

**Department of Romance Languages
Hunter College-CUNY
SPAN 791 Summer 2016
Decentering the Spanish Conquest: The Indigenous Experience in the Canary Islands
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday
10:00-12:30pm**



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Office hours by appointment

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COURSE DESCRIPTION: The course “Decentering the Spanish Conquest: The Indigenous Experience in the Canary Islands” reexamines the Spanish Conquest of the Americas and the Canary Islands from a postcolonial perspective. Through the study of historical, literary, artistic, and cultural texts, students will read about the experiences of the Indigenous Inhabitants of the Canary Islands and the process of the colonization of the archipelago. The Canary Islands were the first colonial experiment of Spain and a major geographical factor in Columbus’ arrival to the Americas. The islands became a laboratory for the colonization of America, including the introduction of slavery and sugar plantations. In this course, students will study the literary, historical, political, and socio-cultural context of the Canary Islands at the time of the conquest.

The course will have a combination of class sessions, lectures and field trips in the island of Gran Canaria. From Monday through Thursday, each day we will have a class session from 10am-1pm, a break for lunch, and a field trip in the afternoons.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Students will engage with course material and draw upon a non-traditional perspective of the colonization of the Canary Islands and the Americas.
- 2) Students will read literary, historical, and cultural texts to examine the life of the Pre-Hispanic civilizations prior to the conquest.
- 3) Students will write critical responses to the course readings.
- 4) Students will conduct archival research at the Museo Canario on the indigenous population. This research will be used to create a Digital Humanities Project that aims to offer historical information on the indigenous inhabitants of the Canary Islands.
- 5) Students will learn about the indigenous civilization outside class through cultural visits and field trips to the House of Columbus, the Museo Canario, cave painting expeditions, and several other excursions.

PRIMARY READINGS

- 1) *Endechas aborígenes*, Anónimo,
- 2) *Antigüedades de las islas Afortunadas de Gran Canaria*, Antonio de Viana.
- 3) *Diarios*, Cristóbal Colón.
- 4) *Brevisima relación de la destrucción de África*, Bartolomé de Las Casas
- 5) *Crónicas de la conquista de Canaria: Matritense, Ovetense y Lacunense*.
- 6) *Le Canarien*. Gadifer de La Salle.
- 7) *Historia de la conquista de las siete islas de Canaria*, Fray Juan Abreu y Galindo.
- 8) *Historia de la conquista de Gran Canaria*, Pedro López Escudero.
- 9) *Conquista de la isla de Gran Canaria*, de Antonio Cerdeño.
- 10) *Del origen y milagros de nuestra Señora de La Candelaria*, Fray Alonso de Espinosa.
- 11) *Los guanches de Tenerife*, Lope de Vega.
- 12) *Comedia del Recebimiento*, Cairasco de Figueroa.

CRITICAL READINGS

- 1) *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest*, Matthew Restall.
- 2) *The Discovery of Mankind*, David Abulafia.
- 3) *La isla que se repite*, Antonio Benítez Rojo.
- 4) *Ab Initio*, José Farrujia de la Rosa.
- 5) *Escrito en piedra*, José Farrujia de la Rosa.
- 6) *The Canary Islands after the Conquest*, Felipe Fernández Armesto
- 7) *Refracted Images: The Canary Islands through a New World Lens*, Eyda Merediz.

GRADING

Participation.....	20%
Oral presentation.....	20%
Midterm.....	20%
Final Exam.....	20%
Final Project.....	20%

ATTENDANCE: Attendance at all classes is required and expected. Each student is not allowed any unexcused absences without penalty. Each unexcused absence will result in a penalty of a **five percent reduction** of your final grade (which is equal to half a letter grade. For example, if your final grade is 85 and you missed one day, you will have earned an 80). Tardiness will result in deduction of points.

CLASS PARTICIPATION: In order to assure active class discussion, it is crucial that students participate in class with assigned readings and tasks completed in their entirety. Food is not allowed in the classroom. Students should not exit the room once the lesson has started. There will be a ten minute break somewhere around the midpoint of each class meeting.

ASSIGNMENTS: You are expected to read your work on the due date (see course calendar below).

PRESENTATION: Individually or in pairs, students will prepare a presentation for the class using PowerPoint. This oral evaluation should last no more than fifteen minutes and no less than ten.

FINAL PAPER: As a final project for the course, students and the instructor will create a digital project about the Pre-Hispanic population on the Canary Islands. Students will research the archives of the Museo Canario in order to find biographical and historical information on one of the indigenous people of the Canary Islands. While Christopher Columbus, Hernán Cortés and other colonizers have received world recognition and historical presence, the indigenous civilizations, such as the one in the Canary Islands, remain largely unknown.

MIDTERM AND FINAL EXAM: The format of the midterm and final exam may include any combination of the following: short-answer identifications, information presented by students, passages for identification and commentary, and brief and/or long essay questions. Each exam will be cumulative. **The Final exam is mandatory for all students.**

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Hunter College and CUNY as a whole have expressed a firm commitment to maintaining access for people with disabilities. Sometimes this necessitates special test-taking procedures or other accommodations for students. If any such students have registered for this course, the Office for Access and Accommodation will send me a memo identifying the accommodation you require. This information will remain confidential and I will only discuss these issues in private. If you need further information please call the Office for Access and Accommodation at 212-772-4891 or visit their website at <http://studentservices.hunter.cuny.edu/DisabilitiesOffice.html> .

ACADEMIC HONESTY-PLAGIARISM-CHEATING:

"Hunter College regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The college is committed to enforcing the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Hunter College Academic Integrity Procedures."

"Any deliberate borrowing of the ideas, terms, statements or knowledge of others without clear and specific acknowledgement of the source is plagiarism. It is, in fact, intellectual theft. Serious students, scholars, and teachers agree that they cannot tolerate plagiarism. It is not, of course, plagiarism to borrow the ideas, terms, statements, or knowledge of others if the source is clearly and specifically acknowledge. Plagiarism will result in disciplinary proceedings. A more detailed explanation of plagiarism and the accepted procedures for acknowledging sources is available from the Department of English or the Office of the Hunter College Senate" (Undergraduate Catalog, p. 49).

GRADING SYSTEM:

A+	100-97.5%	C+	79.9-77.5%
A	97.4-92.5%	C	77.4-70%
A-	92.4-90%	B+	89.9-87.5%
B	87.4-82.5%	D	66-63%
B-	82.4-80%	F	59-0%

*Syllabus may be subject to changes

TENTATIVE COURSE CALENDAR

Friday, July 1st

Arrival at Gran Canaria Airport. Get settled at the university dorms.

Saturday, July 2nd

Students will visit the facilities at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. We will meet at 10am for an orientation session at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. At 1pm there will be a break for lunch and a Historic Tour of Vegueta in the afternoon.

Monday, July 4th

Topic: The Canary Islands before the Conquest I

Readings: *Ab Initio*, José Farrujia de la Rosa.

Afternoon trip: Museo Canario. The permanent exhibition on display at the Canarian Museum is devoted solely to the aboriginal population of Gran Canaria, the canarios. The exhibition explains the way of life of this human group of berber origin who inhabited the islands from the second half of the first millennium BC to the 15th century, when the conquest and colonization by the Crown of Castile took place.

Tuesday, July 5th

Topic: The Canary Islands before the Conquest II

Readings: *Endechas aborígenes*, anónimo. *Escrito en piedra*, José Farrujia de la Rosa.

Trip to The Cueva Pintada de Galdar. It is a rock chamber decorated with geometric paintings that lends its name to the present-day archaeological zone and museum center associated with the cave. The Galdar painted motifs are the most authentic manifestation of pre-Hispanic murals, an exceptional testimony to the artistic and symbolic expression of the early Canarians.

Wednesday, July 6th

Topic: The Conquest of the Canary Islands I

Readings: *Crónicas de la conquista de Canaria: Matritense, Ovetense y Lacunense. Le Canarien*.

Gadifer de La Salle. *The Discovery of Mankind*, David Abulafia

Afternoon trip: Sugarmill in Agaete, used by conquistador Alonso Fernandez de Lugo to finance the conquest of the islands of Tenerife, La Palma and Africa.

Thursday, July 7th

Topic: The Conquest of the Canary Islands II

Readings: *Historia de la conquista de las siete islas de Canaria*, Fray Juan Abreu y Galindo. *Historia de la conquista de Gran Canaria*, Pedro López Escudero. *Conquista de la isla de Gran Canaria*, de Antonio Cerdeño.

Field Trip: Cenobio de Valerón. Cenobio de Valerón is a network of approximately 200-300 caves, which were used as granaries. Within a large basalt arch in the volcanic rock are rows of round and rectangular chambers dug out with stone or animal bone tools. The caves are connected by steps and passages and were once flanked by towers, according to accounts from the time of the Spanish conquest.

Monday, July 11th

Topic: Columbus in the Canary Islands

Readings: *Diarios*, Cristobal Colon. *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest*, Matthew Restall.

Afternoon trip: Columbus House The Christopher Columbus House is an architectural complex, including what was originally the Island Governors' House, and now functions as a five hundred years old museum. The rooms of the museum are mainly devoted to the New World and the role played by the Canary Islands in its Conquest of America.

Tuesday, July 12th

Topic: The Canary Islands after the Conquest

Readings: *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de África*, Bartolomé de Las Casas. *The Canary Islands after the Conquest*, Felipe Fernández Armesto.

Field trip: Roque Bentayga. Three rocks sit up at the mountain peaks on the island. Together they represent the perfect union between the natural landscape and the cultural landscape of the Bentayga, right on the spiritual axis of Gran Canaria's aboriginal world.

Wednesday, July 13th

MIDTERM EXAM

Thursday, July 14th

Topic: Representations of the native Canarios in the Early Modern period I

Readings: *Del origen y milagros de nuestra Señora de La Candelaria*, Fray Alonso de Espinosa.

Eyda Merediz *Refracted Images: The Canary Islands through a New World Lens*

Afternoon trip: Museum Nestor de la Torre. The museum is located in the Pueblo Canario neighborhood, in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. Néstor Martín-Fernández de la Torre was a leading figure of the European symbolist and modernist movements. He was also an essential part of the culture of the Canary Islands for his efforts to create an indigenous artistic expression.

Monday, July 18th

Topic: Representations of the native Canarios in the Early Modern period II

Readings: *Los guanches de Tenerife*, Lope de Vega.

Trip to Caldera de Bandama, Siete Lagares y Santa Brígida.

Tuesday, July 19th

Topic: Representations of the native Canarios in the Early Modern period III

Readings: *Comedia del Recebimiento*, Cairasco de Figueroa.

Afternoon trip: Historic Tour of San Juan and San Francisco de Telde.

Wednesday, July 20th

Topic: Representations of the native Canarios in the Early Modern period IV

Readings: *Antigüedades de las islas Afortunadas de Gran Canaria*, Antonio de Viana.

Trip to Tufia-Cuatro Puertas-Aguimes-Guayadeque.

Thursday, July 21st

Students will present their final project in class.

Monday, July 25th

FINAL EXAM

TURN IN FINAL PROJECT

Tuesday, July 26th

Students will depart back home.