This course will explore the Aztec and Inka empires, seeking to understand how these formidable polities fell rather quickly in the face of Spanish aggression in the sixteenth century. How did Latin America's Indigenous peoples adapt to and contest European domination? How did new identities emerge from the interaction of Indigenous and European traditions? When and why did Indigenous and Mestiza/o communities resort to rebellion? We will also consider Brazil, where the importation of African slaves had become fundamental to the colony's economy by the late sixteenth century. How successful were Africans in preserving their traditions in the brutal and destructive context of plantation slave labor? How did the slave labor system vary regionally, and what was the significance of these differences for Afro-Brazilian culture? All readings and class discussions in English; students may submit their papers in English, Spanish, or Portuguese.