

Section Worksheet and Discussion Questions (#1)

Reading

Wiarda and Klein 3-32

Fuentes 79-89, 93-117, 119-47

The Mexico Reader (20-27)

The Peru Reader (84-106)

Lecture

January 25, 2007 – Mythical Names and Maps

January 30, 2007 – Discovery Myths

February 1, 2007 – Conquest Myths

1. According to Fuentes and the second Chapter of Wiarda and Klein, what combination of events in Spain, some of which were part of trends that affected the whole of Europe, led to the invasion and colonization of the Americas?
2. Before the Europeans arrived, what did Latin American (generally speaking) look like?
3. At what point does the history of Latin America really begin? Where have we begun our historical inquiry?
4. What are some reasons why we might want to start farther back and study the history of the Amerindians prior to 1492? What are some reasons why it is useful and acceptable to start our historical analysis at 1492?
5. Is the 'discovery' of Latin America best termed an invasion, an ethnocide, a conquest, or an encounter? Why does it matter how we refer to its 'discovery'?

6. What two factors does Fuentes suggest led to the quick defeat of the Incan and Aztec empires? What other factors might have contributed to the European victories?

7. Briefly describe the situation in the Aztec and Incan empires prior to the arrival of the conquistadors. Which two conquistadors are credited with the conquest of the Aztec and Incan empires respectively?

8. Describe, generally, the structure of the colonial governing institutions according to Wiarda and Klein. What do they mean when they say that Latin America was 'born feudal'? What did colonial society look like? How was it divided?

9. Fuentes says that the conquistadors "might have been the fathers of their own political democracy, as the settlers of New England were to become. But the conquistadors did not (perhaps they could not) choose this avenue. Between individualism as democracy and individualism as feudal might, they chose the latter" (130). What does he mean by this statement?

10. Briefly, name and describe the three racial categories that emerged under colonial rule (prior to the arrival of Africans).

11. Who spoke out against the exploitation of the indigenous peoples in the 16th century?

12. When did the majority of Latin American countries finally achieve independence from Spanish and Portuguese rule? What country became independent earlier? What country became independent later? Were there consequences for these special cases?

13. What class led the independence movements? Why was the period from the 1820s until the 1850s so tumultuous in most states?

Jumping forward...

14. Who was La Malinche or Dona Marina? Why is she referred to as the mother of all of Mexico? What does Octavio Paz suggest about the role La Malinche plays in Mexican culture today?

15. What are some areas where Wiarda and Klein see progress in Latin America today? What are some problems that are still facing the region? Do you note any issues that the authors seem particularly concerned with?

16. Read the following sentence: “Several countries did moderately well as middle-income countries, but others remained poor and backward, as shown in table 1.1” (Wiarda and Klein, 10). What do you notice? Anything?

16. Laws of the Indies