

**Course Syllabus: History 5303: W01/Pre-Columbian and Colonial Mexico**

**Fall 2024: Sul Ross State University**

**Dr. Mark Saad Saka**

**830-279-3046/ [Msaka@sulross.edu](mailto:Msaka@sulross.edu)/ (alternative email if a malware shutdown occurs [mark.saka1@yahoo.com](mailto:mark.saka1@yahoo.com))**

**Course Objectives:** This course traces the history of Mexico from its beginnings with the earliest human migrations to the Americas through the formation of indigenous civilizations including the Olmec, Teotihuacan, the Maya, Aztecs, and other indigenous peoples of Mexico. The history of Iberian Civilizations (Spain, Portugal, etc.) from the earliest human migrations to Iberia through the formation of the modern nation-state of Spain under Ferdinand and Isabella will also be covered. The Spanish Conquest of the Americas and the formation of European settler societies in Mexico and the creation of colonial order 1519-1821 will represent the second half of the course. The course will conclude with the Mexican War for Independence 1810-1821.

**Required Readings**

**David Carrasco, Religions of Mesamerica, Second Edition, Waveland Press, 2013, ISBN #978-1478607403**

**Noble David Cook; *Born to Die: Disease and New World Conquest, 1492-1650.* Cambridge University Press, 1998. ISBN # 0-521-62730-3**

**Hernando Cortes, Five Letters of Cortes to the Emperor, edited by J. Bayard Morris, , W.W. Norton, ISBN # 0-393-09877-x (this is a famous account, if you can find another edition, that is fine)**

**Alan Knight, *Mexico: From the Beginning to the Spanish Conquest*, Cambridge University Press, 2002, ISBN # 978-0-521-89195-0**

**Alan Knight, *Mexico: The Colonial Era* Cambridge University Press, 2002, ISBN # 0-521-89196-5**

**Course Requirements:**

- 1. You need to write weekly reviews over the readings. The readings are due on the date assigned, if turned in late it shall result in a letter grade drop every day that it is late.**
- 2. Research and write a paper on a topic of Pre-Columbian or Colonial Mexico. The topic must be approved by me by November 03, 2024. The research paper's requirement is listed below but do not hesitate to ask me for clarification. Fifteen pages, M.K.A. Style formatting.**
- 3. There will be a total of 14 reading assignments, including a book review over Born to Die. Each assignment is worth 100 points. The research paper is worth 500 points. Thus a total of 1000 points; 1800-2000=A; 1600-1799=B; 1400=1599=C; 1200-1399=D; 0-1199=F**

**Marketability Skills of a History Major**

**SLO 1—The history student will demonstrate historical research skills in a logically organized, written paper that is mechanically correct and supported by relevant documentation of historical content.**

**Marketable skills---**Students can identify useful resources from a pool of data.  
Students can select and organize data in a relevant manner.  
Students can make written presentations to various audiences.

**SLO 2—**The history student will demonstrate the ability to write about topics in historiography and how those topics are interpreted.

**Marketable skills---**Students can utilize data to persuade various audiences.  
Students can utilize data to generate and strengthen ideas.  
Students can decipher stances adopted by various individuals.

**SLO 3—**The history student will demonstrate knowledge of American History, World History, and Non-American History.

**Marketable Skills---**Students can meet deadlines in a successful manner.  
Students can discharge responsibilities in an adequate manner.  
Students can manage the absorption of data.

### **Course Structure-Where to Go and How:**

**This course is a web offered and semi-asynchronous. What is semi-asynchronous? Good question, it means that you work at you own pace but you have specific due dates for the reading s and the short essays.**

**You must have regular access to the computer and the internet, the course is to be located on your Blackboard.**

**Distance Education Statement: Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, library resources, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website. Students should submit online assignments through Blackboard or SRSU email, which require secure login information to verify students' identities and to protect students' information. The procedures for filing a student complaint are included in the student handbook. Students enrolled in distance education courses at Sul Ross are expected to adhere to all policies pertaining to academic honesty and appropriate student conduct, as described in the student handbook. Students in web-based courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software, according to the needs and requirements of the course, as outlined on the SRSU website.**

**ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act): Sul Ross State University is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request for accessibility services. Students who need accessibility services should contact Rebecca Wren at 432-837-8691; Ferguson Hall Room 112.**

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### Papers will be evaluated on the following points:

- strength of your historical arguments and content
- how well you have used historical evidence to support your arguments • composition (i.e., spelling, grammar, sentence structure) • form (i.e., correct citation)

**Academic Honesty** the University expects all students to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is beyond reproach and to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of their classroom. The University may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty, including but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work, plagiarism, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials. “Cheating” includes: 1. Copying from another student’s test paper, laboratory report, other report, or computer files, data listings, and/or programs, or allowing another student to copy from same. 2. Using, during a test, materials not authorized by the person giving the test. 3. Collaborating, without authorization, with another person during an examination or in preparing academic work. 4. Knowingly, and without authorization, using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, soliciting, copying, or possessing, in whole or in part, the contents of a no administered test. 5. Substituting for another student; permitting any other person, or otherwise assisting any other person to substitute for oneself or for another student in the taking of an examination or test or the preparation of academic work to be submitted for academic credit. 6. Bribing another person to obtain a non-administered test or information about a no administered test. 7. Purchasing, or otherwise acquiring and submitting as one’s own work any research paper or other writing assignment prepared by an individual or firm. This section does not apply to the typing of a rough and/or final version of an assignment by a professional typist. 8. "Plagiarism" means the appropriation and the unacknowledged

incorporation of another's work or idea in one's own written work offered for credit. 9. "Collusion" means the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing written work offered for credit. 10. "Abuse of resource materials" means the mutilation, destruction, concealment, theft or alteration of materials provided to assist students in the mastery of course materials. 11. "Academic work" means the preparation of an essay, dissertation, thesis, report, problem, assignment, or other project that the student submits as a course requirement or for a grade. 12. "Falsification of Data" means the representation, claim, or use of research, data, statistics, records, files, results, or information that is falsified, fabricated, fraudulently altered, or otherwise misappropriated or misrepresented.

All academic dishonesty cases may be first considered and reviewed by the faculty member. If the faculty member believes that an academic penalty is necessary, he/she may assign a penalty but must notify the student of his/her right to appeal to the department chair, the dean and eventually, to the Provost and Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs before imposition of the penalty. At each step in the process, the student shall be entitled to written notice of the offense and/or of the administrative decision, an opportunity to respond, and an impartial disposition as to the merits of his/her case. The decision of the Provost and Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs shall be final.

### Course Outline

August 26-first day of class, please email me when you have read the syllabus and have ordered the books.

August 30-Reading Assignment # 1 Due: "Mexico: From the Beginnings to the Spanish Conquest" Part I to the Classic Collapse

Sept. 06-Reading Assignment # 2 Due: "Mexico: From the Beginning, Part II the Post-Classic Era

Sept. 13-Reading Assignment # 3 Due "Mexico: From the Beginning, Part III, Spain and the Conquest.

Sept. 20-Reading Assinment # 4-David Carrasco, Religions of Mesoamerica" Chapters One and Two

Sept. 27-Reading Assignment # 5-David Carrasco, Religions of Mesoamerica, Chapters Three and Four

October 04-Reading Assignment # 6-David Carrasco, Religions of Mesoamerican Chapter Five

Oct. 11-Readong Assignment # 7, Five Letters of Cortes, Letter One

Oct. 18-Reading Assignment # 8- Five Letters of Cortes, Letter Two

Oct. 25-Reading Assignment # 9-Five letters of Cortes, Letter Three

Nov. 01-Reading Assignment #10-Five Letters of Cortes, Letters Four and Five

**Nov. 08-Reading Assignment # 11 Due: Mexico The Colonial Era, “Part I, sections I through V, Military and Material Conquest to Hacienda and Village.”**

**Nov, 08- Your research paper topic is due this date**

**Nov. 08-last day to withdraw from course with the letter grade of W.**

**Nov. 15-Reading Assignment #12 Due: Mexico The Colonial Era “Part I, sections VI through X Acculturation and Resistance to Theoretical Reprise”**

**Nov. 22-Reading Assignment # 13 Due: Mexico The Colonial Era Part II, sections 1-5**

**Nov. 29--Reading Assignment # 14 Due-Book Review over Born to Die: Disease and New World Conquest, 1492-1650.**

**Dec. 10-Research Paper Due**

**Questions for Assignments to Think About LL ESSAYS SHOULD BE FROM 1,000 TO 1,500 WORDS. The letters from Cortes Assignments can be 300 to 500 words.**

**Questions over Mexico; From the Beginning to the Spanish Conquest by Alan Knight.**

**1. How does Alan Knight interpret history through a materialist lens? He examines Mesoamerican history through a material process and the origins of the first Meso-Americans as well as the development of the Classic Civilizations of the Olmec, Teotihuacan and the Maya as well as others? How did agriculture develop and transform early Mexican civilization? How did chieftains and political structures emerge? How did different regions such as southern, northern, and central differ? What are some common civilizational characteristics of these civilizations, the rise and their declines and in some cases their collapse.**

**2. What are characteristics of the post-Classic Civilizations such as the Toltec and the Aztecs? How did they differ from the Classic and Pre-Classic civilizations? How did the Aztecs revolutionize government and empire in Meso-America? What were the characteristics of Aztec society, governance, military, law and religion? How do these characteristics represent a continuity in Meso-American civilization as a unique region of the world's heritage civilizations?**

**3. What characterized Spanish civilization? What were the influences on Spain that shaped its social, cultural, religious, and martial values? How did Spain conquer the Caribbean and then extend its imperial conquests to the Mexican mainland?**

## **Questions over Religions of Mesoamerica by David Carrasco**

### **Chapters One and Two:**

**1. How should one approach Mesoamerican religions? What are some of the sources? What are common spiritual and religious components of Mesoamerican cosmology? What are our sources for understanding Mesoamerican religious concepts? What does the author mean by the terms "worldmaking", "worldcentering", and "worldrenewing"? How does history, and cosmovisions intersect in Mesoamerican religions? What about astronomy, plants, conflicts, and geographic place in the rise and fall of Mesoamerican civilizations such as the Olmec, the Maya, Teotihuacan, Tollan and the Aztecs?**

### **Chapters Three and Four**

**1. What are major features of the Aztec world-view, including sacred space, cosmovision, words, and rites? What is the spiritual logic of human sacrifice in Aztec religion? What does the author mean by the Cosmic Tree in Mayan beliefs, what about Kingship. How did the Calendar represent the regeneration of time in the Maya world-view?**

### **Chapter Five**

**1. How did the syncretism of Mesoamerican religions and Cosmovision with that of the new spiritual order brought by the Spanish and Catholicism? How does the Virgin of Guadalupe represent this synthesis? Dia De Los Muertos? Fiestas and Festivals in general?**

## **Questions over Five Letters by Hernando Cortes.**

**1. This is a primary account of the Spanish Conquest of Mexico as written by Hernando Cortes himself? What is the difference and value of a primary source? What are some benefits of a primary source? What are some drawbacks? These letters were written to the Emperor of Spain? Could that have affected these letters and why? Did you enjoy rereading the actual accounts by one of the most pivotal figures in Mexican and even world history.**

## **Questions over Mexico: The Colonial Era by Alan Knight**

**1. For Part I, sections I.-V. === How did Spain militarily and materially conquer Mexico? What are some of the material features such as plants, animals, weapons, and such. What labor structures such as the encomienda were imposed on the Mexican Indians? What does the author mean by the "spiritual conquest of Mexico"? How did the Conversion of the Aztecs, Maya and other Indigenous groups play out? Who conquered whom? What political structures did Spain impose on the Mexican Indians? How did the conquest of the North unfold and how did it differ from that of the Central and Southern regions? Finally, how did a new agrarian structure and its relationship between Village and Hacienda emerge as the dominant feature of rural Mexican society?**

**2. For Part I, sections VI. Through X. === How did Mexican Indians resist the Spanish Conquest in the Central Valley? How did they resist in the Southern**

**and Northern regions? Is there a common factor? How did the Empire work? Finally, how and what events unfolded that changed colonial Mexican society and class and race relations as well as the relationship between Colonial Mexico and Imperial Spain? Finally, how did the struggle for independence unfold? Who was Padre Miguel Hidalgo and Jose Maria Morelos and how did Spain fight to keep the Empire? How did events result in Mexico becoming independent?**

**Question for the book “Born To Die: Disease and New World Conquest, 1492-1650.**

**1. We often focus on military and political forces in the shaping of world history? What about disease and pathogens? What role did disease play in the Spanish and by extension peoples from Europe play in the greatest catastrophic collapse of populations ranging from Canada to Argentina? How did disease destabilize Mexican and South American civilizations? Why were Native Americans of the entire Western Hemisphere so vulnerable to Eastern hemisphere disease?**