DECEMBER 2012

SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY

MODULE CODE:        SA4865
MODULE TITLE:       Ethnohistories of the Americas
EXAM INSTRUCTIONS:

Time allowed:

From 19:00 on 9/12/12 to **23:59 on 11/12/12**

Penalty for lateness: 1 point for every ten minutes late after deadline time.

Answer **TWO** questions –

- **ONE** question should come from either section one or section two
- **ONE** question **must** come from section three.

Combined, the two answers should total no more than 3000 words.

*If you quote from any readings (and please use quotes very sparingly or not at all), you should indicate the author’s last name and the page number in parentheses.*

Students should not make use of any previous coursework submitted for this module.

Responses should be uploaded to MMS: [https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/mms/](https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/mms/)
SECTION 1

Primary Source Analysis

Read the historical source below and answer the following questions (a) and (b), devoting about 500 words to each response.

1A. What does this source tell us about the nature of colonial Amazonian society? In your answer, approach this source as an ethnohistorian would, and make an argument on the basis of evidence from the source.

1B. How do other studies you have read help you understand this source? Draw analytical connections to at least two different class readings in your response.

Note: This primary source is an excerpt from a larger work composed by a Jesuit missionary, João Daniel, in the late eighteenth century. His manuscript was based on observations and experiences accumulated during the sixteen years that he lived in the Amazon. In 1757, Daniel was expelled from the region, along with all the other Jesuit missionaries, on the orders of the Marquis of Pombal, Portugal’s powerful prime minister. He spent the rest of his life behind prison walls, during which time he wrote what remains the single most important historical source on the colonial Amazon.

Source:

The [recently arrived] Indians are so inconstant and so prone to fleeing, that it is necessary for the missionaries to take special precautions to keep them content in the missions where they settle. They should persuade the Indians that the missionary acts as their father in caring for them, their doctor in healing their sicknesses, their mediator in settling their disputes, their nurse for comforting them in illness…

They [the recent arrivals] also flee from the descimentos after witnessing some harsh punishment. I remember a descimento that a missionary carried out, which ended up fleeing back into the forest because the Indians saw the

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Descimentos were resettlements (literally, “descents”) of native groups, which entailed bringing them out of their original lands in the interior to a mission village or colonial Indian community.
punishment that he dealt to a criminal tapijara\(^2\)… Much prudence is necessary on the part of the missionary [to avoid these setbacks].

…There are other precautions that should be followed, in order to keep newly resettled Indians in check, and to keep them from fleeing. The first and most important is to transport these Indians far away from their original lands, and not settle them nearby, because the more distant they are, the less likely they are to flee. On the contrary, if they are settled close by, the more likely they are to leave at the first disappointment in the mission, and sometimes all it takes is the memory of their lands or the nostalgia for their relatives back in the forest. Being close, there is no difficulty facing them [in returning]. It is even preferable to resettle them in their same territory than nearby, where they would always been looking longingly [toward their original lands]. Being far away, they are dissuaded by the difficulty of the trip, the lack of food supplies, and the fear of being caught.

Another precaution is to send some of their young male children and headmen to the city [of Belém] to serve as guarantees of their loyalty and permanence [in the missions]. Convincing them to send [these individuals] requires special tact, so as not to make them distrust us, for sometimes this provokes them to flee. This happened to a missionary in my time, who convinced a barbarous and cannibalistic Indian group to settle at a spot on the Xingu River, and to best secure them [in that spot], he went about trying to persuade them to let him send their children to the city, with the goal of their learning some trades with the whites, etc. But the more he tried to convince the Indians, the more distrustful they became, and they plotted to kill the missionary and return to their lands…

It is also necessary to tell the tapijaras not to displease [the recently arrived Indians], as they often do, deprecating them, shaming them by calling them savage and wild, requiring them to serve them, not wanting to share belongings with them… Some missionaries, when they carry out a descimento, divide the newly arrived Indians among the houses of the tapijaras. Others prepare separate residences for the new arrivals, and this seems to be a better practice, for multiple reasons. One is that, if you assign them to the old houses, [the tapijaras] will make the new ones their servants, treating them like slaves and abusing them with injurious words. Being separate, the two groups of Indians do not have so many conflicts with one another.

Finally, I will say of the descimentos that the missionaries must be very careful in their baptisms of newly arrived Indians. Some missionaries, as soon as they complete a descimento, baptize all the children. This practice, however, is very dangerous, due to the risk of their returning to the forest. This has happened innumerable times, such that there are in the forest many Catholics, who live as heathens. To avoid this outcome, it seems to me best to baptize the children only after the parents are very firm [in their new faith] and rooted in the missions…For this purpose, there are spies in the missions

\(^2\) Tapijaras were the longtime residents of the missions — Indians who had been born or raised under the tutelage of missionaries.
and zealous evangelizers [among the mission Indians]. Some [of these spies] advise the missionaries as to who might be in danger [of slipping back into heathenism], and others take over the missionary's tasks in his absence.

SECTION 2
(no more than 1000 words)

2. Scholars once commonly assumed that the perspectives and motivations of non-elite, non-white people were irretrievable and lost to history. What can be uncovered through the use of new types of sources, or through the use of new methods for reading familiar sources? What are some of the limitations of these new approaches?

In your answer, consider these questions with regard to two of the following examples:

- The Saramaka maroons,
- The rebels of the Cabanagem,
- The tapuios (detribalized Indians) of the mid 19th century,
- or The caboclos/peasants of the twentieth century.

SECTION 3
Answer ONE question from this section (no more than 2000 words)

3. 'Caboclo, as an ethnic category, may have Indian referents, but as a kind of Amazonian society, caboclo has little to do with Indian economy or social organisation, rather it is a particular, and particularly limited, artifact of haphazard colonial development.' Discuss.

4. Explore the ways in which contemporary Indians have actively engaged with the Brazilian nation-state.

5. Was the Cabanagem rebellion a race war?

6. What does the study of dolphin folktales reveal about cultural transformation in Amazonia?

7. Discuss the uses of archaeology and historical ecology for an ethnohistorical approach in the Amazon.

8. This module has focused largely on contact between different groups of people in the colonial context. If used as a category of analysis, how do you think contact is best defined? (In your answer, indicate how you came to this definition by referring to specific readings or examples we have covered.)