In the period 1500–1750, Europeans established colonial empires that transformed the global economy and the economy of the Americas.
Develop an argument that evaluates the extent to which colonial economies in the Americas in this period relied on the introduction of new systems of labor.

Note: Everything not in italics is what I was able to complete in the forty minute timestamp, along with outlining. The rest of the essay took me about fifteen more minutes. I am going to practice brevity and efficiency, and do handwritten LEQs on my own.

Prior to European maritime expansion and colonization, which began halfway through the fifteenth century, economies and the labor systems that upheld them were more locally based and less globally integrated. Domestic enslaved people from Africa were taken to Muslim countries, but no such slave trade existed to the extent or distance of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. Empires, like those established by the European states like the Portuguese, Dutch, and British, were trading post empires, based more on establishing a monopoly over trade rather than settling large numbers of Europeans and foreign laborers into the colonies as what occurred in the Americas. However, this all changed in the period 1500-1750, when Europeans established overseas colonies in the Americas with unprecedented systems of labor. The labor system of slavery, new in its extent and effect, contributed most to colonial economies in the Americas from 1500-1750. Also, the labor systems based on European serfdom but new in their application to *recently global* industries changed colonial economies somewhat. To a lesser extent, somewhat new, inherently impermanent forms of labor influenced colonial economies in the Americas in this period.

First, colonial economies in the Americas in the period 1500-1750 were most greatly impacted by the labor system of slavery, in which slaves were taken from West Africa at unprecedented levels and were brought to the Americas to work in brutal and fatal settings where they were often treated like nothing more than property. While *one might argue that* slavery had always been a continuity, *this colonial labor system is a new system* because slavery had never been practiced to such an extent for such a long time, it had never occurred over such long distances, and it previously did not have racial *justification - Europeans claimed that Africans were inherently inferior to the white race, often seen more like animals than people, thus claiming that enslaving them had no moral implications*. *This is despite negotiating with African leaders to obtain slaves from smaller, more vulnerable states in Africa in exchange for European weapons and other goods.* This extreme effect on colonial economies is evidenced in the existence of cash crop plantations throughout the Americas, but most clearly in sugar plantations in Brazil and the Carribean. Sugar growth and processing was a laborious job that required many people for a profitable output. Colonists and the governments behind them believed that no such output would result without slave labor, for there were no longer enough natives to exploit due to the rapid decline of their populations as a result of diseases like smallpox and measles, and warfare at the hands of the Europeans. The economic - albeit not moral - success of this labor system for Europeans when it comes to cash crop plantations such as those in the Carribean is seen in the vast increase in slaves in these regions as time went by. What started as a couple thousand slaves transported to the Americas per year grew to tens of thousands, and most of them went to these sugar plantations in the Caribbean and in Brazil. It is because of this massive increase in production that sugar trade became a global phenomenon - sugar was grown and processed in the Americas and exported internationally, mostly to Europe, to the point that it was no longer a good of the wealthy in that region. However, cash crop farming was not the only evidence of the impact that slave labor had on colonial economies. This is also seen in silver mines in the Americas, such as Potosi in Bolivia or those in Mexico. Much like sugar growing, harvesting, and processing, mining silver was a labor-intensive and dangerous job, and there were not enough natives to substantially support this industry. Thus, slaves also were brought to places in the Americas with silver so they could mine the metal. The effect of their labor is evidenced in the increasingly globalized trade of this metal, in which silver was mined in the Americas, sent to Asia, and eventually sent to Europe so that Europeans could use silver to buy goods in Asia, when prior they had not much advantage over Asian traders because they did not have many desirable goods to give in exchange. The silver trade, brought to the extent that it was by slave labor, was the one of the first examples of a truly global economic exchange.

Also, labor systems based on European serfdom but new in their application to industries changed colonial economies somewhat. European serfdom was largely based on the idea that peasants would work the land of wealthy landlords in exchange for protection in a highly fragmented and volatile society. This idea was brought to the colonial Americas, however, it was applied specifically to the recent*ly* global industries of silver mining and cash crop plantations. For example, the Spanish encomienda system was applied to silver mining. In exchange for protection and shelter, Native Americans were sent to work at these mines in extremely dangerous conditions to fuel the trade of silver, which would then be sent to Asia and later to Europe. These systems were less effective at economic output than that of slavery because they were applied to Native American populations: as the years passed, they died either from disease or dangerous working conditions, or were able to escape their servitude because they knew the territory better than Europeans did. While less effective th*a*n slavery at producing a large output of raw material, this labor system worked for some time as colonies were getting established and allowed Europeans to make use of their colonial subjects while still giving them something minimal in return to keep them somewhat appeased, especially because their former rulers had been killed or stripped of their power. This is also evidence*d* in the hacienda system, *which is similar to the encomienda system, except it is applied to cash crop farming rather than silver mining. Yet another industry important to the profiting of the mother countries, giving them leverage in global trade, Europeans were able to use this labor system to economically exploit the natives by offering them some political support. While this system was overpowered by the slave trade, that took more time to develop due to the three month long journey across the Atlantic Ocean and the Europeans' need to negotiate with African coastal leaders, so this worked in the interim and required not much political negotiation after the inital usurping of indigenous rulers.*

To a lesser extent, somewhat new, inherently impermanent forms of labor influenced colonial economies in the Americas in this period. For example, indentured servitude was a form of labor in the Americas that contributed to colonial economies. This form of labor, based upon a *contract that generally lasts seven years and gives migrants free passage into the Americas in exchange for labor, often makes use of people who are in need of economic opportunity and think they will find this in the Americas. This occurred in global colonial industries like the cash crop farming of sugar and tobacco or in silver mining, and the conditions were still dangerous. However, while this did produce some economic output for European mother countries and allowed them to have greater leverage over and connection with Asian peoples, the servitude is only for a set number of years and is based upon a contract - while the employed often has greater power than the employee, they still do not have as much control as one would in hacienda or encomienda, where they are dealing with colonial subjects, or especially in slavery. Another example of an inherently impermanent form of labor that colonial economies somewhat relied on would be the mit'a system - a labor tax system borrowed from the Incan empire, but new in the global extent of the industries that the labor would be for and in the fact that the people imposing the tax are not native to the Americas. While this did serve as an effective political tool because it was a system of labor that the natives were used to and it allowed for increased control over the natives in a way that wouldn't cause much upheaval, because the tax is for a set number of days a year it is similarly not a permanent form of labor that can lead to much profit. Furthermore, it targets Native American populations, who, as previously said, did not last long as a labor source either due to death or escape.*

Overall, various labor systems that existed in the Americas, made new by their extent or their application to the newly global industries that funded the mother countries' exploits, had a profound impact on the success of colonial economies for colonists. However, this occurred in different degrees, with slavery being the most effective at producing the most output of commodities like sugar and silver, followed by systems like encomienda and hacienda that exploited native populations for as long as they could, followed by the impermanent forms of commissioning labor like indentured servitude and the mit'a labor tax.