Idolatry and Its Enemies* (available as "5-K. Mills")

- ▶ **Discussion Post #5:** Initial post by Friday (Oct 2). Two responses to classmates by Sunday.
- ▶ **Reading Quiz 5: Oct 4**
- ▶ **Small group presentation: Oct 4** – Suggested topics:
  - Imposing sexual norms (indigenous and Spanish views on sexuality)
  - Diego de Landa's Mayan Inquisition

### Week 7 Oct 5 – Resistance and Rebellion

Topics: Indigenous Rebellions

 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*)

- ▶ **Discussion Post #6:** Initial post by Friday (Oct 9). Two responses to classmates by Sunday.
- ▶ **Reading Quiz 6: Oct 11**
- ▶ **Small Group Activity: Thinglink Image Analysis: Oct 11**
- ▶ **Small group presentation: Oct 11** – Suggested topics:
  - Caste War of Yucatan
  - Pueblo Revolt
  - Taki Onkoy Rebellion of the Andes

### Week 8 Oct 12 – Mid-Term

Topics: Review and Mid-Term Exam

- ▶ **Mid-Term Exam: By Oct 19**

### Week 9 Oct 19 - Religious Continuity in Public Spaces

Topics: Cofradias (religious confraternities); acculturated practices in present day

Film – *The Devil's Miner*

- ▶ **Discussion Post #7:** Initial post by Friday (Oct 21). Two responses to classmates by Sunday.

**Week 10 Oct 26 – 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”)

- ▶ **Discussion Post #8:** Initial post by Friday (Oct 30). Two responses to classmates by Sunday.
- ▶ **Reading Quiz 7: Nov 1**
- ▶ **Small group presentation: Nov 1** – Suggested topics:
  - Canonization of Juan Diego

**Week 11 Nov 2 - 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.

- ▶ **Small group presentation: Nov 9** – Suggested topics:
  - Benito Juarez and La Reforma

**Week 12 Nov 9 – 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 8: Nov 15**
- ▶ **Small group presentation: Nov 15** – Suggested topics:
  - Cristero Rebellion
  - The Anti-clericalism of the Mexican Muralists

**Week 13 Nov 16 – Christianity and the Cold War**

Topics: Spiritual Socialism in Allende’s Chile; Dirty Wars

📖 Reading: *Mental State of Torturers* – Mark Osiel (See Blackboard)

- ▶ **Reading Quiz 9: Nov 13**
- ▶ **Small group presentation: Nov 16** – Suggested topics:
  - Be a Patriot, Kill a Priest – El Salvador’s war on religious activism
  - Leaders of Liberation Theology

**Week 14 Nov 23 – Christianity and the Cold War (continued)**

Topics: Argentina’s Dirty War


**Film – La Historia Oficial**

- ▶ **No class:** Thanksgiving Break
- ▶ **Discussion Post #9:** Initial post by Friday (Nov 27). Two responses to classmates by Sunday.



**Week 15 Nov 30 – Liberation Theology**

Topics: Liberation Theology

 Reading: Church Base Communities – Dominique Barbé from chapt 12 of *Liberation Theology: An Introductory Reader*

- ▶ **Discussion Post #10:** Initial post by Friday (Dec 4). Two responses to classmates by Sunday.
- ▶ **Reading Quiz 10: Dec 6**
- ▶ **Team writing exercise 2 (essay):**
- ▶ **Small group presentation: Dec 6** – Suggested topics:
  - Leaders of Liberation Theology

**Week 16 Dec 7 – Finals Week**

- ▶ **Final Exam** – to be announced