

## 09/15 Virgin Soil Epidemics

### Disease Before Columbus

Disease-free paradise vs. evidence of infectious diseases

### Encounter and Devastation

Hispaniola: Las Casas

Tenochtitlan & *Broken Spears*: from 25,000,000 to 1,000,000

Quebec

Roanoke

New England: 1616-1619, 1633-1634

Overall, 90% decline in first century after contact

Epidemics and demoralization?

Impact on Europeans: corn, potatoes, tomatoes, and tobacco...

### How Many Died?

Historical records

Archeological evidence

Ecological theories

Epidemiological extrapolations

### Why Did They Die?

Evidence of infections

Why were Indians susceptible?

Natural selection and virgin soil theory

Role of malnutrition

Contingency and social causation

### Health Disparities Today: Biological and Social Explanations