

THE MAKING OF MODERN SPAIN
Sample syllabus for a discussion-oriented course
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Modern political scientists often cite the existence of violent Basque and Catalán separatist movements as proof that Spain is an “imperfect” or “incomplete” nation-state. Historians trying to decide whether this is true, and why it should be so, often look to the origins of modern Spain in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries for answers. What they find there, however, depends largely on the way that modern definitions of states, nations, and national identity shape their research. In this course, we will learn first about how modern Spanish historians have used the early modern period as a battleground for their modern, political concerns. Then we will look anew at that period in its own right, to decide for ourselves whether it truly is the cradle of modern Spanish identity—on its own terms.

The weekly readings and class discussions are the lifeblood of this course; it is therefore expected that you will complete the readings and participate in all the discussions to the best of your abilities. In addition to the two essay assignments described below, you will be expected to give brief presentations on particular readings over the course of the semester, as assigned by the professor. There will also be a final essay examination, which will ask you to analyze an unfamiliar primary source in the context of the themes we have developed over the course of the semester.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

I. The Problem of Spanish Nationhood

Week 1. An Overview of Early Modern Spain

Please read one or more of the following works as thoroughly as possible:

Henry Kamen, *Spain, 1469–1714: A Society of Conflict*, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Longman, 1991).

John Edwards, *The Spain of the Catholic Monarchs* (Oxford: Blackwells, 2000).

John Lynch, *Spain, 1516–1598: From Nation State to World Empire*, 2nd rev. ed. (Oxford: Blackwells, 1992).

Teofilo Ruiz, *Spanish Society, 1400–1600* (New York, NY: Longman, 2001).

Week 2. Is Spain a Nation? The “Eternal Unity Thesis”

V.G. Kiernan, “State and Nation in Western Europe,” *Past and Present* 31 (July 1965): 20–38.

José Álvarez Junco, “The Formation of Spanish Identity and Its Adaptation to the Age of Nations,” *History & Memory* 14:1–2 (Fall 2002): 13–36.

J.N. Hillgarth, “Spanish Historiography and Iberian Reality,” *History and Theory* 24:1 (February 1985): 23–43.

J.H. Elliott, “A Europe of Composite Monarchies,” *Past and Present* 137 [The Cultural and Political Construction of Europe] (November 1992): 48–71.

Week 3. A Tale of Two Historians: Américo Castro & Claudio Sánchez Albornoz

Américo Castro, *The Spaniards; an Introduction to their History*, trans. Willard F. King & Selma Margaretten (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1971), selections.
Claudio Sánchez Albornoz, *Spain, a Historical Enigma*, trans. Colette Joly Dees & David Sven Reher, 2 vols. (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 1975), selections.
Henry Kamen, “Limpieza and the Ghost of Américo Castro: Racism as a Tool of Literary Analysis,” *Hispanic Review* 64:1 (Winter 1996): 19–29.

ASSIGNMENT #1: In a response paper of 2–3 pages, compare both the arguments and the evidence of Castro and Sánchez Albornoz. Why do you think that they disagreed so strongly in their evaluations of “Spanish character”? Were they operating with the same definition of Spain? The same definition of nationhood? Finally, mention whose view of early modern Spain seems more believable to you, and why.

II. The Making of Spain

Week 4. Governing Spain: From Civil War to Civil Society

“Demands of the Comuneros,” in Jon Cowans, ed., *Early Modern Spain: A Documentary History* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 46–48. *NB: Hereafter abbreviated as “Cowans, [pages].”

Marvin Lunenfeld, “Governing the Cities of Isabella the Catholic: The Corregidores, Governors, and Assistants of Castile (1476–1504),” *Journal of Urban History* 9:1 (November 1982): 31–55.

James Casey, “Some Considerations on State Formation and Patronage in Early Modern Spain,” in C. Giry-DeLoison & R. Mettam, eds., *Patronages et clientélismes, 1550–1750: France, Angleterre, Espagne, Italie* (Lille, 1995), 103–115.

Week 5. How to Write Spanish History

Isidore of Seville, *History of the Goths, Vandals, and Suevi*, 2nd ed., trans. Guido Donini & Gordon B. Ford (Leiden: Brill, 1970).

Robert B. Tate, “Mythology in Spanish Historiography of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance,” *Hispanic Review* 22:1 (January 1954): 1–18.

Sabine MacCormack, “History, Memory and Time in Golden Age Spain,” *History and Memory* 4:2 (1992): 38–68.

Week 6. Santiago & the Prestige of Spanish Catholicism

A. Katie Harris, “Forging History: The Plomos of the Sacromonte of Granada in Francisco Bermúdez de Pedraza’s *Historia Eclesiástica*,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 30:4 (Winter 1999): 945–966.

Kate van Liere, "The Missionary and the Moorslayer: James the Apostle in Spanish Historiography from Isidore of Seville to Ambrosio de Morales," *Viator* 37 (2006): 519–543.

Thomas D. Kendrick, *St. James in Spain* (London: Methuen, 1960).

Week 7. How to Speak Like a Spaniard

Antonio de Nebrija, Prologue to the *Gramática castellana* (1492).

Malcolm K. Read, "Cristóbal de Villalón: Language, Education, and the Absolutist State," in Tom Lewis & Francisco J. Sánchez, eds., *Culture and the State in Spain: 1550–1850* [=Hispanic issues, 20] (New York, NY: Garland Publishing, 1999), 1–33.

Kathryn A. Woolard, "Bernardo de Aldrete and the Morisco Problem," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 44:3 (July 2002): 446–480.

J.N.H. Lawrance, "On Fifteenth-Century Spanish Vernacular Humanism," in I. Michael & R. Cardwell, eds., *Medieval and Renaissance Studies in Honour of R.B. Tate* (Oxford, 1986), 63–79.

Fredi Chiapelli, ed., *The Fairest Flower: the Emergence of Linguistic National Consciousness in Renaissance Europe* (Florence, 1985).

Week 8. Honor Culture

Scott K. Taylor, "Credit, Debt, and Honor in Castile, 1600–1650," *Journal of Early Modern History* 7:1–2 (January 2003): 8–27.

idem, "Women, Honor, and Violence in a Castilian Town, 1600–1650," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 35:4 (2004): 1079–1100.

Melvenna McKendrick, "Honour/Vengeance in the Spanish *Comedia*: A Case of Mimetic Transference?" *Modern Language Review* 79 (1984): 313–335.

Week 9. A Public Sphere?

Sara T. Nalle, "Literacy and Culture in Early Modern Castile," *Past and Present* 125 (November 1989): 65–96.

Sara T. Nalle, "Printing and Reading Popular Religious Texts in Sixteenth-Century Spain," in Tom Lewis & Francisco J. Sanchez, eds., *Culture and the State in Spain: 1550–1850* [= Hispanic Issues, vol. 20] (New York: Garland Publishing, 1999), 126–156.

Antonio Pérez-Romero, *The Subversive Tradition in Spanish Renaissance Writing* (Lewistown, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2005), Chapters 1, 2, 10.

ASSIGNMENT #2: Read Chapters 1–3 of Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, rev. ed. (New York, NY: Verso, 1991) [on reserve in the library]. Study carefully how Anderson defines nationalism, and when, why, and how Europeans began to "imagine" themselves to be members of nation-states. Then, reflect on the national myths that Spaniards believed about themselves. Does Spain fit the definition of an "imagined community," according to Anderson? Does Anderson's theory of national development make sense according to the reality of Spanish history? Why or why not? Finally,

consider how you might modify Anderson's theory based on what you have learned about Spain.

III. At the Margins of "Spain"

Week 10. Religious Minorities

"Decree of Expulsion of the Jews" (Cowans, 20–23).

"A Morisco Plea;" "The Moriscos of Granada," "Decree of Expulsion of the Moriscos," "On the Expulsion of the Moriscos" (Cowans, 105–109, 143–144, 145–148, 149–151).

Henry Kamen, "Toleration and Dissent in Sixteenth-Century Spain: The Alternative Tradition," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 19:1 (Spring 1988): 3–23.

L.P. Harvey, *Islamic Spain, 1250 to 1500* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1990), Introduction, Chapter 20.

Week 11. National Minorities; Summing Up

"Catalan Grievances" and "Decree Pardoning the Catalan Rebels" (Cowans, 158–160, 161–162).

J.H. Elliott, *The Revolt of the Catalans: A Study in the Decline of Spain (1598–1640)* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1984 [1963]), Chapters 1–4.