"Thus they ruined and depopulated all this island which we beheld not long ago; and it excites pity, and great anguish to see it deserted, and reduced to a solitude." [Bartolomé de las Casas]

The belief that the sixteenth-century Spanish invasions of the Americas destroyed the hemisphere’s indigenous peoples is a durable stereotype. While Las Casas was right to argue for the existence of destructive forces unleashed by the arrival of Spaniards on the scene, those who have looked beyond the Dominican’s heartfelt defense of the "Indians" (which was actually a legal argument designed to spur reforms in the colonial system) are finding that the stereotype was equal parts truth and myth. Today when one travels to Mexico, Guatemala, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia what seems to be indigenous culture and “Indian” people are everywhere, from the kinds of foods people eat to the ways in which Latin Americans worship God. The truth is that with some exceptions neither indigenous peoples nor their cultures were ever completely wiped out in what we call Spanish America, nor did they lack a capacity to survive, to adapt, and to resist the situations and systems that confronted them. The societies and cultures we encounter in the region today emerged from this kind of dynamic historical. Even if Hernando Cortés, Francisco Pizarro, and the conquistadores eliminated the empires of the Aztecs and Incas, the citizens of those empires and their descendants lived on despite military defeats, devastating epidemics of introduced European diseases, and dehumanizing Iberian prejudices.

History 482/582 investigates this fascinating process of cultural evolution. We will focus on the sedentary peoples of Mesoamerica (a region
comprised today of Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, and other parts of Central America) and the Andes (Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, northern Chile, and northwestern Argentina). Our goal is to understand Mesoamerican and Andean cultures prior to the Spanish invasions of the early sixteenth century, and then to examine the impact of those invasions on indigenous life and culture during the long colonial centuries. At the end of the term we will also take a very brief look at the state of the survivors of conquest in modern Mesoamerica and the Andes. Whenever possible, we will be coming at things from an indigenous, rather than European, perspective thanks to a number of sources produced by the supposedly conquered peoples themselves. Transcriptions of some of these documents are posted elsewhere on the HIST 482/582 Blackboard site, and at least three of the books required for the course also reproduce translated indigenous voices of various kinds.

To sum up, what you are expected to take away from the course is as follows:

- To understand the complex realities of pre-contact and post-conquest indigenous societies in Mexico and Peru, and in so doing recognize the difference between stereotype/myth and more nuanced readings of history;
- to let what might be called the voices of the supposedly voiceless be heard, and to learn how to listen to them - or, other words, to learn how to recognize indigenous people as agents in their own lives, without, however, sugar-coating the colonial realities that faced them;
- to understand how and why indigenous cultures, in contact and dialogue with “Old World” ones, forged unique new cultures in Mexico and Peru, cultures that continued to evolve into the national period and which make Latin America what it is today;
- and, to hone your skills in terms of reading analytically and writing persuasively in relation to the interpretation and analysis of evidence and opinion, skills that will serve you well in many aspects of your lives after you leave the UO.

**BOOKS:**

The following books are required for all undergraduates enrolled in the course. You may purchase them at the Duck Store. It may be possible to find
used copies at Smith Family Books (or at some of the other used bookstores in town), or by way of Powell’s City of Books website or Amazon.com. A copy of each of these books will also be found on reserve for our course in the Knight Library.


Graduate students enrolled in HIST 582 have two additional required books:


The Reading calendar lays out a schedule for reading all required materials, which will include not only these books, but also certain brief items (usually primary materials or website links) posted on our Blackboard site. Our site also features a “Course Bibliography” that has a longer list of recommended items, some of which are being held on reserve for our course at the Knight Library. You may be able to find used copies of at least some of these things
at places like Smith Family Books if you decide to purchase your own.

ASSIGNMENTS

Course grades for undergraduates will be based on several elements:

- Participation and attendance (10% of your grade), including input during in-class discussions
- A take-home exam, due **Thursday, February 6** (30% of your grade);
- An analytical report on a colonial-era indigenous language play (translated into English), which will be performed in our class), due **Tuesday, February 25** (25% of your grade);
- A final paper, due **Wednesday, March 19** (35% of your grade, taking the place of a final exam). You should actually start on this project early in the term; I'll explain about this in our first class meeting.

Graduates students must write an additional paper, a study of the Tupac Amaru Rebellion that took place in eighteenth-century Peru, a paper that is to be based on materials in the Stavig and Schmidt book as well as contextual information gleaned from the Kicza book and relevant materials assigned to undergraduates. The due date for this paper will be announced later in the term. Instructions for all of these assignments will be discussed in class and will be posted elsewhere on this Blackboard site.

A NOTE ON PENALTIES FOR LATE WORK:

Take-home exams and play papers not received during class on the due date, but turned in later that same day, will be assessed a fine of 3 points. This fine will also be assessed if a student turning in his or her paper at the beginning of the class period does not stay for the rest of that class meeting. Exams and play papers received after the day they were supposed to have been turned in will be assessed a fine of 5 points per day. Final papers will not be accepted any later than Friday of finals week.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR AND ETIQUETTE:

Please try to arrive to class on time. Do not leave the classroom while class is in session, as this is disruptive. Let me know if you will have to leave a class meeting early on any particular day. Please turn off your cell phone. My permission must be obtained for the use of any other electronic device (including laptop computers) during class meetings. Please do not read
anything unrelated to course content during class meetings (such as websites, Youtube videos or other visual materials, or text messages from friends, relatives, or lovers). Do not talk unless you are joining into class activities and do not engage in any other kind of potentially distracting behavior; if you would rather not be in class, please drop the course. Do come to class awake and ready to learn and participate if you want to get as much as possible out of HIST 482/582.

**COURSE CALENDAR**

**WEEK 1**

Tuesday, Jan. 7: The Cultural Landscapes of the Americas

Thursday, Jan. 9: Chariots of the Gods?

**WEEK 2**

Tuesday, Jan. 14: The Incas: Myths and Realities

Thursday, Jan. 16: The Mayas: Peaceful Theocracies or Warrior Kingdoms?

**WEEK 3**

Tuesday, Jan. 21: Nahuas and Aztecs: An American Empire in the 15th and Early 16th Centuries

Thursday, Jan. 23: Nahuas and Aztecs, cont.

**WEEK 4**

Tuesday, Jan. 28: The Spanish Invasions Begin

Thursday, Jan. 30: The Spanish Invasions Continue

**WEEK 5**

Tuesday, Feb. 4: Reading Workshop and Review: Assessing the Pre-Contact era and the Spanish Invasions

Thursday, Feb. 6: Secret Judgments of God: The Demographic Disaster

***TAKE-HOME EXAM DUE IN CLASS***
WEEK 6

Tuesday, Feb. 11: The Process of Cultural Survival and Change

Thursday, Feb. 13: The Spiritual Conquest

WEEK 7

Tuesday, Feb. 18: The Play’s the Thing

Thursday, Feb. 20: Reading Workshop and Review: The Spiritual Conquest Reconsidered

WEEK 8

Tuesday, Feb. 25: Land and Labor, Blood, Sweat, and Tears

***PLAY ANALYSIS PAPER DUE***

Thursday, Feb. 27: Altepetl and Civitas: Views of Community and History

WEEK 9

Tuesday, Mar. 4: Martyrdom and Idolatry

Thursday, Mar. 6: Murder, Resistance, and Rebellion

WEEK 10

Tuesday, Mar. 11: El Indio in the National Period

Thursday, Mar. 13: Workshop and Review: El Indio as a Metaphor for Indigenous History

FINALS WEEK

Wednesday, Mar. 19: FINAL PAPERS DUE IN MY OFFICE, 355 MCKENZIE HALL, BY 5:00 P.M.