

## **Module 01: Demographic Catastrophe — What Happened to the Native Population After 1492?**

### **Assignments**

#### **Module Quiz**

Take the [interactive quiz](#) to check your comprehension of key themes and details from the module. The quiz will assist you in your preparation for class discussion, exams, and writing assignments. You can choose to email the results to your instructor.

#### **Module Evaluation**

Please assist the project team for the Digital History Reader by completing the short survey below. Your responses will be very helpful to further development.

[Module Evaluation: US 01 - Demographic Catastrophe — What Happened to the Native Population After 1492?](#)

#### **Suggested Writing and Classroom Assignments**

1. Imagine that a very contagious and very deadly "virgin soil" epidemic appeared in your community. What would happen? How would your community's responses differ from those of the native peoples of the New World in the sixteenth century?
2. How did the presence of new diseases complicate the encounter between the native peoples of Meso-America and the Spaniards? Cite specific documents as you explain the role of disease in the Spanish "conquest" of the New World.
3. Many historians believe that "demographic catastrophe" is a phrase that best describes what happened to the native peoples of the Western Hemisphere when Europeans began to explore and settle in the New World. One historian has called it a "holocaust." What role do you think disease played in this catastrophe? What other factors might account for the sharp decline in the native population of Central and South America?