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2016-17 Phi Beta Kappa-Frank M. Updike Memorial Scholar

**Phi Beta Kappa Visiting Scholar Topics  
2016-2017**

Topics for the General Lecture or, if desired, for classroom and informal discussion:

*\*\*Please note: Faculty members interested in Professor Adorno's participation in their classes will need to be in touch with her to determine an appropriate topic as well as suitable background materials for the students to read in advance of the discussion.*

1. **Mark Twain on Spain**
2. **“Dancing with the Stars” (Baroque Style): Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz and Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora**
3. **What Does Columbus Day Mean Now? or Why Hispanic Heritage Month Matters**
4. **Gonzalo Guerrero: Hearsay and History in Myth-Making about Colonial Latin America**
5. **The Friar and the Native Lord: What Manuscript Artifacts Can Tell Us about the Collaboration of Their Makers**
6. **Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca and the Legacy of One of the Earliest European Sojourns in North America**
7. **The Polemics of Possession in Spanish American Narrative**
8. **The End of History in Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala's *New Chronicle and Good Government***
9. **The Intellectual Life of Bartolome de las Casas**
10. **‘The Polemics of Possession’: Spain on the Americas, circa 1550**
11. **Estevanico's Legacy: Insights into Colonial Latin American Studies from Postcolonial Africa**
12. **Court and Chronicle: A Native Andean's Engagement with Spanish Colonial Law**
13. **Guaman Poma and the Polemics of Possession or How a Native Andean Looked at the World of Spanish Colonialism**
14. **Spanish in the World, Then and Now**

## 1. Mark Twain on Spain

Mark Twain barely set foot in Spain. He did not know Spanish. But that did not mean that he didn't have his views. In the nineteenth-century United States, Spain was a silent *sine qua non* for historical-cultural interpretations of the meaning of America. To U.S. authors, the history of Spain, whether in the Western hemisphere or on the Iberian Peninsula, could have been unfamiliar, but it was not ignored, particularly thanks to the well-assimilated, dark interpretation of Spanish history known as "The Black Legend." Twain contemplated De Soto's 1540s discovery of the Mississippi River, and he offered strong opinions on the folly of the U.S. resolution of the Spanish American War of 1898. But like most writers of merit, he cared more about literature than history or current events. In this light, it has been argued that Twain was deeply influenced by the first modern novel, Miguel de Cervantes's *Don Quijote de la Mancha*. He has frequently been called "the American Cervantes." Should we take such claims seriously? If so, in what ways? If not, why not?

*This lecture will be illustrated (PowerPoint).*

## 2. "Dancing with the Stars" (Baroque Style): Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz and Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora

Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz and Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora are arguably the two greatest figures ("stars") of El Barroco de Indias, that is, the Baroque literature of colonial Spanish America. They were often friendly competitors (hence, their "dance") who were called upon to commemorate the great events of their day. One of the most important was the installation of a new viceroy. How best would they honor the devoutly Christian Spanish nobleman who was to rule New Spain? For models for this Christian prince to follow, Sor Juana turned to the Greco-Roman gods of antiquity and Sigüenza, to the pre-Columbian deities of Mexico. Their respective and differing interpretations of the Roman god of the sea Neptune and the pre-Columbian Mexican god of war Huitzilopochtli allow us to consider the theories of interpretation they used and the evolving meanings of Old and New World mythologies in their time.

*This lecture will be illustrated (PowerPoint).*

## 3. What Does Columbus Day Mean Now? or Why Hispanic Heritage Month Matters

National holidays are always controversial, and none is more so than Columbus Day. Hispanic Heritage Month offers a welcome alternative in educational and cultural institutions around the country. The current image of Columbus as a "Renaissance Darth Vader" has a long history, and Hispanic Heritage Month has a shorter but more immediately (indeed!) important one. If the former is concerned with European overseas expansion and the colonization of native Amerindian peoples, the latter involves United States domestic issues of race, ethnicity, and immigration. This talk will cover briefly the history of Columbian commemorations in the United States (mentioning its observances in Spain and Latin America) and, at greater length, the development of Hispanic Heritage Month. The interpretation of the figure of Columbus and his contemporaries in contemporary Latin American novels will round out this presentation.

*This lecture will be illustrated (PowerPoint).*

#### **4. Gonzalo Guerrero: Hearsay and History in Myth-Making about Colonial Latin America**

“Gonzalo Guerrero” is the name given by sixteenth-century Spanish chroniclers to a shipwreck victim who was thought to have joined Maya society and became a Maya war lord who thwarted the Spanish conquest of Yucatan (Mexico). The retelling of the story has proven irresistible: as recently as fifteen years ago there appeared a newly discovered “autobiography” of Gonzalo—and it was not the first. Tracing this series of arresting accounts through the centuries in both Spanish-language and Anglo-American English-language traditions, we will consider how fiction emerged from history and hearsay in the Latin American literary tradition. Taking this celebrated example from the chronicles of the Spanish conquest period, we will contemplate the issue of how vaguely known historical events become the object of hearsay, eventually creating myths that are ultimately given the credence and weight of history.

*This lecture will be illustrated (PowerPoint).*

#### **5. The Friar and the Native Lord: What Manuscript Artifacts Can Tell Us about the Collaboration of Their Makers**

The collaboration of Spanish friars and Amerindian elites in the production of codices, maps, and chronicles in early colonial Latin America is a topic of perpetual interest. Occasionally, a single manuscript artifact that explains pre-Columbian cultural practices allows us to access that manuscript’s making. More rarely, a small cluster of such artifacts permits broader insights. One such instance comes from the Andes in the viceroyalty of Peru. Three spectacularly illustrated histories of the Incas emerged in early seventeenth-century Peru. Their authors were the native Andean chronicler, Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala, and the Mercedarian friar, Martín de Murúa. The discovery of the relationship among the three artifacts they produced has made them “witnesses” to themselves individually and to each other. This lecture will reveal aspects of the making of the manuscripts and their makers, telling the respective, related stories of their authorship.

*This lecture will be richly illustrated (PowerPoint).*

#### **6. Álvaro Núñez Cabeza de Vaca and the Legacy of One of the Earliest European Sojourns in North America**

Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca’s *Naufragios* (“Shipwrecks,” “Calamities”) has long been considered the quintessential story of the European and the African, confronting for the first time the wilderness of North America and its native inhabitants. The themes it evokes—quest and adventure, freedom and bondage, empire and colonialism, miracles and shamanism—have made it a tale retold in Spain, Latin America, and the U.S., where the Cabeza de Vaca route through North America has been the subject of scholarship and legend since the end of the nineteenth century until today. Cabeza de Vaca’s pan-American experience has engaged the creative and critical energies of Anglo, African, Latin, and Latino Americanist interests as well as that of European scholars, translators, writers, and artists. This lecture will suggest why Cabeza de Vaca’s ever-unknowable experiences—those that he described, as well as those upon which he did not comment—perpetually stimulate the reader’s imagination and make Cabeza de Vaca’s saga relevant to other people in other times and places, including our own.

*This lecture will be illustrated (PowerPoint).*

## 7. The Polemics of Possession in Spanish American Narrative

Why “polemics” and why “narrative”? I suggest “polemics,” because there is no single, universal and monolithic account of past events, and “narrative,” because it is all that remains of those lost historical referents. The narratives about early Latin America have intrigued readers for five centuries. Hernán Cortés’s march on México-Tenochtitlan offers the detailed narration of suspense-filled events that occurred over a few months’ time, and Cabeza de Vaca’s ten-year sojourn in North America is an elliptical account—wrapped up as rapidly as possible—of a decade of experience living among the natives of North America. These accounts were written fairly soon after the events narrated had taken place. They are contrasted by the chronicle of the Spanish foot soldier-conquistador of Mexico, Bernal Díaz del Castillo, who proclaims, thirty years after the fact of the conquest events he narrates, “Ah, yes, I remember it well!” As readers, we know the general outcomes of these tales and the long-lost events they narrate, which is the Spanish conquests of Mexico. If it is the curiosity of rediscovering “what happened next” that keep us reading, it is the authors’ fidelity to the narrative tradition that gives them authority and credibility.

*This lecture will be illustrated (PowerPoint).*

## 8. The End of History in Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala’s *New Chronicle and Good Government*

The medieval European *mappae mundi* (“map of the world”) depicted human history and its spiritual destiny, in the Christian tradition, from Creation to Apocalypse (“the end of the world”). The much newer theoretical notion of the “end of history” was recently projected (and more recently rejected) by Francis Fukuyama (1992). In his *Nueva corónica y buen gobierno* (New Chronicle and Good Government) the native Andean chronicler Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala created a “*Mapamundi* of the kingdom of the Indies of Peru” and projected on it his own understanding of the medieval “end of history.” This lecture will show how Guaman brought together disparate Old and New World images and ideas of spatial organization by availing himself of the symbolic representation of space as understood, variously, by medieval European and Andean cosmography, and how he complemented the spatial organization of his pictorial *mapamundi* with European and Andean formulations of temporal value.

*This lecture will be richly illustrated (PowerPoint).*

## 9. The Intellectual Life of Bartolome de las Casas

Las Casas’s *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias* (Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies) of 1552 is one of the most famous—indeed, infamous—books of the early modern period; it has been translated into dozens of languages and reprinted from the sixteenth century to the present day. Its author, the Dominican friar Las Casas, is accused of having been the inventor of African slavery in the Americas. Is this true? Also, did he exaggerate in the *Brevísima* his demographic estimates of native destruction in the Indies and, if so, could the deeds he described never have occurred, that is, were the conquests as devastating as he described? These opposing views are extremes. Black-Legend proponents and the population-devastation-deniers alike stake their claims on their views of Las Casas himself, interpreting him either as an honest, creditable witness or a flagrant, flamboyant liar. Based on documentary evidence, this lecture will present a more moderate view. *Illustrated by PowerPoint.*

## **10. ‘The Polemics of Possession’: Spain on the Americas, circa 1550**

The first early modern state to set a pattern for the relationship of overseas empire and the Christian religion was Spain; her conquests in the Americas were inaugurated before the end of the fifteenth century. They were continued throughout the sixteenth century and beyond, in the vast lands of South, Central, and North America. Off the battlefield, Spanish kings, royal councilors, jurists, and theologians considered questions of the legal right to conquest and the imposition of governance in foreign territories. These principles were bound up with the Christian gospel’s mandate to “go and preach to all peoples”. This lecture will review and assess the debates as carried out by the most influential thinkers of their day (Francisco de Vitoria, Bartolomé de las Casas, Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda) and correct some centuries-old commonplaces that have prevented a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics of those paradigmatic intellectual exchanges.

*This lecture will be richly illustrated (PowerPoint).*

## **11. Estevanico’s Legacy: Insights into Colonial Latin American Studies from Postcolonial Africa**

Estevanico was a black African slave—Christianized but Arabic-speaking—who in the 1520s helped Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca and two other Castilians survive nearly eight years of hardship in the Texas wilderness. After the men’s successful return to Spanish-held territory, Estevanico was resold into slavery and died violently somewhere in today’s New Mexico. From his native North Africa to Castile to the Caribbean to eastern coastal Texas to Mexico-Tenochtitlan, and ultimately to the land of the Zuni in today’s New Mexico, Estevanico trudged a trail of forced migration common to the colonized subjects of imperial Spain. Today, he is heralded as having been “the first black man in North America.” This lecture will consider his years with Cabeza de Vaca in native North America, during which Estevan imposed his own, talisman-like authority on the native Amerindian communities to which neither he nor the white men, belonged and whose bidding he was forced to do.

*This lecture will be illustrated (PowerPoint).*

## **12. Court and Chronicle: A Native Andean’s Engagement with Spanish Colonial Law**

In Spanish colonial Mexico and Peru, natives became assimilated to European language and custom, served local civil and ecclesiastical institutions and, by becoming literate in Spanish, learned to defend their claims to lands and properties. In the Spanish viceroyalty of Peru, the case of a Quechua- and Spanish-speaking Andean, Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala, illustrates some general principles about indigenous interactions with colonial institutions. When Guaman Poma’s efforts to support land claims on behalf of himself and his kin failed, he turned to writing a history of ancient Peru and an exposé of colonial corruption that included extensive recommendations for governmental reform. This lecture links Guaman Poma’s legal petitioning in the 1590s with his 1615 *New Chronicle and Good Government* (*New Chronicle and Good Government*) to reveal the relationship between legal argumentation and historical narration in which the demands of the future required the creative rewriting of the historical past.

*This lecture will be illustrated (PowerPoint).*

### **13. Guaman Poma and the Polemics of Possession or How a Native Andean Looked at the World of Spanish Colonialism**

One of the most complete records of a native Amerindian's experience of Spanish colonialism is Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala's *Nueva corónica y buen gobierno* (New Chronicle and Good Government). Living in the Andes Mountains at the turn of the seventeenth century, Guaman Poma was of non-Inca lineage and was trained in the Spanish language by missionary friars. As an adolescent and adult, he served as an interpreter in transactions between native communities and the Spanish colonial administration. Ultimately disillusioned with the Spanish legal system and the impossibility of protecting his rights through it, he turned to writing. His 1200-page manuscript, illustrated by his own hand with some 400 drawings, was destined for the king of Spain. Guaman Poma hoped by that means to seek redress of his own grievances and promote broader colonial reform. This lecture explores a native Andean's views on the multi-ethnic, multi-racial society of his day as being a "world upside down" as he contemplated an uncertain, perhaps ruinous future for "the Indies of Peru."

*This lecture will be richly illustrated by Guaman Poma's remarkable drawings (PowerPoint).*

### **14. Spanish in the World, Then and Now**

When the existence of this Western Hemisphere was first announced to Europe, it was done in Spanish. Quickly translated into Latin and published, Christopher Columbus's 1493 "Letter of Discovery," as it has come to be called, was as much a world event as the remarkable discoveries it described and the promises it made to its readers at the Castilian royal court. Soon afterward Spanish accounts of exploration and conquest were translated into Italian, English, French, German, and Dutch as readers of those languages sought to answer the question, "What *are* those people doing over there?" If Spanish emerged on the world stage in the sixteenth century, it occupies front and center today as the world's second most spoken language. It is also the second language of the United States. The challenges and opportunities that this offers to those of us who study (or teach) Spanish are real. The relationship of Spanish to the humanities at large, including its role in European cultural history, is the topic of this lecture.