

English 469/569  
Course Time: MW 4:00-5:20  
bdawson@uoregon.edu  
Course Location: 189 PLC

Prof. Brent Dawson  
Email:

Office Location: PLC 473  
Office Hours: F 9-12 or by appt.

## Literature, Science, and Colonialism in the Early Transatlantic

### *Description*

This course looks at how literature, science, visual arts, and politics interact during the beginning of colonialism in the Americas. It examines how these genres shape new ideas about nature, and how these ideas in turn influence debates over human nature and human rights in the context of colonial violence. It attends to a wide array of voices who are caught up in this history: canonical playwrights, indigenous artists, female philosophers, activist theologians, travel writers, and spies. Readings will include utopias, science fiction narratives, drama, indigenous histories and botanical writing, maps and landscape illustrations, essays on human cruelty and animal reason, and trips to the Rare Books library.

### *Required Texts*

Bring all books in print to class. You must use the editions specified.

Thomas More. *Utopia*. Yale.

Margaret Cavendish. *The Blazing World and Other Writings*. Penguin.

Aphra Behn. *Oroonoko*. Oxford.

William Shakespeare. *The Tempest*. Oxford.

## *Assignments*

### Undergraduate

Participation (10%): Discussion will be an important component of class. There may be occasional in-class writing assignments based on the reading.

Commonplace Journal: Throughout the term, you will create a commonplace journal, a text file where you keep and collect quotations from the reading. Each week, you will add at least three entries. Entries should be organized alphabetically by topic, and you can make as many topics as you want at any point in the term. For each entry, include a sentence or two about how it fits the topic. Journals will be collected three times throughout the term. (15%)

Discussion Leading (25%): Working in groups of two or three, students will guide discussion on the text we are reading on the day of their choice for about twenty minutes. Discussions should focus on a particular topic and have some structure to follow.

2 Short Papers (25% each): Students will write two short papers of five to six pages, generally focusing on a couple textual moments from that section of the course.

### Graduate

Additional Readings and Participation (10%): Graduate students will have some additional critical or theoretical readings each week. If possible, we will arrange some additional sessions to discuss these, and if not, correspond online.

Annotated Bibliography (40%): Graduate students will turn an annotated bibliography of eight to ten scholarly sources on a topic related to their final paper. Each entry should include at least a paragraph summarizing the argument and explaining how it is relevant to the students' interests.

Conference Paper (50%): Graduate students will submit an 8-12 page paper, modeled on a paper to be presented at an academic conference, on a topic related to the course. Students will submit in advance a 250 word abstract.

## Calendar

- 1/6: Michel de Certeau, from *Writing of History*  
1/8: Eduardo Galeano, from *Memory of Fire, vol. 1: Genesis*
- 1/13: Christopher Columbus, from *Four Voyages*  
1/15: Amerigo Vespucci, "Mundus Novus" 45-56  
Peter Hulme, from *Colonial Encounters*
- 1/20: Thomas More, *Utopia* book 1  
1/22: *Utopia* book 2, **journal collection 1 due**
- 1/27: Bartolomé de Las Casas, from *In Defense of the Indians*  
1/29: Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala, from *The First New Chronicle and Good Government*
- 2/3: Michel de Montaigne, "Of Cannibals," from "Apology for Raymond Sébond";  
Jean de Léry, from *History of a Voyage*  
2/5: Montaigne, "Of Coaches";  
Chimalpahin/Francisco López de Gómara, *Chimalpahin's Conquest* 213-261; **paper 1 due**
- 2/10: Spenser, *The Faerie Queene* 2.proem, 2.11;  
Nahua Authors/Bernardino de Sahagun, from *The Florentine Codex*  
2/12: *Faerie Queene* 2.12; **Journal Collection 2 due**
- 2/17: William Shakespeare, *The Tempest* 1-3  
2/19: *Tempest* 4-5
- 2/24: John Smith, *A True Relation*  
2/26: White and de Bry images of Virginia;  
Paula Gunn Allen, from *Pocahontas: Medicine Woman, Spy, Entrepreneur, Diplomat*
- 3/2: Margaret Cavendish, *The Blazing World*, first part  
3/4: *Blazing World*, second part  
Early Modern Maps, Atlases, and Science Texts (visit to Rare Books Library)
- 3/9: Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko*  
3/11: Saidiya Hartman, from *Lose Your Mother*  
Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, "Open Boat," "Burning Beach"  
**Paper 2 due 3/16, Journal Collection 3 due 3/11**

## *Policies*

**Accessibility:** Please let me know me if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center (formerly Disability Services) in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or [uoaec@uoregon.edu](mailto:uoaec@uoregon.edu).

**Attendance:** Coming to class with the day's reading printed is mandatory. Missing more than three classes unexcused will result in your final grade being lowered by one third a letter grade for each additional absence. For example, if you miss three classes, a B will become a B-, and with five classes it will become a C+. Seven or more unexcused absences will mean you fail the course.

**Formatting Papers:** Your written assignments must be in twelve-point font, double-spaced, and have one-inch margins. Submitting assignments electronically is completely acceptable, but you need to use .pdf format (not .doc, .docx, .pages, or .odt). If you're not sure how to do that, ask me in advance. You can follow MLA or Chicago guidelines for citations, but be consistent. A great guide to either format can be found at Purdue's OWL website (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>). You are expected to proofread your work; too many errors will result in a small penalty to your grade.

**Late Assignments:** I give out extensions readily, but you need to ask in advance. The farther in advance you ask, the more likely I am to grant the extension. If you don't complete an assignment on time and you don't ask for an extension, I still encourage you to let me know your circumstances. Exceptions may be given for emergencies and other extraordinary circumstances. Late assignments are generally graded down one letter grade per day late. Assignments are due at the beginning of class unless stated otherwise; assignments turned in after that will be considered a day late.

**Plagiarism:** All work must be your own and be written solely for this class. Plagiarism can be unintentional, so be careful and make sure you understand the rules. If you don't, ask me. When you quote, paraphrase, or borrow ideas from an article, website, editor's note, friend, or any other outside source, you need to provide documentation. I encourage you to look at the library's guides for citing sources and avoiding plagiarism (<https://library.uoregon.edu/citing>). The same link will also allow you to access the university's official policy toward academic misconduct; you should read over the policy if you are unclear about what counts as cheating or plagiarism. If you're struggling with a paper, I encourage you to contact me. It's better to submit a paper late, unfinished, or that's not very good than to risk failing the class by plagiarizing.