

Imperial Spain, 1469–1714

Professor Silvia Z. Mitchell

Email: mitch131@purdue.edu

Office: BRNG 6162

Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description

This course surveys the history of Imperial Spain from the union of Castile and Aragon in 1469 through the end of the War of the Spanish Succession in 1714. The course includes three major components:

1. **Spain's Rise to Empire** – How independent kingdoms became a global empire.
2. **The Habsburg Imperial System** – Political, social, and economic structures of Spanish rule.
3. **The Seventeenth Century** – Crisis, cultural flourishing, and the so-called “decline” of the monarchy.

By the end of the course, students will be able to place early modern Spanish history within broader **European** and **Atlantic** contexts, identify strengths and weaknesses of the Spanish imperial system, and appreciate the major cultural achievements of the period.

Required Texts

- **John Cowans (ed.)**, *Early Modern Spain: A Documentary History* (2003)
 - **Silvia Z. Mitchell**, *Queen, Mother, and Stateswoman: Mariana of Austria and the Government of Spain* (2019)
 - **Alexandra Parma Cook & Noble David Cook**, *Good Faith and Truthful Ignorance* (1991)
 - **Sherry Velasco**, *The Lieutenant Nun* (2001)
 - **Silvia Z. Mitchell & Erica Heinsen-Roach (eds.)**, *Ibero-Dutch Imperial Entanglements in the Seventeenth Century* (2025), ebook available via HHSE Library
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Learning Goals

By the end of the course, students will:

1. Understand how the Spanish monarchy formed, expanded, and governed a global empire.
2. Identify major geographic and political shifts in the Spanish Monarchy (1469–1713).
3. Analyze women’s roles in political and cultural developments of early modern Spain.
4. Explain how dynastic marriages and succession shaped events in Spain, Europe, and the world.

Assignments and Grade Distribution

Learning Guides (60 points total)

- **Draft of Learning Guide 1** — 10 points, due **Feb 10**
- **Learning Guide 1** — 25 points, due **Mar 5**
- **Learning Guide 2** — 25 points, due **May 4**

These assignments involve answering essay questions based on readings and lectures.

Spanish Women and the Arts Project (20 points)

Research and produce a narrated PowerPoint (or equivalent) exploring women’s contribution to Spain’s Golden Age.

Guided Participation Assignments (20 points total)

- **CPA 1** — 10 points, due **Feb 26**
- **CPA 2** — 10 points, due **Apr 2**

Summary Table

Assignment	Points	Due Date
Draft LG1	10	Feb 10
Learning Guide 1	25	Mar 5
Learning Guide 2	25	May 4
CPA 1	10	Feb 26
CPA 2	10	Apr 2
Women & the Arts Project	20	Apr 23
Total	100 points	—

All major assignments must be completed to pass the course.

Grading Scale

Percentage	Grade	Percentage	Grade
100–98	A+	89–88	B+
97–93	A	87–83	B
92–90	A–	82–80	B–
79–78	C+	69–68	D+
77–73	C	67–63	D
72–70	C–	62–60	D–

Course Expectations & Policies

Attendance

Attendance is expected. The instructor will attempt to provide recordings and optional Zoom access when health or weather issues arise.

Communication & Support

If you face health, personal, or learning challenges, please contact the instructor early so accommodations can be made.

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism or cheating results in **failure of the entire course** and may be reported to the Dean of Students.

Purdue's Academic Integrity Policy:

<http://www.purdue.edu/odos/osrr/academicintegritybrochure.php>

Emergency Policy

If a major campus emergency occurs, adjustments will be posted on Brightspace or communicated by email.

Course Schedule

Week 1 (Jan 13–15)

Topic: The Birth of Spain

Readings:

- Mitchell, *Spanish Habsburgs*, Ch. 1 (start)
- Cowans: "Marriage Concessions, 1469," pp. 7–9

Week 2 (Jan 20–22)

Topic: Union of Crowns; Spain under the Catholic Monarchs

Readings:

- Mitchell, *Spanish Habsburgs*, Ch. 1 (continue)
- Brightspace PPs
- Cowans: "Treaty of Granada," "Columbus, Letter on the New World," "Expulsion of the Jews"

Week 3 (Jan 27–29)

Topic: Emperor Charles V (1506–1556)

Readings:

- Brightspace PPs
- Mitchell, *Spanish Habsburgs*, Ch. 1 (finish)
- Cowans: "The Requirement," "Conquest of Mexico," "Demands of the Comuneros"

Week 4 (Feb 3–5)

Readings:

- Brightspace PPs
- Mitchell, Ch. 2 (start)

- Cowans: "Charles V on Luther," "Just War in the Indies," "Thirty Propositions"
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Week 5 (Feb 10–12)

Readings:

- Brightspace PPs
- Mitchell, Ch. 2 (finish)
- Cook & Cook, *Good Faith and Truthful Ignorance*, Part 1

Assignment Due: Draft LG1 (Feb 10, 11:59 p.m.)

Week 6 (Feb 17–19)

Topic: Philip II (1556–1598)

Readings:

- Brightspace PPs
 - Mitchell, *Spanish Habsburgs*
 - Cowans: "Margaret of Parma," "Events in Antwerp," "Portuguese Succession," "Armada Defeat"
 - Cook & Cook, Part 2
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Week 7 (Feb 24–26)

Readings:

- Brightspace PPs
- Cook & Cook (finish)

Assignment Due: CPA 1 (Feb 26, 11:59 p.m.)

Week 8 (Mar 3–5)

Focus: Complete Learning Guide 1

Due: LG1 (Mar 5, 11:59 p.m.)

Week 9 (Mar 10–12)

Topic: Women & the Arts Project (Introduction)

Readings: Velasco, *The Lieutenant Nun*

Due: Research Proposal (end of week)

Week 10 (Mar 17–19)

Spring Break — No Class

Week 11 (Mar 31–Apr 2)

Topic: Philip III's Pax Hispanica (1598–1621)

Readings:

- Velasco (finish)
- Cowans: Cellorigo, Expulsion of Moriscos, Archbishop of Seville
- Mitchell & Heinsen-Roach: selected chapters

Assignment Due: CPA 2 (Apr 2, 11:59 p.m.)

Week 12 (Apr 7–9)

Topic: Philip IV (1621–1665)

Readings:

- Cowans: "Oliveres, Instructions," "Pardon of Catalan Rebels"
 - Mitchell & Heinsen-Roach: Litrel chapter
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Week 13 (Apr 14–16)

Topic: Mariana of Austria (1665–1675)

Readings:

- Mitchell, *Queen, Mother, and Stateswoman*, Introduction + Ch. 1–2
 - Cowans: “Velázquez Investigation”
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Week 14 (Apr 21–23)

Topic: Regency of Mariana of Austria

Readings:

- Mitchell, Ch. 3–5
- Cowans: “Treaty Between Spain and Portugal (1668)”
- Mitchell & Heinsen-Roach: Mitchell chapter

Assignment Due: Spanish Women & the Arts Project (Apr 23, 11:59 p.m.)

Week 15 (Apr 28–30)

Topic: Reign of Carlos II (1665–1700)

Readings:

- Mitchell, Ch. 6–7 + Epilogue
 - Mitchell & Heinsen-Roach: “The Battle of Stromboli”
 - Cowans: “Laws of the Habsburg Monarchy,” “Memoirs of the Court of Spain,” “Spain under Charles II”
 - Additional readings TBA
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Finals Week (May 1–6)

Learning Guide 2 Due: May 4, 11:59 p.m.