ENGL 639: Discovery and Colonization in Renaissance Literature

This course will explore the connections articulated in English Renaissance poetry, drama, chorography, and travel writing among the projects of national identity formation, cultural description, and colonial expansion. We will examine the European and transatlantic contexts of English self-representation during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and will attend, in particular, to the powerful influence of Spain and Spanish conquests in Granada and the Americas on England’s national imaginary and its colonial efforts in Ireland and the Americas. Primary texts will include Thomas More’s *Utopia*, Bartolomé de Las Casas’s *Una brevisima relación* (in the 1583 English translation, *The Spanish Colonie*), Edmund Spenser’s *View of the State of Ireland* and *The Faerie Queene*, sonnets by Garcilaso de la Vega and Sir Philip Sidney, travel writing by Sir Walter Raleigh, Ben Jonson’s *Masque of Blackness*, William Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, Aphra Behn’s *Oroonoko* and *The Widow Ranter*, and the memoirs of Catalina de Erauso (who abandoned her Basque cloister for life as a transvestite and mercenary soldier in the New World). This course aims to sharpen both close reading and research skills and will prepare students to develop and deliver a paper at an academic conference.

Requirements

*Attendance and participation (including contributions to class discussions and to the overall intellectual climate of the course) are mandatory. More than two absences will affect your grade. You cannot pass the class if you miss five or more classes.*

Assignments and Grading:
-Weekly response writings (500 words reflecting on and responding to the readings due for either Tuesday or Thursday of each week. I suggest that you use these short writing assignments to explore connections between the readings and the themes, topics, and critical contexts covered in class. Responses are to be emailed to me by 10pm on the day before the readings that you’ve chosen to reflect upon are due). 20%
-Two research presentations (the first will be on a work of travel or colonial writing not covered on the syllabus and the second will be modeled on a conference presentation and excerpted from your final research paper) 15%
-Two essays: a close-reading paper (5-7 pages) and a research paper (10-15 pages) that develops an innovative thesis and defines its contributions to early modern scholarship. We will workshop the research paper in class during our final week and students will give a presentation that is the length of a conference paper (15 minutes or 6-8 pages) on the last day of class. The final version of the paper, incorporating class feedback, should be submitted to me by email on or before December 18. 65%
Books
William Shakespeare, *The Tempest* (Arden)
Richard Hakluyt, *Voyages and Discoveries* (Penguin)
Thomas More, *Utopia* (Penguin)
Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko and Other Writings* (Penguin)
Catalina De Erauso, *Lieutenant Nun* (Beacon)

Selected Bibliography
- Knapp, Jeffrey. *An Empire Nowhere: England, America, and Literature from Utopia to


Online Resources

-Oxford English Dictionary Online (historical dictionary available via library databases—use this to look up sixteenth and seventeenth-century meanings of words)

-Luminarium: www.luminarium.org (independent scholarly website; includes texts and scholarly essays as well as links to other online resources)

-Project Muse (library database for humanities and social sciences)

-MLA International Bibliography (library database for modern languages and literature)

-JSTOR (library database for humanities, arts, sciences, and social sciences)

-The Early Modern Drama Database
http://homepage.mac.com/tomdalekeever/earlymodern.html

-Renaissance Women Online
http://www.wwp.brown.edu/about/RWOoverview.html

-Voice of the Shuttle (guide to online humanities research)
http://vos.ucsb.edu/

-The English Dept. at the University of Pennsylvania’s CFP (calls for papers) List and Archive http://call-for-papers.sas.upenn.edu/

Schedule of Readings and Assignments (Subject to Change)

Week 1: Introduction, Constructions of Nationhood


Thurs., Sept. 6: Thomas More, Utopia

-Jeffrey Knapp, An Empire Nowhere, chapter 1 (recommended)

Week 2: Humanism and Travel Writing:

Tues., Sept. 11: Thomas More, Utopia


-Thurs., Sept. 13: Hakluyt, Selections from Voyages and Discoveries

-Barbara Fuchs, “An English Picaro in New Spain: Miles Philips and the Framing of National Identity” (Project Muse)
Week 3: Spain and the Black Legend
Tues., Sept. 18: Selections from *Voyages and Discoveries*
- Eric Griffin, “From Ethos to Ethnos: Hispanizing ‘the Spaniard’ in the Old World and the New” (Project Muse)
Thurs., Sept. 20: Selections from *Voyages and Discoveries*

Week 4: Imperial Desires
Tues., Sept. 25: Selections from *Voyages and Discoveries* (Sir Walter Raleigh)
- Roland Green, “Imperial Sidney” from *Unrequited Conquests*.

Week 5: Spenser and the Celtic Fringe (cont.)
Tues., Oct. 2: Edmund Spenser, excerpt from *A View of the Present State of Ireland*
Thurs., Oct. 4: Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, Book V

Week 6: Irish Moriscos; Genealogies of Colonial Space
Tues., Oct. 9: *Faerie Queene*, Book V
Thurs., Oct. 11: *Faerie Queene*, Book V
*First Paper Due*

Week 7: Court, Commerce, and Spectacle
-Gary Taylor, “Hamlet in Africa, 1607.” (handout)

Week 8: Humanism and Emerging Ethnographies
Thurs., Oct. 25: *The Tempest*
-Michel de Montaigne, ‘Of the Canniballes’ (1580), trans. John Florio (1603), (handout).

Week 9: Colonial and Postcolonial Studies
Tues., Oct. 30: *The Tempest*
Paul Brown, “‘This thing of darkness I acknowledge mine’: *The Tempest* and the Discourse of colonialism.” (handout)
Thurs., Nov. 1: No classes

Week 10: Epic Voyages; Biblical and Colonial History
Tues., Nov. 6: John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book 4
Thurs., Nov. 8: *Paradise Lost*, Book 4

Week 11: Transatlantic Studies and the Slave Trade
Tues., Nov. 13: Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko*
Thurs., Nov. 15: *Oroonoko*

Week 12: Class Conflict and Colonial Discourse
Tues., Nov. 20: Behn, *The Widow Ranter*
*Conference paper proposal due*
Thurs., Nov. 22: *The Widow Ranter*

Week 13: Colonial Contexts of Seventeenth-Century Women’s Writing
Tues., Nov. 27: Lady Mary Wortley Montagu TBA
Thurs., Nov. 29: Catalina de Erauso, *Lieutenant Nun*

Week 14: Travel and Transvestitism
Tues., Dec. 4: *Lieutenant Nun*
-Marjorie Garber, “The Marvel of Peru”
Thurs., Dec. 6: No classes

Week 15: Conclusions
Tues., Dec. 11: *Lieutenant Nun*
*Workshop of final papers (6-7 pages due)*
Thurs., Dec. 15: Conference paper presentations (15 minutes each)