Before First Contact: “Columbus did not discover a new world. He established contact between two worlds, both already old.” — Historian J. H. Perry

Overview—big ideas
- By 1600 Europeans had created the world’s first truly global economy.
- Meanwhile, the "age of discovery" resulted in the greatest human catastrophe the world has ever known: 90% of Native Americans killed by 1600; slavery of tens of millions of Africans.
- Cultural differences between the European and Americans were so immense that conflict was tragically inevitable in the 15th and 16th centuries.

I. Native Americans
- Early Native Americans arrive on North American continent → conflicting research
  - rapidly migrated south and east
  - Many moved south into Mexico and Central America, others moved east into Canada and the United States

Developed civilizations ("sedentary societies") — late-Stone Age
1. Incas in Peru
2. Mesoamerica: Aztecs in Mexico, and Mayans in Yucatan (earlier)
   - developed advanced agricultural techniques based primarily on corn
   - built stone-carved cities rivaling many in Europe
   - studied mathematics and astronomy
   - men and women worked fields and families saved surpluses for trade

North American natives less developed: most "semi-sedentary" by Columbus’ time
- Native American farmers actively managed their environment—not necessarily pristene protectors of environment of myth
- Most Native American societies were bound together by kinship more than anything else
- Most Native American cultures attempted to maintain a sense of dependency among their people
- Gender Roles
  - in most Native American cultures, religious leadership remained in hands of males
  - social and economic power often rested in hands of women
- Religions
  - Native American religions centered on the belief that nature was alive—it has a spiritual power
  - Humans were only one part of the cycle of nature—they didn’t control nature, but were a part of it

II. Europeans
- Social and political structure
  - European society and politics based on hierarchical structure
- Daily life
  - most Europeans lived an agrarian lifestyle
  - as kinship and community ties weakened, the nuclear family became more important in European society--with the eldest male head of the family
- Religions
  - Christianity the main religion in Europe
    - Throughout 16th century Europe, Protestants and Catholics struggled to control the religion of different nations
    - this competition would spill over as the Europeans began to explore and colonize the Americas
  - Christianity as a factor of daily life
religion played a vital role in daily life of many Europeans--important part of their culture (not just something for Sunday)

- The Renaissance and the Age of Exploration
  - The Renaissance opened peoples eyes to a new world outside the continent
  - At the same time, new political and economic developments in Europe pointed toward the outside world
  - nations began to organize and grow--less in-fighting between small principalities
  - wealth of rulers and merchants increased greatly, leading to desire for more wealth and the means to explore for it
  - These two factors helped lead to exploration of other parts of the world--especially Africa and Asia

III. West Africans
- Over half of all immigrants to the New World between 1500 to 1800 came from western Africa--almost all involuntarily
- West Africa dominated by small-scale agriculture and trade
  - Trade--brought about contact with other cultures
- Gender roles
  - women and men frequently shared equal authority in trading with others
    - (although Europeans sometimes had problems accepting fact of women in power)
  - African families tended to be matrilineal--heredity traced through mother, property also inherited through mother
  - still, in most, the two genders held relatively equal power--men and women participated in religious and social leadership--each in their separate spheres
- African villages and kingdoms were ruled by small groups of priests and nobles
  - leaders tended to rely on persuasion rather than force as way of ruling
- Religions
  - Northern parts of West Africa had been exposed to Islam since around 1100 CE, and many Africans had converted to that religion
  - in the areas of west Africa where native religions had survived spread of Islam, people worshiped many gods--usually associated with aspects of the natural world

First Contact
- Non-Europeans came prior to Columbus but did not stay.
  - Afro-Phoenicians c. 1000 BCE-300 CE may have reached Central America
  - West Africa (Mali) c. 1311-1460 sailed to Haiti, Panama, possibly Brazil
- Vikings & Leif Erickson had temporary settlement at New Foundland c. 1000

III. Columbian Exchange--biological transfers
- Diseases and Addictions
- Plants
- Animals

IV. Results of contact between Native-Americans and Europeans
A. For Native Americans
  1. Genocide: By 1600, nearly 90% of Native American population perished.
  2. European impact on culture: cattle, swine and horses, firearms
B. For Europeans
  1. Global empires for 1st time in human history.
  2. Explosion of capitalism
  3. Revolution in diet
I. Similarities and Differences between Native Americans, Europeans, and Africans

- Native American farmers actively managed their environment—not necessarily pristene protectors of environment of myth
  - moved villages when soil becomes depleted
  - burning of forests to encourage cultivation of crops and wildlife
  - gatherers would leave seeds of gathered plants to insure more the next year
- Most Native American societies were bound together by kinship more than anything else
  - extended families often meant as much as the nuclear family (discuss nuclear vs. extended)
  - most villages consisted of a collection of families (or clans)
  - family ties often bound different villages together, helping to form tribes and nations
- Most Native American cultures attempted to maintain a sense of dependency among their people
  - conformity was viewed as necessary
  - Why? need to work as a group to survive

- Men were the hunters; women the gatherers.
- Women did the farming (except tobacco); much "slash and burn" agriculture
- Europeans sought to turn men into farmers; Indian men saw it as "women's work"

Europeans spoke of "reducing the Indian men to civility"

3. Most NA societies matrilineal and matrilocal: women owned the property
   - Men taught their children by persuasion and example.
   - Few cared to acquire more property than could be carried from one site to another.
   - Antithesis to European capitalism; Europeans saw them as poor consumers

4. No individual land ownership (even in sedentary societies) → Clans or families guarded their "use rights" to land allocated by chiefs.

Religious differences between Native Americans and Europeans

1. Christian view:
   a. Bible: God gave Adam dominion over animals and plants.
   b. Bible did not mention Indians. What were they? Where did they come from?
   c. Sacrificial temples, skull racks, cannibalism and snake motifs of Mesoamerica meant Aztecs worshipped Satan in eyes of Europeans.
      - Yet, 100,000 "witches" killed between 1500-1700 in Europe
      - Spanish Inquisition burned thousands
      - Indians saw these too as human sacrifices

2. Native American view:
   a. Indians had nothing in comparison for commodification of plants and animals.
   b. Christians ate their own god (Eucharist) but less outraged at lesser human sacrifice to please Indian god. (Very confusing.)
   c. Indians had no concept of heaven (in Christian sense); disliked Christian heaven because few souls there were Indian; preferred to be buried with ancestors.
Differences in War
1. Indians curious why Europeans sought decisive battles on battlefield.
   a. Saw it as tremendous waste of humans who could be used for replenishment or sacrifice
   b. Used guerrilla-type warfare.
   c. Europeans made poor torture victims (except Jesuits)
2. Europeans could not easily catch Indian warriors.
   a. Resorted often to killing women and children - Pequot War in 1630s most gruesome example
   b. By King Philip’s War (1670s), Indians had learned this lesson well and destroyed Puritan villages, killing non-combatants.
3. Indians often captured children of other tribes and assimilated them.
4. Adult warriors often sacrificed in Mesoamerica
5. European weapons deeply intensified warfare among Native Americans.

III. Columbian Exchange--biological transfers
• Diseases and Addictions
  o Indians got smallpox, flu, and measles (mortality rates as high as 90% in some areas)
  o Europeans got syphilis, cocaine, and tobacco
• Plants
  o Europeans got corn, bean, squash, and potatoes (discuss importance)
  o Wheat, rye, and weeds introduced to North America
• Animals -- Native Americans got horses (became critical to living among Great Basin societies), cattle, and rats

IV. Results of contact between Native-Americans and Europeans
A. For Native Americans
   1. Genocide: **By 1600, nearly 90% of Native American population perished.**
      a. European diseases, e.g., smallpox, yellow fever, malaria, most destructive.
      b. inter-tribal warfare + introduction of European weapons
      c. alcoholism
      d. Central Am. & Caribbean pop. in 1519 = perhaps 25 mil; 1 mil in 1605.
   2. European impact on culture: cattle, swine and horses, firearms -- Great Plains tribes: Apache, Blackfoot, and Sioux--transformed via horses
B. For Europeans
   1. Global empires for 1st time in human history.
   2. Explosion of capitalism
   3. Revolution in diet
      a. Corn, beans, tomatoes & esp. potato lead to improved diet = higher mortality = higher population = bigger push for emigration → Revolutionized international economy.
      b. Stimulants: coffee, cocoa, and tobacco