This course is an introduction to the colonial history of Spanish America and the Caribbean. It approaches the colonial era of Latin America and the Caribbean as a unique historical turning point in human history. For the first time in world history, the destinies of three continents (Europe, Africa, and America) became inextricably linked. At the same time, the expansion of Europe into the New World in the 16th century also signaled the end of a millennial history of native civilizations, as the Aztec, Mayan, and Inca civilizations seemed almost to collapse under the weight of Spanish militarism, colonial bureaucracy, and the Christian crusades. The course covers the history of pre-European contact through the end of the colonial era, leading up to the Wars for Independence.