

1. GREETING AND INTRODUCTION (2/03/04)

Introduce course.

About the encounter between Europeans and native peoples of America.

Not just initial meeting or conquest but over hundreds of years.

Clash of peoples and cultures. Partly physical: military, political, economic, ecological.

But also clash of ideas: attempts to understand, to impose ideas, to change people.

On one side, attempts to dominate and change, on other to resist or accommodate.

Will emphasize both established patterns that the two sides brought to encounter, and new patterns that established in the encounter.

The sections of the course: Spanish conquest and colonial domination; then French colonies in Canada, especially Jesuit missionization; then New England, especially war and environmental change; then U.S. through early 19th century; then switch back to Latin America, Kuna people in 20th century Panama; then Kayapo late 20th century Brazil.

Cannot cover everything, compromise between intensive study of cases and wider coverage.

Will see several films, study critically how represent history.

Will learn to use primary documents, draw own conclusions.

The Americas before Columbus.

Humans in Americas only a few thousand years.

Small hunting bands crossed from Asia. Dating controversial, perhaps 14,000 years ago.

Fantasies of early European voyages very doubtful except for Vikings.

Slow evolution of agricultural and complex civilizations, largely separate from Old World.

Multiple centers of domestication of plants in Americas. Slow process.

Evolution of sedentary village societies, then complex chiefdoms and states.

Great centers in Andes and Mesoamerica.

North America somewhat peripheral, but development secondary centers of complex chiefdoms in Southwest and Ohio/Mississippi valleys. Smaller-scale versions of Mexico.

Collapse of some complex societies before Europeans arrived.

Then great destruction by diseases left by earliest European explorers: path of destruction of DeSoto expedition.

So idea that only simple societies in native North America at time of conquest an illusion.