HISTORY 448:
Imperial Spain and Portugal

Course Description:

Agents of the Iberian empires—Spain and Portugal—appeared on the shores of the Americas from the 15th century, which marked the beginning of the modern era of colonialism. Under the Treaty of Tordesillas, a line of demarcation was drawn up about halfway between the Cape Verde Islands (already Portuguese) and the islands encountered by Columbus on his voyage to America. Lands to the east would belong to Portugal, and lands to the west, to Spain. But this division was constantly contested, and lured by the spices in the East, they ventured further, achieving an almost complete domination of the globe. At its peak, it was the “Empire on which the Sun Never Sets.”

Between the 16th to the 19th centuries, the Iberian empires of Spain and Portugal intensified their colonizing efforts in the Americas, Africa, Asia and the Pacific. They undertook a distinct program of colonization shaped by geography, regional networks, religious practices, and the leadership and nature of indigenous societies in these regions. Both empires confronted established empires and dynasties, local indigenous religions and Islam, and spent a lot of effort on converting indigenous people to Christianity, fighting to protect their trade routes and ports from both Islamic and European competitors, and attempting to transform indigenous practices through a process called Hispanization. All these attempts, and their interactions with American, Asian and Pacific societies, shaped the very nature of their Iberian societies, especially with regards to law, economics, politics and culture.
This course will focus on how the lives of Spanish and Portuguese colonizers entwined with the lives of indigenous peoples in the Americas, Asia and the Pacific. It seeks to explore the history of the Iberian presence in these regions, and through themes such as religion, trade, language, class and notions of power, ethnicity, and identity, the course will examine the transformation in political, economic and cultural life experienced by indigenous societies through their interactions with the agents of the Iberian empires.

Much of the Spanish empire’s colonizing efforts began in Seville, which was the political, commercial and navigational center of the European world from the 15th century. From Seville, traders, merchants, explorers, missionaries, and mercenaries gathered for various reasons: to buy and sell goods, to seek audience and patronage with the royal leaders, enlist in the continuing crusades of the Reconquista, or to simply seek adventure in the unknown world of the Americas and Asia and the Pacific.

Through this Study Abroad program, we would go back in time, to literally walk the streets where these adventurers treded as they embarked on a journey of exploration and colonization. In this course, the students will be taken on a cultural and intellectual journey to understand Spain’s rise as an empire through visits to such monuments such as the Catedral de Sevilla, the Alcázar, the Parque María Luisa, the Rio Guadalquivir and the Archivos de las Indias. But it will also take them to the Americas, and to Asia and the Pacific, to the place they now call home, to see how the American, Asian and Pacific peoples welcomed these travelers in order to understand how their societies were profoundly changed by these encounters. In Seville, we will see and feel how the Old world encountered and encounter the New, how the world became global, and how the effects of colonialism continue to affect the societies of Spain and those in the Americas, Asia and the Pacific.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

Students who successfully complete this course will:

1. Identify crucial developments in the history of the Iberian empires of Spain and Portugal in the Americas, in Asia and the Pacific and will have a good knowledge of the complex transnational history of these regions.

2. Articulate past and current critical issues and debates about the history and legacy of Iberian colonialism in the Americas, Asia and the Pacific.

3. Demonstrate skills in critical thinking and historical interpretation through close readings of both primary and secondary texts. They will, therefore, acquire proficiency in working with and interpreting primary and secondary sources. Provide summaries and analysis of materials and therefore demonstrate their writing and oral skills through essays, presentations and other assignments.

4. Exhibit some basic familiarity with Spanish language and culture through conversational exercises and journal entries about daily experiences in Spain. They will, therefore, immerse themselves in the rich culture and history of Seville and Spain.

5. By living and studying in Seville, students have the unique opportunity to see how “history comes alive” and gain a deeper appreciation of how history shapes contemporary societies.
Requirements:

Students from diverse backgrounds are welcome and no previous knowledge of the subject is required. The purpose of the Study Abroad is to familiarize and open ourselves to the surroundings and history of Seville and modern Spain. Requirements in this course are therefore flexible and grades for the course will be centered around essays reflecting on the assigned books and readings, as well as a journal of the student’s weekly reflections on the history of and their experiences in Spain.

Grades in the class will be based on the following:

1. Discussion of Readings: Articles and Books (4@5 points each) 25 points
2. Imagining Iberia Class Activity and Final Research Project 40 points
3. Weekly Journal in Spain 10 points
4. Compulsory Attendance at Field Trips 15 points
   --1-2 page essay reflecting on trips
5. Participation and discussion in class 10 points

TOTAL: 100 points

Note on Cultural Visits/Field Trips:

As part of the Study Abroad program, you are required to go to ALL of the Field Trips organized by ICS. Our trips to Cordoba, Granada, Cadiz and Morocco are relevant to our interrogations about empire and identity and before and after each trip, we will reflect on the rise and legacy of Spain as an empire.

ICS has also organized 5 cultural visits around the city of Seville for the students of the Study Abroad Program. For this class, you are required to go to 4 out of the 5 visits, particularly the Alcazar, Plaza de Espana and the Catedral, as these sites will be relevant to our class. You can choose the fourth one from the list.

All students must write a 1-page reflection/essay for each trip and site visited. Your attendance to these trips/visits and your reflection essays will be part of your overall grade.

Final Research Project: Imaging Iberia Activity
[See details at the end of the syllabus.]

Writing Feedback:

The instructor will put comments on the students’ papers and will meet regularly with students to give them feedback on their writing. At any time, students can approach the instructor for advice on how to improve their writing.
**Readings:**

**Main Readings:**


**Supplementary Readings:**


**For background reading:**


Political, economic, social, and cultural issues are analyzed through close reading of primary sources, such as eyewitness accounts, which are placed within broader transnational, transdynastic, and transimperial contexts by engaging with a selection of recent scholarship.
The schedule is organized around particular themes. Readings and topics for discussion for each class are indicated below:

**Part I: Iberia**

**Week 1: Introduction**

1. Bienvenido (Welcome) a Seville! Introduction and Syllabus

2. Two Spains

   Kamen, Chapter 1, “Foundations.”
   J.H. Elliot, “Union of the Crowns” and “Reconquest and Conquest,” in *Imperial Spain.*

   Cultural Visit #1: Plaza de Espana (Required)

   Field Trip: Jerez/Bolonia (Required)

**Weeks 2-3: The Making of the Iberian Empires**

3. Spain: A Society in Conflict

   H. Kamen, “The Catholic Monarchs” up to page 45, in *A Society of Conflict.*
   In Laulima.

4. Imperial Spain

   W. Maltby, “Imperial Beginnings,” in *Rise and Fall.* Book.
Cultural Visit #2: Alcazar (Required)
Reflections on the *Reconquista*, Royal Patronage of Explorations, and Colonization.

5. Portugal

In *Laulima.*

6. The European Empire

Kamen, “Early Western Empire,” in *Empire.*

**First Article Review Due.**
Cultural Visit #3: Italica
Reflections on the Imperial Origins of Spain

**Part II: The Americas**

![Historical Map of the Americas](image)

**Weeks 4-6: The New World**

7. Columbus and Beginning Explorations

E. Thornbrough, “The World Columbus Discovered,” in *The World of Christopher Columbus.*
Elliot, “Part II: A Wider World,” in *Spain, Europe and the Wider World.*
8. Conquest of the Americas

Elliot, “Confronting American Peoples” and “Empire and Identity” in *Empires of the Atlantic World*.

Field Trip: Granada (Required)
Reflections on Christendom and *Reconquista*, Spain’s Rise as Empire, The Old and the New World.

9. The Atlantic Slave Trade

Lockhart and Otte, *Letters and People of the Spanish Indies* Altman,
"Spanish Migration to the Americas"

10. Portugal and Brazil


**Second Article Review Due.**

Cultural Visit #4: Catedral (Required)
Reflections on the Power of the Catholic Church, and the *Patronato Real* (Union of Church and State).

11. Trip to the Archivos de Indias.

We will meet at the Archivos to explore how the Spanish “organized” and “archived” their empire. Students will start to think about their topics of their research projects.

**Part III: The Lure of Spices**
**Week 7: Portugal in Asia**

12. Portugal in the Moluccas Islands

Andaya, “Part One: The Two Worlds,” in *The World of Maluku.*

13. Portuguese Asia

E. Van Veen, “The Portuguese in Asia,” in *Decay or Defeat?*

**Week 8: Spain in the Philippines**

14. Magellan’s Voyage to the Pacific


15. Las Islas Filipinas


**Third Article Review Due.**

Cultural Visit #5: Museo de Bellas Artes
Field Trip #3: Morocco (Required)
Reflections on Iberian and Islamic Cultures and the Legacies of Spanish Colonialism.

**Part IV: The Empire on Which the Sun Never Sets**
Week 9: The Sword and the Cross: *Reconquista* in the Americas, Asia and the Pacific

16. Pacifying peoples in the Americas, Asia and the Pacific


17. The Spread of Christianity in the Americas, Asia and Pacific

Shwartz, “Conversos and Mariscos” and “Christian Tolerance,” in *All can be Saved*.
Fourth Article Review Due.

Field Trip #4: Cordoba (Required)
Reflections on imperial motivations, science and modernity, Spain and Portugal.

**Weeks 10-12: Imagining Iberia Class Activity**
See separate sheet.
**Activity Write-up Due.**

**Part V: The Sun Always Sets on the Empire**
Week 13: Losing the and Haunted by Empire

23. Articulating Resistance, Independence and Identity

Maltby, “Imperial Decline” in The Rise and Fall of the Spanish Empire.
Ernst van Veen, Decay or defeat?: An inquiry into the Portuguese decline in Asia, 1580-1645 (Leiden, 2000).

24. Iberian Colonial Legacies in Asia and the Pacific

Maltby, “The End of the Empire,” in The Rise and the Fall of the Spanish Empire.

FINAL PAPER ON PROJECT DUE.
RESEARCH/CLASS ACTIVITY:
IMAGINING IBERIA IN THE AMERICAN AND ASIAN/PACIFIC WORLDS

General Instructions:

1. Each student will pick a scenario among the choices outlined here. Some issues to consider:
   --What was the world like from the 15th to 17th centuries?
   --What were the political developments and cultural values that shaped this world?

2. Imagine yourself as the person in the scenario and think about what your thoughts and actions
   would be in this scenario. Discuss different possibilities/actions for your chosen person/s.

3. Plan your presentation. Each student will make a presentation in class. What kind of
   presentation would you like to do? Reporting? Powerpoint? Role playing? A dialogue? A
   narration? Each presentation should be about 15-20 minutes long. There will be a Q&A after
   each presentation.

4. Please use our readings, articles and other materials, but please just don’t rely on Wikipedia
   and other online sources. You can access books and articles from the internet, so it would be good
   to use them.

5. As a final project, you need to prepare a write-up of your presentation. This write-up should be
   between 5-10 (maximum) pages. Total points including the presentation is 30 points.
The Setting: The Iberian-American-Asian-Pacific Worlds in the 15th-17th Centuries

Scenario I: Member or Supporter of the Spanish Crown

You are a member of the Royal Household of the Hapsburg Empire. A close confidant and adviser to King Charles V, you are there when the Crown is thinking about colonial expansion. Or you are someone who had aspirations to become a Conquistador and had concrete plans to govern in the Americas. The previous monarchs had financed the trip of Christopher Columbus, which led Spain to conquer the Americas. But now you are dealing with a situation—should Spain expand its territories further? Why or why not? What should your motivations for colonial expansion? And how should you proceed with colonization, taking into consideration their experiences in the Americas? Should Spain have the same policies? What effects would Spain want in its further expansion? How could Spain ensure the success of their colonial enterprises?

Scenario II: Indigenous/Native American on the Spanish Encounter

You are a Native American who is part of a great empire in the Americas—probably the Aztec or Inca Empires. You have a respected leader but your community is divided about supporting your leader. White people from a foreign land arrive in your community. They give you gifts and offer you baptism. But then you notice dramatic changes in your community. Many people are dying from diseases. Your leader is threatened by the demands of the foreigners. What will you do in these circumstances? Will you support your leader or give your allegiance to the powerful white foreigner? How will you convince other people of your community to follow your decision? What will be the consequences of your decision?

Scenario III: An African Slave

As a person in Africa, you have become a much desired commodity in the Atlantic Slave Trade, where Europeans compete for in the capture and sale of slaves. While there was slavery in your society in the past, this new trade is particularly horrendous, and here, you find yourself forcibly captured by white traders and transported to the Americas. You endure the brutal and inhumane “Middle Passage” as you were chained at the bottom of the ship, packed like sardines with other slaves, starving and lying in filth. And then in the Americas, you are sold at an auction and are now owned by a white plantation landlord. Imagine two kinds of slaves: One who was captured and transported to the Americas, and another who was sold, lived and worked in the plantation.

Scenario IV: A Jesuit Missionary

During the 15th to the 17th centuries, the Church is on a mission—to spread Christianity and to save infidels and pagans from eternal damnation. You are a Jesuit missionary who believes in spreading the Good News to all people—especially the savages in the New World and Asia. But you are also a member of the most powerful institution in the world. How will you carry out your mission? How will you convert the pagans and savages? What are the challenges and temptations that you face in carrying out your mission? If you are successful, how will you transform the society using your powerful position? How will you deal with the State who feels threatened by you and wants to curb your power? How would you like to be remembered as a missionary and part of the Spanish Empire?
Scenario V: A Portuguese Soldier and/or Mercenary (or a Soldier of Fortune)

During the 15th to 17th centuries, as a Portuguese, your country is involved in an intense rivalry with Spain. The official position of Portugal (following the Treaty of Tordesillas) is to explore and conquer the lands to the West of the demarcation line. Even though just a small country, with limited resources and personnel, Portugal conquers Brazil, parts of Africa, and many areas in Asia. There are many opportunities to be part of the Portuguese colonizing forces. Will you join other Portuguese to colonize in the name of Crown and country? Or are you a mercenary, who does not want to be an official agent of the Portuguese Crown, and instead, you want to be your own agent and entrepreneur? So you look for opportunities in the Americas and Asia and work for anybody who will hire you: a Native American Emperor, a Muslim chieftain, Chinese merchants, pirates and European entrepreneurs. Why would you choose to be a Portuguese mercenary than an official member of the colonial government? What will you do as a Portuguese mercenary during this period? What are the benefits to being a mercenary? And what are the disadvantages? Describe your typical activities as a Portuguese soldier and/or mercenary either in the Americas or in Asia.

Scenario VI: A Woman in Iberia and/or in America

As a woman from the 15th to the 17th centuries, there are not much written about you and your role in history. And yet, you are always present…traveling with your husband and family as you settle in the New World. Or you stayed behind in Iberia, involved in the societal changes brought about by the riches from colonizing the Americas and Asia. Imagine two types of women: First, a woman in Iberia. What are the roles you play in the Iberian societies as many men venture into the New World? How do you perceive and participate in the colonizing efforts in the Americas? Do you enjoy the privileges that came with this powerful status? And two, you are a female settler in the Americas. How do you maintain ties with your Iberian roots and forge new relations with the multicultural society of the Americas? Do you participate in the colonial activities of the Iberian government? How do you feel about the natives and their cultures?

Scenario VII: A Sultan, or Muslim chief, in Asia

During the 15th to 17th centuries, you are a ruler of a sultanate in Asia. Your religion is Islam, you are devoted to the religion and you rule according to Islamic law. You also control the most extensive trade network in Southeast Asia. To maintain your control, you welcome many different and diverse traders from all over the world, including the Arabs and the Chinese. And then you meet the white man from a foreign land. They come in peace and bearing gifts. They want to trade with your rich sultanate. They introduce you to their religion and try to convince you to be baptized as a Christian. Faced with this scenario, what will you do as a Sultan or a Muslim chief? Should you trust the new foreigners and welcome them to your land? Should you accept their gifts and their religion? What will you do if they make more demands and eventually threaten to take over your trade, religion, culture and society?