Course Description

This graduate seminar highlights landmark books, topics, and debates relevant to the social history and political economy of colonial Latin America. Its reading list and assignments should give us a sense for the contours of the historiography in these fields, and should invite us to share the excitement of recent research. The seminar asks participants not only to analyze particular books, but to gain experience in researching and analyzing historiography.

The instructor begins with four premises:

1) The colonial Latin American experience, while important in its own right, is also an inescapable pre-requisite for those seriously interested in the study of post-colonial history. Given the existence of large indigenous populations for whom the "colonial question" remains very much alive, and given the uneven, regionally varied, and often non-linear patterns of change in 19th and 20th century Latin America, problems and issues in colonial social history and political economy resonate into the modern era.

2) The distinction between "social history" and "political economy" is a limited one. The actions of social groups, including non-elite people, had an important impact on economic life, and colonial political economy conditioned social life in crucial ways. From this point of view, "social history" and "political economy" are not well understood in isolation of one another.

3) Our purpose in seminar is not simply to "cover information," but also, and most especially, to engage debates, explore implications, interpret significances, and sharpen our critical tools as historians. It goes without saying that one cannot perform the latter tasks well without digesting a considerable amount of empirical information.

4) In one semester, it is useless to try to touch on all topics or historiographies relevant to colonial Latin America. In the fields of social history and political economy, our reading list contains glaring omissions. Student papers will undoubtedly compensate for some of these. (Note: We are not dealing with the considerable literature on slavery in part because I offer a Comparative World History seminar that studies slavery.) In addition, entire fields are left out. A Latin American historian should know, for example, the rich tradition in intellectual and cultural history associated with Mario Góngora, Lewis Hanke, John Tate Lanning, Irving Leonard, Richard Morse, Edmundo O'Gorman, J. M. Ots Capdequf, John L. Phelan, Silvio Zavala, and others.

Course Assignments and Grading

There are three course requirements: oral participation, a short review essay on assigned readings, and a longer essay based on extra readings.
Course Assignments and Grading (Continued)

Active participation in discussion is fundamental for the success of the seminar, and will count fully 45% towards the final grade. I expect seminar members to enter our meetings prepared to articulate and to defend their critical reflections, to join in the give-and-take and debate which make intellectual discussion rewarding.

The short review essay (ca. 5-8 pages) should be a critical analysis of the week's readings (or a portion of them). Normally, such an essay would provide a close analysis of the author's assumptions and questions; the reasoning, evidence, and method used to develop his or her argument; the author's conclusions and insights, and their validity; and the book's implications (whether the author intended them or not). How much space you devote to each of these topics will of course depend partly on the particular readings you review. This paper counts 15%, and is due at the start of the seminar session devoted to the readings analyzed in the paper. You may choose any of the readings assigned for Weeks 2-9 for this paper.

The longer essay (ca. 25 pages) will analyze critically either the historiography of a particular field in colonial Latin American history (example: the literature on women in Spanish America), or a specialized topic that requires research in historiographically significant works (example: comparative hacienda history of the central valleys of Chile and Mexico). In either case, I would expect the author to identify, from a much larger bibliographical list, the five or six most significant works related to the paper topic. In addition, the author should write a few comments (5-6 lines) on the historiographical significance of each of these works, and append the annotations to the bibliography. Students will present and debate these "state of the literature" and "special topics" papers during Weeks 12-15 of the semester. The papers will count 40% towards the final grade.

Please note that I will not grant "Incomplete" grades except in cases of severe family or medical emergencies.

Schedule

Week 1. Introduction. August 31.

Organization meeting. No assigned readings for discussion. Students unfamiliar with colonial Latin American history are advised to read Charles Gibson, Spain in America (New York, 1966), for background. This little text is also a good way for more experienced students to brush up.

Week 2. The "World-System" and Its Critics. Sept. 7.


Week 2. (Continued)

Stuart Schwartz, "Indian Labor and New World Plantations: European Demands and Indian Responses in Northeastern Brazil," American Historical Review, 83:1 (Feb., 1978), 43-79.

Recomm.: Dobb, Studies.


José Miranda, "La función económica del encomendero en los orígenes del régimen colonial de Nueva España (1525-1531)," Anales del Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, Vol. 2 (1941-46), 421-462.

Philip Wayne Powell, Soldiers, Indians & Silver (Berkeley, 1952).
Mario Góñora, Encomenderos y estancieros: estudios acerca de la constitución social aristocrática de Chile después de la conquista, 1580-1660 (Santiago de Chile, 1970).

Reading: Steve J. Stern, Peru’s Indian Peoples and the Challenge of Spanish Conquest: Huamanga to 1640 (Madison, 1982).


Karen Spalding, De indio a campesino: cambios en la estructura social del Perú colonial (Lima, 1974). Includes helpful review essay on Indian social history, originally published in English in 1972 in Latin American Research Review.

Juan and Judith Villamarín, Indian Labor in Mainland Colonial Spanish America (Newark, Delaware, 1975).


Reading: Woodrow Borah, New Spain’s Century of Depression (Berkeley, 1951).


Guillermo Lohmann Villena, Las minas de Huancavelica en los siglos XVI y XVII (Seville, 1949).


Reading:

- all of class

- 1/3 of class

- 1/3 of class

- 1/3 of class

- 1/3 of class
  - Mario Góngora, Origen de los inquilinos de Chile central (2nd ed., Santiago de Chile, 1974).


R. Romano, Una economía colonial: Chile en el siglo XVIII (Buenos Aires, 1965).


Reading:

- all of class

- 1/2 of class


Week 7. Reading:


Recomm.: Jean Borde and Mario Góngora, Evolución de la propiedad rural en el Valle de Puange (2 vols., Santiago de Chile, 1956).


Gibson, Aztecs, 220-334.


James Lockhart, "Views of Corporate Self and History in Some Valley of Mexico Towns: Late Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," in George A. Collier et al., eds., The Inca and Aztec States, 1400-1800: Anthropology and History (New York, 1982), 367-393.


Gibson, Aztecs, passim.

Eric Wolf, Sons of the Shaking Earth (Chicago, 1959).

Reading:
1/2 of class

Recomm.: Carlos Sempat Assadourian, El sistema de la economía colonial: mercado interno, regiones y espacio económico (Lima, 1982).

Week 10. The Bourbon Reforms and the Crisis of the State. Nov. 2.
Reading:


Hugh M. Hamill, Jr., *The Hidalgo Revolt* (Gainesville, 1966).


Presentation and discussion of student essays.