

Religion in Latin America
840:330; 590:330
Monday/Thursday 8:10-9:30am, Scott Hall 116
Spring 2013

Instructor: Hilit Surowitz-Israel

Office Hours: Wednesday 10-11:30 or by appointment, Miller Hall, room 107

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Description:

This course will explore the various religious traditions and experiences in Meso- and South America from the indigenous religions of the pre-Columbian period to the Pentecostal revivals of the late 20th century. We will survey the most visible traditions, such as Popular Catholicism and Pentecostalism, minority religious traditions, such as Judaism and Islam, and also the lesser-known religions of Umbanda and Candomblé. A socio-cultural historical framework will give us the opportunity to consider both intellectual religious historical narratives as well as lived religious practices. Course themes will include encounter, immigration, colonialism, gender, and resistance.

Required Texts:

Course textbooks are available at Barnes & Noble, a Rutgers University Bookstore.

❖ David Carrasco, *Religions of Mesoamerica: Cosmovision and Ceremonial Centers* (Waveland Press Inc., 1998).

ISBN-10: 1577660064, **ISBN-13:** 978-1577660064

❖ Anna L. Peterson, *Martyrdom and the Politics of Religion: Progressive Catholicism in El Salvador's Civil War* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997).

ISBN-10: 0791431827, **ISBN-13:** 978-0791431825

❖ R. Andrew Chestnut, *Born Again in Brazil: The Pentecostal Boom and the Pathogens of Poverty* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press 1997).

ISBN-10: 0813524067, **ISBN-13:** 978-0813524061

❖ Additional readings for the course are available on SAKAI.

Other readings or media may be assigned during the course of the semester.

Learning Goals:

h. Understand the bases and development of human and societal endeavors across time and place.

k. Explain the development of some aspect of a society or culture over time, including the history of ideas or history of science.

Assessment: Via embedded exam questions and embedded written assignments.

Attendance & Participation

Students are expected to attend each class on time. Attendance will be taken at each class meeting. You are permitted three unexcused absences. Following the third unexcused absence 1/3 of a letter grade will be deducted for each unexcused absence. Students who encounter any extended problem with absences, for example, for medical or family emergencies, or religious reasons, must inform me in writing about the reason and duration of the absence. Decisions on excused absences will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Short quizzes will be given on a regular basis. There will be no make-ups for in-class quizzes or exams.

Student participation is an integral component for the success of this class. Course participants will be expected to arrive to class on time, and prepared to discuss the assigned readings. **Please bring assigned readings to class as we will frequently consult the text.** Participation not only means asking questions and involving oneself in the classroom discussion, it also means actively listening to others.

Requirements:

- ❖ Participation, in-class assignments, attendance (5%)
- ❖ Quizzes (10%)
- ❖ In-class midterm (25%)
- ❖ Primary Source Analysis (15%)
- ❖ Essay II (15%)
- ❖ Final exam (30%)
- ❖ I encourage all students to come to office hours at least once during the semester.

***Students must complete all course components to fulfill the requirements of this class.

Written work will be graded on the basis of content, clarity of argument, quality of writing, and how well it analyzes the material and answers the questions. Written work, except for that which is a classroom assignment, must be typed (double-spaced, 12 pt. font), and spell-checked. One letter grade per day will be deducted for late papers unless you have a written medical excuse.

Classroom Policies:

- ❖ Plagiarism and cheating will be penalized according to the full extent of University policy. Please consult Rutgers University's *Policy on Academic Integrity for Undergraduate and Graduate Students*:

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml#plagiarism>

❖ Students with disabilities who require accommodations should provide me with their “accommodation letter” from the Office of Disability Services as soon as possible so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Please consult the website of the Office of Disability Services for further information:

http://sas.rutgers.edu/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=135&Itemid=117

❖ Note that I do not accept assignments submitted by email. All assignments must be submitted in hard-copy on the day that they are due.

❖ Evaluations will cover *all* course material.

•Schedule•

Thursday 1/24

Introduction to Course

Review Syllabus

Monday 1/28

Religions of Mesoamerica

Carrasco, *Religions of Mesoamerica* [ROM], xv-19

Primary sources: *The Place Where One Becomes Deified Codex Matritensis, 1562-1575*;
Our Grandfathers, Our Grandmothers Codex Matritensis, 1562-1575

Thursday 1/31

Religions of Mesoamerica cont.

Carrasco, *ROM*, 20-57

Blood of Kings (film)

Monday 2/4

Religions of Mesoamerica cont.

Carrasco, *ROM*, 58-91

Primary Sources: *Maya Afterlife* [Diego de Landa, 1566]; excerpts from *Popul Vuh*

Thursday 2/7 (Quiz #1)

Religions of Mesoamerica cont.

Carrasco, *ROM*, 92-123

Primary sources: *Maya Religiosity* [Diego Duran, 1580]

Monday 2/11

Views of Conquest and Encounter

Carrasco, *ROM*, 124-153

Primary Source: excerpts from Las Casas' *Destruction of the West Indies*

Thursday 2/14

Conquest and Encounter cont.

In Class Film (PBS DVD)

Primary Sources: *Imperialism Triumphant* [Christopher Columbus, 1492]

Monday 2/ 18 (Quiz #2)

The Church in colonial Americas

“Christianity in the New World” from John Lynch, *New Worlds: A Religious History of Latin America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012).

Film: *Mission*

Thursday 2/21 (Primary Source Analysis due in class)

Film: *Mission*

Monday 2/25

African Religions in the Americas

“Introduction” from Joseph Murphy, *Working the Spirit: Ceremonies of the African Diaspora*

“Introduction” and “Historical Background” from Margarite Fernandez Olmos’ *Creole Religions of the Caribbean: An Introduction from Vodou and Santeria to Obeah and Espiritismo (Religion, Race, and Ethnicity)*

Thursday 2/28

Candomblé

Primary Sources: *Catholic Mass and Candomble in Bahia* [Kathleen de Azevedo, 1997]; *The Taste of Blood: Spirit Possession in Brazilian Candomblé* [Jim Wafer]; *Guia do Pai de Santo no Candomblé* [Ogã Gimbereua]

Film: *Bahia, Africa in the Americas*

Monday 3/4 (Quiz #3)

Umbanda

Umbanda by Lindsay Hale

Primary Sources: *A Night of Umbanda* [Lindsay Hale, 1991]

Thursday 3/7

Islam

-excerpts from Micahel Gomez, *Black Crescent: The Experience and Legacy of African Muslims in the Americas* (Cambridge University Press, 2005)

-excerpts from Sylviane Diouf, *Servants of Allah: African Muslims Enslaved in the Americas* (New York: New York University Press, 1998).

Monday 3/11

Judaism

Rowland, R., in Bernardini & Fiering, The Jews and the Expansion of Europe to the West, “New Christian, Marrano, Jew” and Wachtel, Nathan, “Marrano Religiosity”

Excerpts from New Spain Inquisition Records

Thursday 3/14

*** midterm (in-class)

Monday 3/18

NO CLASS – SPRING RECESS

Thursday 3/21

NO CLASS – SPRING RECESS

Monday 3/25
NO CLASS

Thursday 3/28
Catholicism (Vatican II and Medellin)
Primary Sources TBA

Monday 4/1
Popular Catholicism
Peterson, *Religion and the Politics of Martyrdom* [RPM], pgs. 1-42

Thursday 4/4 (Quiz #4)
Peterson, [RPM], pgs. 43-72

Monday 4/8
Peterson, [RPM], pgs. 72-92

Thursday 4/11
Peterson, [RPM], pgs. 93-136

Monday 4/15
Peterson, [RPM], pgs. 137-182

Thursday 4/18
Chestnut, *Born Again in Brazil* [BAB], pgs. 1-48

Monday 4/22 (Quiz #5)
Chestnut, [BAB], pgs. 51-72

Thursday 4/25 (Essay #2 due in class)
Film: *Romero*

Monday 4/29
Chestnut, [BAB], pgs. 73-91

Thursday 5/2
Chestnut, [BAB], pgs. 92-128

Monday 5/6
Chestnut, [BAB], pgs. 129-174
(and course summary)