

**Hispanic Studies HISP-302**  
**Discovery and Ethnography: Spanish America, 1492-1590**  
(Hispanic Literature and Culture in English)  
**2012-2013**

**Professor David A. Boruchoff**

**Office address:**

**688 Sherbrooke Street West, rm. 383**

**Office hours:**

**Tuesday and Thursday, 14:30-15:30, or by appointment**

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**Course Description:**

Ethnography--the study and documentation of human cultures--underwent a series of gradual yet profound changes during the first century of European exploration and settlement in the New World as experience of unfamiliar natural phenomena and human practices called into question the certainty of the wisdom derived from classical and ecclesiastical authorities. Focusing on the Caribbean and Mesoamerica, we will examine this process of change and its legacy by considering a variety of primary readings--letters; reports; codices; theatrical works and speeches; scientific, religious, and cultural histories--composed by both European and Amerindian authors of the period. All readings and discussions will be in English, with written assignments done in either English or French, or in Spanish by special permission.

**Required Readings:**

The following five books are available for purchase at the McGill Bookstore:

Columbus, Christopher: *The Four Voyages* (Penguin)

Díaz del Castillo, Bernal: *The Conquest of New Spain* (Penguin)

Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, Álvar: *Chronicle of the Narváez Expedition* (Norton)

Casas, Bartolomé de las: *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies* (Penguin)

Acosta, José de: *Natural and Moral History of the Indies* (Duke UP)

Selections from the following texts are available either on the course website or via McGill's library:

Scillacio, Nicolò: *De insulis meridiani atque indici maris nuper inventis* (website)

Cuneo, Michele da: Letter to Gerolamo Annari (1495) (website)

Vespucci, Amerigo: Letter to Lorenzo di Pier Francesco de Medici (1502) (website)

---: Letter to Piero Soderini (1504) (website)

Fernández de Oviedo, Gonzalo: *Natural History of the West Indies* (website)

Cortés, Hernán: *Letters From Mexico* (library)

Durán, Diego: *History of the Indies of New Spain* (website)

Sahagún, Bernardino de: *General History of the Things of New Spain* (website)

Motolinía: *History of the Indians of New Spain* (website)

Anonymous: "The Nobleman and His Barren Wife" (website)

**Course Requirements and Mark Distribution:**

Students are expected to prepare all required readings and participate actively in class discussion. The two essays are due at the start of class on the dates listed in the syllabus and must conform to the guidelines of the *MLA Handbook* ([www.mcgill.ca/files/library/mla.pdf](http://www.mcgill.ca/files/library/mla.pdf)). Work handed in late is subject to a penalty. No electronic submissions or faxes will be accepted. There are no extra-credit activities.

Class participation.....20%

Short essay (6-7 pages)...due February 12.....20%

Mid-term.....20%

Final essay (12-15 pages)...due April 11.....40%

In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

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### Schedule of Readings and Discussions

Please note: the page numbers are those of the editions indicated in the list of required texts. If no page numbers are given, the whole work is to be read. Class discussion will focus primarily on the pages in bold. All assignments are subject to modification, with changes posted on the course website.

#### I: First Impressions – the Caribbean

<b>January</b>	8	Introduction
	10	Columbus: <i>Four Voyages</i> <b>115-23</b>
	15	Columbus: <i>Four Voyages</i> 27-123 ( <b>37-76</b> )
	17	Columbus: <i>Four Voyages</i> 127-99 Scillacio: <i>De insulis meridiani atque indici maris nuper inventis</i> ( <b>all</b> ) Cuneo: Letter to Gerolamo Annari ( <b>all</b> )
	22	Columbus: <i>Four Voyages</i> 203-317 ( <b>206-26, 283-304</b> ) Vespucci: Letter to Lorenzo di Pier Francesco de Medici ( <b>all</b> ) Vespucci: Letter to Piero Soderini ( <b>all</b> )
	24	Fernández de Oviedo: <i>Natural History of the West Indies</i> ( <b>all</b> )

#### II: The Conquest of Mexico

<b>February</b>	29	Cortés: <i>Letters From Mexico</i> <b>3-46</b>
	31	Cortés: <i>Letters From Mexico</i> <b>47-159</b>
	5	Díaz del Castillo: <i>Conquest of New Spain</i> <b>13-188</b>
	7	Díaz del Castillo: <i>Conquest of New Spain</i> <b>189-307</b>
	12	Díaz del Castillo: <i>Conquest of New Spain</i> <b>Short Essay Due</b>
	14	Nahua accounts in Núñez Cabeza de Vaca: <i>Chronicle</i> <b>133-38</b> Durán: <i>History of the Indies of New Spain</i> <b>460-507</b>
	19	Núñez Cabeza de Vaca: <i>Chronicle</i> <b>3-60</b>
	21	Núñez Cabeza de Vaca: <i>Chronicle</i> <b>60-91</b> Oviedo in Núñez Cabeza de Vaca: <i>Chronicle</i> 95-116 ( <b>100-01, 114-16</b> )
	26	TBA
	28	<b>*Mid-term*</b>
<b>March</b>	5	<b>Study Break</b>
	7	<b>Study Break</b>

#### III: Missionary Ethnography

<b>April</b>	12	Las Casas: <i>Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies</i>
	14	Las Casas: <i>Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies</i>
	19	Sahagún: <i>General History of the Things of New Spain</i>
	21	Sahagún: <i>General History of the Things of New Spain</i>
	26	Motolinía: <i>History of the Indians of New Spain</i> Anonymous: “The Nobleman and His Barren Wife”
	28	TBA
	2	Acosta: <i>Natural and Moral History</i>
	4	TBA
	9	Acosta: <i>Natural and Moral History</i>
	11	Conclusions <b>Final Essay Due</b>