1492: CONQUEST OF PARADISE

1992 Gerard Depardieu, Sigorney Weaver 122 Min. PG-13

This is a visually pleasing and educationally useful film about the discovery of America which is sufficiently complex and comprehensive to generate relevant discussion. The film, however, is long and sometimes confusing and is best broken into short segments which can stand alone or be combined in sequence.

3:30

In the monastery.

6:50

Burning of heretics.

11:00

University of Salamanca.

14:00

Dialog between scholastics.

18:00

Map room in monastery.

20:00

Fall of Grenada.

23:00

Audience with Isabella.

30:00

Departure from Spain.

35:00 At sea.

41:00

Threatened mutiny.

48:00 Land.

54:00

Exploration.

First encounter with Native

Americans.

1:02:00

Search for gold.

1:10:00

Return to Spanish Court.

Segment: 0:00 - 20:00

Seminar Questioning Sequence:

Why did the scholastic scholar believe that "an independent mind was dangerous"?

Who were the established authorities in Europe and how were they threatened by the rise of scientific thought?

What conflict exists between the interests of the established authorities. What role does the Banker play? How does this influence this period of exploration?

Segment: 20:00 - 48:00

Seminar Questioning Sequence:

In what ways could the discovery and the conquest of the New World be seen as a continuation of the crusade against the Moors? What was the role of the aristocracy, the church, and the average soldier in this new undertaking?

Predict how you think the Spanish would organize their new colonial lands.

Segment: 54:00 - 1:30:00

For this segment, reports can introduce the Native American peoples encountered by the Spanish and the conflict that would mark the culture clash between the European settlers and the Native Americans.

The first segment of the film offers an opportunity to have students consider the rising influence of renaissance thought on the static socio/political structure of Europe.

The Renaissance
The Inquisition
Scholasticism
Monasticism
Medieval
Universities

The second segment can be used to uncover the background of the Spanish expansion into the New World and to lay the groundwork for a later contrast with the English.

The Reconquest
Spanish
art/architecture
Isabella and
Ferdinand
The Moors
15th Century
Navigation

1:21:00 Return to New World. 1:30:00 Building the Mission. 1:40:30

1:40:30 Punishment for theft of Gold.

1:48:00 Struggle to control colony.

1:53:00 Battle at the river.

2:00:00 Reasons to return.

2:06:00 Columbus reports to Isabella.

2:11:00 Columbus in prison.

Seminar Questioning Sequence:

Why was the Spaniard with the lip deformity attracted to the Native American culture?

What other examples of the contrast between communalism and individualism have you seen? Why is this significant? How is it related to the Renaissance?

Segment: 1:30:00 - 2:03:00 Seminar Questioning Sequence:

How have the Spanish Conquistadores organized their colony? What was their purpose?

What was the role of European women, as nearly as you can tell, in this colonial enterprise?

What do you predict to be the long term result of this kind of policy on the development of the Spanish colonies in America?

The final film segment could be used to predict the long term developmental trend the Spanish colonies and point toward later a contrast with the British and French.

Council of the
Indies
Encomienda
System
Hernan Cortez
Francisco Pizzaro
Americo Vespucci
Cabeza de Vaca

Notes