“Wonder-full” Narrations of the New World

Description
This course explores the ways in which Europeans and Native peoples explained their interaction with one another during the first centuries of interaction in the New World. We will use first-person narratives, captivity accounts, European artwork, fictionalized reconstructions, and recent films to investigate the meaning of their narratives as well as the gendered assumptions, cultural imperatives, and material circumstances that shaped them.

We will focus on indigenous-European encounters in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In particular, we will examine the Spanish conquest of the Aztecs and Mayans in Tenochtitlan and Yucatan, respectively; the French Jesuits’ interventions among the Huron and Mohawks in New France; and the Puritans’ dealings with various Native groups in New England. We will develop a nuanced understanding of how two unequally situated groups of people came to measure one another.

Honor Code: All student work is governed by the Oberlin College Honor Code. If you have a question about how the Code applies to a particular assignment, you should raise that question with the professor in advance of the due date.

Readings
The following required books have been ordered for purchase at the Oberlin College Bookstore:

Brian Moore, *Black Robe*
Allan Greer, *Mohawk Saint: Catherine Tekakwitha and the Jesuits*
Ignatia Clendinnen, *Ambivalent Conquests: Maya and Spaniards in Yucatan, 1517-1570*
Enrique Pupo-Walker, ed., *Castaways: The Narrative of Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca*
Neil Salisbury, ed., *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God: Together with the Faithfulness of his Promises Displayed: Being a Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson and Related Documents*

Additional readings are available on Blackboard. PowerPoint presentations will also be posted on Blackboard after the class meeting in question.

**Museum Trips**
- Natives (2/12)
- French (2/28)
- Spanish (3/18)
- Britons (4/29)

**Museum Guidelines**
1. All personal belongings such as bags, backpacks, briefcases, coats, and umbrellas must be left on the hooks by the back door of the museum. When coming to the Print Study Room, only pencils and paper or notebooks may be brought in.
2. Please do not touch the works of art.
3. No food or drink allowed.
4. Pencils only are permitted in the galleries and Print Study Room; pens and writing instruments using inks may not be used.
5. Shoes and shirts are required at all times.

**Films**
- Black Robe
- La Otra Conquista
- Pocahontas
- The Last of the Mohicans

**Evaluation**
*Class Participation (35%)*
- Attend all classes. Remain engaged in the texts and in the class.

Write six one-page discussion papers. You must submit three discussion papers before mid-semester break and three after the break. Use the papers to identify and briefly explain issues in the readings. These papers are for your benefit. Their sole purpose is to facilitate discussion. Consequently, late discussion papers will not be accepted, for any reason. Discussion papers may not be submitted
electronically. Each discussion paper will receive a “grade” of $\sqrt{+}$, $\sqrt{-}$, or $\sqrt{-}$. The cumulative performance on these papers may be used at the margin to shape a student’s final grade. Comments will not be written on the papers themselves but you are welcome to come talk to me about them if you have concerns or questions.

**Lead pre-assigned class discussions.** Post discussion questions at least 24 hours before class.

**Three Scenes (45%)**
Three 4-5 page scenes that explore the Spanish (Aztec and Mayan) and English conquests. Each scene requires a 1-page contextualization.
- First scene: draft, peer reviews, and final version: 3/20, 4/3, and 4/8
- Second scene: draft, peer reviews, and final version: 4/17, 4/24, 4/29
- Third scene: final version: 5/8

**Note:** Late papers will be penalized 5% each day until submission.

**Peer Evaluations (20%)**
Write peer critiques of the first two scenes.

**Schedule of Classes**

**Week 1**
February 5
Introduction; or the “Invasion” of the Americas

February 7
Seeing Native Worlds

Discussion
Stephen Greenblatt, “Introduction” and Chapter 3, “Marvelous Possessions” from *Marvelous Possessions: Wonder of the New World*
Kathleen Brown, “Native Americans and Early Modern Concepts of Race”
Louise Montrose, “The Work of Gender in the Discourse of Discovery”
Daniel Richter, “Imagining a Distant New World”

**Week 2**
February 12
**Museum Trip:** Construction of Natives

February 14
No class

**Week 3**
February 19
Jesuits in New France

Discussion
Brian Moore’s *Black Robe*

February 21
**Film:** Black Robe

**Week 4**
February 26
Women of New France I

Discussion
Carol Devens, “Separate Confrontations: Gender as a Factor in Indian Adaptation to European Colonization in New France”
Natalie Zemon Davis, “Iroquois Women, European Women”
Jan Noel, “New France, Les Femmes Favorisees”
Eleanor Leacock, “Montagnais Women and the Jesuit Program for Colonization”
Nancy Shoemaker, “Kateri Tekakwitha’s Tortuous Path to Sainthood”

February 28
**Museum Trip:** Constructing the French Empire

**Week 5**
March 4
Women of New France II

Discussion
Allan Greer, *Catherine Tekakwitha*

March 6
Conquest of the Aztecs

Discussion
Igná Clendinnen, Chapter 1 of *Ambivalent Conquests*
Selections from Cortes’ “The Second Letter”
Miguel Leon-Portilla, Selections from *The Broken Spears*
Igná Clendinnen, “Fierce and Unnatural Cruelties”

**Week 6**
March 11
Native women in Spanish America: The place of La Malinche

**Film:** La Otra Conquista
Discussion
Cordelia Candelaria, “La Malinche, Feminist Prototype”
Analisa Taylor, “Malinche and Matriarchal Utopia: Gendered Visions of Indigeneity in Mexico”

March 13
Myths of Spanish Conquest

Discussion
Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca, Castaways

**Week 7**
March 18
**Museum Trip:** Constructing the Spanish empire

March 20
No class
**Due:** Draft of scenes for the Aztec conquest (send via email)

**Mid-Break**

**Week 8**
April 1
Conquest of the Mayans I

Discussion
Lowell S. Gustafson, “Mother/Father Kings” from Ancient Maya Gender Identity and Relations, ed. Lowell S. Gustafson and Amelia M. Trevelyan
Igna Clendinnen, *Ambivalent Conquests: Maya and Spaniards in Yucatan, 1517-1570*, first half (excluding chapter 1)

April 3
**Workshop:** Evaluating the Aztec scenes
**Due:** Peer evaluations

**Week 9**

April 8
Conquest of the Mayans II

Discussion
Igna Clendinnen, *Ambivalent Conquests: Maya and Spaniards in Yucatan, 1517-1570*, second half
Diego de Landa on the Maya of Yucatan, excerpts
**Due:** Revised Aztec scene (hardcopy)
April 10
English Visions

Discussion
Richard Hakluyt, “Discourse of Western Planning”
Sarah M. S. Pearsall, “Gender” in The British Atlantic World, ed. Armitage
Joyce E. Chaplin, “Race” in The British Atlantic World, ed. Armitage

**Week 10**
April 15
English settlement in Virginia

Discussion
Carol Berkin, “The Sisters of Pocahontas: Native American Women in the Centuries of Colonization”
Kathleen Brown, “In Search of Pocahontas”
Michael J. Puglisi, “Capt. John Smith, Pocahontas and a Clash of Cultures: A Case for the Ethnohistorical Perspective”
Clara Sue Kidwell, “Indian Women as Cultural Mediators”

April 17
**Film:** Pocahontas
**Due:** Draft of scene for the Mayan conquest (send via email)

**Week 11**
April 22
English society in New England

Discussion
Neil Salisbury, ed., The Sovereignty and Goodness of God: Together with the Faithfulness of his Promises Displayed: Being a Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson and Related Documents

April 24
**Workshop:** Evaluating the Mayan Scenes
**Due:** Peer evaluations

**Week 12**
April 29

**Museum Trip:** Constructing Britons
**Due:** Final Mayan scene

May 1
Hybrid Identities
Discussion
James Axtell, "The White Indians of Colonial America"
Daniel K. Richter, "War and Culture: The Iroquois Experience,"
James Merrell, "The Indians' New World: The Catawba Experience,"

**Film:** The Last of the Mohicans

**Week 13**
May 6
**Workshop:** Evaluating the English Scenes (no peer evaluations required)

May 8
**Due:** Final English scene (hardcopy)
**Potluck**

Discussion
James Axtell, “Humor in Ethnohistory”
James Axtell, “Colonial America Without the Indians: Counterfactual Reflections”