

**DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES  
AND CULTURAL STUDIES**

<https://uofa.ualberta.ca/modern-languages-and-cultural-studies>

**2017 SPAN 441: B1**  
***Reading Colonial Culture***  
(Winter Term)

Instructor: Dr. Ann De León  
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Time: M, W, F 10-10:50AM  
Place: HC 2-21  
Office Hours: W, 1:30-2:30PM  
or by appointment  
Course Website: [eclass](http://eclass)

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**Course Prerequisite:** SPAN 320 & an additional \*3 in SPAN at the 300 level (excluding 300 and 306) or consent of the Spanish Undergraduate Advisor.

**Course-based Ethics Approval** in place regarding all research projects that involve human testing, questionnaires, etc.?  No, not needed, no such projects involved

**Community Service Learning component:**  None

**Past or Representative Evaluative Course Material Available:**  Documents distributed in class

**Additional mandatory Instructional fees (approved by Board of Governors):** No

**Course Description and Objectives:**

This course will introduce students to a diverse set of Colonial Latin American historical, literary and pictorial documents and material culture and will expose students to some recent critical postcolonial theory about how to read these “texts.” Every two weeks students will be expected to read an excerpt from a key primary colonial “text” and also some accompanying theoretical essays. Students will develop their own questions and critiques about these texts to be discussed in class. Students will have the chance to work with some facsimiles of rare indigenous pictorial manuscripts (*codices*) from our *Bruce Peel Special Collections* and will also have the opportunity to conduct preliminary original archival work and some exposure to paleography using our very own VECM (*Viceregal and Ecclesiastical Collection*). Students will be expected to develop a final research paper about a topic related to course topics in consultation with the professor.

Some of the questions that will be addressed in the course include (but are not limited to):

- 1) What is colonial “literature”? What constitutes a (canonical) colonial “literary” text? Who decides? Who is included and who is excluded?

- 2) What were the (historical, cultural, social, etc.) conditions that enabled the production, reproduction, translation, circulation, disappearance, theft, or destruction of these “texts”? How do we know about these texts today? Where are they located? How do we read them?
- 3) Problems of “authorship”: who writes and why? How does the author construct her/him-self in relation to an-“Other”: i.e. new people, new customs, new language, new culture, new landscape, new food etc.? What discursive strategies does the author use to represent her/himself as an “authoritative” source?

While primary readings and class discussions will be conducted mainly in Spanish (some theoretical texts are written in English to facilitate the understanding of critical Postcolonial theory).

**Learning outcomes:**

By the end of this course students will be able to:

- \*Identify some of the most important and non-mainstream colonial Latin American literary/historical authors and intellectuals.
- \*Be able to historically contextualize these “texts” and perform a critical and close reading on them.
- \*Be exposed to some important theoretical and critical debates surrounding these “texts”.
- \*Carry out authentic and collaborative archival research work on important colonial Latin American documents and indigenous pictorial manuscripts.
- \*Write an advanced research paper in Spanish on a colonial Latin American topic (e.g. conquest, resistance, food, gender, indigenous manuscripts etc.)

**Texts:**

All readings will be provided to the student through eclass.

**Grade Distribution (see “Explanatory Notes”):**

*Attendance/Participation: 20%*

*Guide one course reading (sign up by week 2): 10%*

*Indigenous Pictorial Manuscript (Códices) Bruce Peel Rare Books assignment: 10%*

*Take Home Midterm (Handed out March 15—turn in exam on March 20): 25%*

*Mini VECM archival work: 10%*

*Final Essay (due by email on April 19): 25%*

**Date of Deferred Final Exam (if applicable): N/A**

**Explanatory Notes on Assignments:**

A detailed explanation of each graded assignment will be provided on eclass.

**Attendance/Participation:** It is imperative that the students attend class prepared, i.e. having done the readings (thoughtfully) and also be ready to engage in active participation in class discussions.

**Guided Course Reading:** Each student will be asked to briefly (10-15 minutes) guide/develop questions for one course reading during the semester. (Students will be assigned a reading by the end of week two). Guidelines will be provided in class.

**Bruce Peel Rare Books Assignment:** In February, Students will receive a guided workshop at the Bruce Peel Rare Book's collection where they will be able to look at facsimiles of pre- and post-colonial Indigenous Pictorial Manuscript (*Codices*). In pairs they will then be assigned to write a little research report/mini-presentation on the historical background of one of these indigenous manuscripts. Guidelines will be provided.

**Mini VECM archival work:** Students will receive some introductory training on how to use the VECM archive in our library and will have the opportunity to explore a small document held within this collection. Guidelines will be provided in class.

**Exams:** There will be one take-home midterm exam in this course. It will be handed out on, March 15, 2017—and should be turned back in class on March 20, 2017.

**Final Essay:** Students will have to write a final (**10 page double-spaced**) paper in Spanish based on a research topic of their choice relevant to the class materials. The essay topic will be pre-approved by the professor. Final essay is due by email April 19, 2017.

**Required Notes:**

“Policy about course outlines can be found in the [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#) of the University Calendar.”

***Academic Integrity:***

“The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at <http://www.governance.ualberta.ca/en/CodesofConductandResidenceCommunityStandards/CodeofStudentBehaviour.aspx> ) and avoid any behaviour that could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.”

***Learning and Working Environment:***

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring all students; faculty and staff are able to study and work in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment. The Department urges anyone who feels that this policy is being violated to:

- Discuss the matter with the person whose behaviour is causing concern; or
- If that discussion is unsatisfactory, or there is concern that direct discussion is inappropriate or threatening, discuss it with the Chair of the Department.

For additional advice or assistance regarding this policy you may contact the [Office of the Student Ombuds](#). Information about the [University of Alberta Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures](#) is described in [UAPPOL](#).

***Academic Honesty:***

**All students** should consult the information provided by the [Office of Judicial Affairs](#) regarding avoiding cheating and plagiarism in particular and academic dishonesty in general (see the [Academic Integrity Undergraduate Handbook](#) and [Information for Students](#)). If in doubt about what is permitted in this class, ask the instructor.

**Students involved in language courses and translation courses** should be aware that on-line “translation engines” produce very dubious and unreliable “translations.” **Students in languages courses** should be aware that, while seeking the advice of native or expert speakers is often helpful, **excessive editorial and creative help** in assignments is considered a form of “cheating” that violates the code of student conduct with dire consequences.

An instructor or coordinator who is convinced that a student has handed in work that he or she could not possibly reproduce without outside assistance is obliged, out of consideration of fairness to other students, to report the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty. See the [Academic Discipline Process](#).

***Recording of Lectures:***

Audio or video recording of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the content author(s) or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Recorded material is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).

***Attendance, Absences, and Missed Grade Components:***

Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance in any course. In cases of potentially excusable absences due to illness or domestic affliction, notify your instructor by e-mail within two days. Regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult sections [Attendance](#) and [Examinations](#) of the University Calendar. Be aware that unexcused absences will result in partial or total loss of the grade for the “attendance and participation” component(s) of a course, as well as for any assignments that are not handed-in or completed as a result.

**In this course** attendance will be taken regularly and will be factored in as part of the participation component of the course. Note though that simply attending the course will not guarantee a high participation grade. It is essential that the student actively and critically participate. Students who fail to attend 50% of the classes can expect to do poorly or even fail the course.

***Policy for Late Assignments:***

Students who consult the instructor with **sufficient advance notice** regarding contingencies preventing the timely completion of an assignment may, at the discretion of the instructor, be granted an extension without penalty. Otherwise, assignments will incur a 5% per day late deduction. After three days late no assignments will be accepted.

***Student Accessibility Services:***

If you have special needs that could affect your performance in this class, please let me know during the first week of the term so that appropriate arrangements can be made. If you are not already registered with [Student Accessibility Services](#), contact their office immediately (1-80 SUB; Email [sasrec@ualberta.ca](mailto:sasrec@ualberta.ca); Email; phone 780-492-3381).

***Grading:***

Assessment of the individual course components may be in the form of numerical marks or letter grades. The final letter grade will be based on "a combination of absolute achievement and relative performance in a class" (University Calendar, [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#)). The University Grading Procedure mandates that "a student's level of achievement of the goals/outcomes of a course, their grade, and the descriptor of that grade must be aligned" (<https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/>).

The following guidelines have been adopted by the Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies:

**“MLCS Undergraduate Grading Scale”**

Descriptor	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value	%
<b>Excellent.</b> A+, A or A- is earned by work which is superior in content and form and demonstrates an exceptional grasp of the subject matter. The grade of A+ designates work that far exceeds course expectations. Grades in the A range are normally achieved by a small number of students.	A+	4.0	<b>97-100</b>
	A	4.0	<b>93-96</b>
	A-	3.7	<b>90-92</b>
<b>Good.</b> B+, B or B- is earned by work that demonstrates a thorough comprehension of the course material and a good command of relevant skills. Grades in the B range are normally achieved by the largest number of students.	B+	3.3	<b>87-89</b>
	B	3.0	<b>83-86</b>
	B-	2.7	<b>80-82</b>
<b>Satisfactory.</b> C+, C or C- is earned by work that demonstrates an adequate grasp of the course material and relevant skills. Grades in the C range designate work that has met the basic requirements of the course.	C+	2.3	<b>77-79</b>
	C	2.0	<b>73-76</b>
	C-	1.7	<b>70-72</b>
<b>Poor/Minimal Pass.</b> D+ or D is earned by work that demonstrates minimal familiarity with the course material. Grades in the D range generally indicate insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the subject matter.	D+	1.3	<b>65-69</b>
	D	1.0	<b>60-64</b>
<b>Failure.</b>	F	0.0	<b>0-59</b>