Instructor: Suzanne Mariko Miller
Meetings: Mon. 2:30-4:20pm (Rice 016)
Office Hours: Tu 4pm-5pm; W 10am-12pm; by appointment (Rice 307)
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The sea has been a potent vector for trade, cultural exchange and imperialism for Western Europe. This course investigates the shifting importance to Europeans of the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. We will investigate this evolution in attitudes and its repercussions in ideology, religion, trade and politics by reading primary sources such as Renaissance merchant notebooks, medieval crusade accounts, and theology regarding Native Americans, as well as secondary texts by such scholars as Fernand Braudel, Patricia Seed and Felipe Fernandez-Armesto.

This course is a discussion-based seminar designed to allow students to:
- Learn how to analyze primary sources and weave together the analyses to create original interpretations of the past.
- Explore important debates in historiography of European attitudes toward exploration, cross-cultural contact, trade and the significance of the sea.
- Understand the broad range of experiences lived by Europeans and those they encountered by traveling the seas.
- Develop their ideas through discussion and debate with fellow members of the seminar.
- Undertake an individual research project using the skills gained in class.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**
- Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Time of Philip II*
- Averil Cameron, *The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity*
- Usamah Ibn Munqidh, *The Book of Contemplation*
- Evelyn Edson, *The World Map, 1300-1492*
- Felipe Fernandez-Armesto, *Before Columbus: Exploration and Colonisation from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, 1229-1492*
- Bartolome de las Casas, *In Defense of Indians*
- Patricia Seed, *Ceremonies of Possession: in Europe's Conquest of the New World, 1492-1640*
- Natalie Zemon Davis, *Trickster Travels: A Sixteenth-Century Muslim Between Worlds*
- Various online texts available through Blackboard (B) and ERes (ER).

**ASSIGNMENTS**
- Class Participation: 20%
- Book Reviews (3): 10% each
- Analytical Essay: 15%
- Research Paper: 35% (2% topic; 3% outline; 30% paper)
Class Participation: Students are expected to contribute substantially to debate and discussion in class. The following rubric will be used to assess participation:

- **A range:** The student is fully engaged and highly motivated. This student is well prepared, having read the assigned texts, and has thought carefully about the texts’ relation to issues raised in seminar. This student's ideas and questions are substantive (either constructive or critical); they stimulate class discussions. This student listens and responds to the contributions of other students.
- **B range:** The student attends and participates consistently in discussion. This student comes to class well-prepared and contributes quite regularly by sharing thoughts and questions that show insight and a familiarity with the material. This student refers to the assigned texts and shows interest in other students' contributions.
- **C range:** The student meets the basic requirements of seminar discussion. This student is usually prepared and participates once in a while but not regularly. This student’s contributions relate to the texts and offer a few insightful ideas but do not help to build a coherent and productive discussion.
- Failure to fulfill satisfactorily any of the criteria for C-range participation will result in a grade of "D" or below.

Book Reviews: Each student will be responsible for writing 3 book reviews during the course of the semester. The review should be posted on the course Blackboard site by 6 pm on the day before the pertinent meeting. There is a course blog on Blackboard called "Book Reviews"; you should post your review there. Reviewable books are marked with an asterisk on the syllabus.

The review should be 800-1,000 words long. The language should be scholarly, and all criticisms of the text should be carefully explained. The structure of the review should flow as follows:

- A hook to draw the reader in—i.e. why we should care about this book
- A boiled-down statement of the author's position
- A short summary of the evidence used to back that position
- What the book adds to our understanding of the subject (if anything)
- What the book fails to address, or major flaws in its argument (if anything)
- Overall assessment (1-2 sentences).

All students are responsible for reading the week’s reviews before coming to class.

Analytical Essay: Each student will write an essay comparing and contrasting the approaches to the sea from two different primary sources read in class. Students should take a clear position, expressed in an analytical thesis at the beginning of the paper. The essay should be written in clear, proof-read English. Students should use the Chicago Manual of Style format for citation (this means footnotes), and include a bibliography. The paper should be 6-8 pages long and is due on Mar. 16 in class.

Research Paper: Each student will create research paper based chiefly on primary sources. It should include both primary and secondary texts outside the assigned readings. The student will be expected to turn in a topic proposal and a detailed outline of the paper for assessment in advance of the final product. The proposal should include the line of research the student expects to pursue as well as a tentative thesis. It is due in class on Mar. 2. The outline should include the sources used to support the paper’s interpretation as well as the various arguments supporting the main thesis. It is due in class on Apr. 20.
The final paper itself should be in clear, proof-read English. Students should use the Chicago Manual of Style format for citation, and include a bibliography at the end of the paper. It should also have an analytical, concisely-stated thesis, supported throughout the paper with evidence from primary sources and critical assessment of pertinent secondary texts. The paper should be 15-18 pages (double-spaced, 12 pt. font) and is due on May 12.

**Class Policies**

*Honor Code*: Students should conduct themselves according to the Oberlin College Honor Code, contained in the Student Handbook, available at [http://www2.oberlin.edu/students/handbook/](http://www2.oberlin.edu/students/handbook/). Students should affirm their understanding of the code by copying out the Honor Pledge and signing it at the end of each essay turned in for this class.

*Accommodation of Student Needs*: Students may find themselves in circumstances that affect their ability to fully participate in class. Examples include disabilities, participation in sports and performances for the Conservatory. Students in these situations should contact the instructor as soon as possible with the proper documentation, so that suitable accommodation (such as make-up work or deadline extensions) can be achieved.

*Late Papers*: For every day that an paper is late without an extension, it will receive a 1/3 grade reduction (e.g. a B+ paper will drop to a B- if it is two days late). Extensions will be given only for unavoidable emergencies and must be cleared with the instructor.

*Laptops*: Given the discussion-based nature of the seminar, students are asked not to use laptops in class. Online texts should be printed out for reference during discussion.

**Schedule**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 2</td>
<td>From the <em>Mappa Mundi</em> to Mercator: The Place of the Sea in European Conceptions of the World</td>
<td>In-class handout</td>
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<td>Feb. 23</td>
<td>Vector of Faith: Religion in the late antique and early medieval Mediterranean</td>
<td>Egeria, <em>Pilgrimage</em> (B) <em>Averil Cameron, The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity</em></td>
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Mar. 2: Mediterranean Crossroads: Convivencia and Crusades  
Readings: William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*. (B)  
Usamah ibn Munqidh, *An Arab-Syrian Gentleman and Warrior in the Period of the Crusades*  
**Paper Proposal DUE**

Mar. 9: Ports of Call: Transmission of Goods and Culture across the Mediterranean  
Readings: John Dotson, *The Zibaldone da Canal* (B)  
*Olivia Remie Constable, *Housing the Stranger in the Middle Ages*, excerpts (B)

Mar. 16: The Idea of the World  
Readings: *The World Map, 1300-1492* by Evelyn Edson  
**Analytical Essay DUE**

Mar. 30: Moving the Center Westward  
Readings: *Felipe Fernandez-Armesto, Before Columbus*  

Apr. 6: Reinventing the Spice Road: Africa, India and Beyond…  
Readings: *Natalie Zemon Davis, Trickster Travels: A Sixteenth-Century Muslim Between Worlds*  
Hans Mayr, *The Voyage and Acts of Dom Francisco* (B)

Apr. 13: Masters of the World: Marking Ownership across the Atlantic  
Readings: *Patricia Seed, Ceremonies of Possession*  
Various Settlement Accounts (English, Spanish, Portuguese) (B)

Apr. 20: Brave New World: The Impact of the Colombian Journey  
Readings: Bartolomé de las Casas, *In Defense of the Indians*  
*Anthony Pagden, The Fall of Natural Man*, excerpts (B)  
**Paper Outline DUE**

Apr. 27: Old Europe: The Fate of Mediterranean Societies  
Francisco Balbi, *The Siege of Malta*, excerpts (B)

May 4: *Mappa Mundi* to Mercator Redux  
Readings: Barbara Solow, *Slavery and the Making of the Atlantic System*, ch. 1-5 (B)

May 12: **Final Paper DUE**