

### *Sample Paper Topics for first part of the course*

You could suggest topics that leave the development of the paper wide open, or you could provide topics with specific areas of guidance for the student. For example:

Write a theme (7-10 pp.) on one of the following questions.

1. Compare the differing goals of Bartolomé de las Casas' *Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies by the Spanish* and Bernal Díaz del Castillo's *True History of the Conquest of New Spain*. How does the rhetoric of each author fulfill his aim? Remember that rhetoric is not only style but also the selection and arrangement of materials, including internal and external proofs or evidence in support of the author's stated thesis and of his ultimate goal. Pay special attention to his arguments, which might consist of one sentence or a detailed anecdote. Which of them establish his authority (ethos), which are derived from reasoning (logos), which express--and inspire--emotion (pathos)?

2. Analyze the ways in which the three laws or rights (natural, human, and divine) relate to the rhetoric of the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega's *Royal Commentaries of the Incas and General History of Peru*, pt. 1. How do these laws shape his arguments concerning the non-Inca indigenous civilizations and the Inca conquest of these civilizations before the arrival of the Spanish conquerors? How do these same laws relate to the Inca Garcilaso's views on the Spanish conquest of the Inca empire and to the rhetorical aim of his *Royal Commentaries*?

3. The historical consciousness of the Spanish conqueror and the Spanish priest are not our own, nor is their historiographical consciousness ours. The world in which they were living, and the historiographical fashions or conventions within which they were writing, differ radically from our late-20th-century ideas on the past, present, and future, and from our norms for writing about the cultural past. They had no concept of a historical consciousness, no "interpretive framework" for writing history: past, present, and future were as the Bible said they were--reality, not a "worldview" or a "cultural bias." How does what we conceptualize as *universal history* shape the views of non-European civilizations found in Bartolomé de las Casas' *Brief Account* and Bernal Díaz del Castillo's *True History*? Examine the authors' own comparisons of indigenous and European civilizations. Further, where, why, and how do their narratives consciously take note of what we today call "cultural gaps," which complicated relations between indigenous groups and Spanish conquerors and priests?

For the theme you develop, please type double-spaced and with one-inch margins.

In your first paragraph state what your thesis is (what you are going to argue), why you believe it is correct (i.e. state summarily the texts or evidence that led you to it), and how you intend to present it (i.e. in what order you are going to present the lines of your argument and evidence in support of it).

In your last paragraph summarize briefly what you have argued, why it is correct, and the key points of your argument.

You may paraphrase and give summaries of authors' arguments, but you must also give textual examples to support your interpretation of a particular author and how he fits into your thesis.

***Sample paper topics for second half of the course***

Write approximately 10-12 pages on two of the following themes.

1. Relate the fusion of traditional and modern thought in Sor Juana's *Reply* and *First Dream*, focusing on the individual's relationship to Catholic society. Consider Sor Juana as a religious woman who must reconcile her social status and personal interests, *and* a poetic and human voice in pursuit of divine knowledge.
2. The universal history of the colonial chroniclers was derived from the Catholic religion. Sarmiento's assumptions about the evolution of society and the individual, and about the stages of human history, are derived from a nineteenth-century Catholicism heavily influenced by Enlightenment and Romantic philosophies. Relate specific philosophical tenets--those that informed Sarmiento's concept of universal history--to his categories of "civilized" and "barbarian."
3. Compare the image of Bolívar presented in his addresses and letters to that constructed by García Márquez in his work of historical fiction. How might the demands of fiction and the ideology of García Márquez explain these different portraits or images?
4. What are the differing bases of Bolívar's and Sarmiento's pessimism regarding the future of Spanish America?

For each of the two themes that you develop, please type double-spaced and with one-inch margins.

In your first paragraph state what your thesis is (what you are going to argue), why you believe it is correct (i.e. state summarily the texts or evidence that led you to it), and how you intend to present it (i.e. in what order you are going to present the lines of your argument and evidence in support of it).

In your last paragraph summarize briefly what you have argued, why it is correct, and the key points of your argument.