COLLOQUIUM IN SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH:

EARLY MODERN ATLANTIC AND GLOBAL EXCHANGES

History 16:510:535
Spring 2015
Tuesdays 1.10-4.10
Van Dyck Hall 011
Prof. J. Delbourgo
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Office Hours: VD 104 Thursdays 1.30-4.30

DESCRIPTION

This colloquium is designed to serve the needs of graduate students with interests in early modern Europe, colonial America, the Atlantic world, global history, and the history of science, technology, environment and medicine. It seeks to introduce them to the intellectual excitement of combining the methodologies of science and technology studies with colonial and global histories. It asks what kinds of histories we should write about the natural world in the age of the ‘Columbian Exchange’ and the ‘First Globalization’ that draw together humans, animals, environments and objects. We will not isolate scientific knowledge but see it as embedded in specific cultures, environments, infrastructures and economies. We will address classic imperial themes like bio-prospecting and natural history, as well as consider perspectives and encounters not centered on European actors. We will engage with the methodologies of science and technology studies and examine key terms and questions concerning the process of knowing about and intervening in the natural world, such as the construction of knowledge as local or universal; the relationship between theory and practice, or science and technology; the fruitfulness and limitations of colonial and imperial paradigms; and the agency of animals, objects, microbes and climates.

BOOKS ORDERED VIA BARNES AND NOBLE, 100 SOMERSET STREET

Bruno Latour, We Have Never Been Modern, Harvard
Alfred Crosby, The Columbian Exchange, Greenwood or Praeger
Kenneth Pomeranz, The Great Divergence, Princeton
Richard Grove, Green Imperialism, Cambridge
Alan Mikhail, The Animal in Ottoman Egypt, Oxford
Jennifer Anderson, Mahogany, Harvard
Londa Schiebinger, Plants and Empire, Harvard
Carla Nappi, The Monkey and the Inkpot, Harvard
Judith Carney, Black Rice, Harvard
James Sweet, Domingos Álvares, North Carolina
Jorge Canizares-Esguerra, How to Write the History of the New World, Stanford
Daniela Bleichmar, Visible Empire, Chicago
Neil Safier, Measuring the New World, Chicago
Laura Hostetler, Qing Colonial Enterprise, Chicago
Florence Hsia, Sojourners in a Strange Land, Chicago
Joyce Chaplin, Subject Matter, Harvard
Serge Gruzinski, What Time is it There?, Polity
ASSIGNMENTS

(i) Verbal participation is expected on a weekly basis, especially raising questions for discussion
(ii) Leading at least one, perhaps two, discussions on a book or set of readings
(iii) Short response paper on the readings either from weeks 1 or 2: 4-pp. double-spaced max.
(iv) Book review: 1,000 words – due ideally before Spring Break
(v) 15-20 page paper on topic of student’s choice, agreed by consultation with professor during office hours; 3-page prospectus with bibliography and key questions due by Tues 10 March; may draw entirely from syllabus or not; hard copy due by last class, 28 April

50% of the course grade will derive from participation & short papers; 50% from the term paper

CLASS PROTOCOLS

The aim of graduate seminar discussions is above all to enjoy the play of ideas; find what is interesting in the readings; to generate positive intellectual excitement at the potential for innovative work; and to encourage each other to think creatively. Therefore we will enforce THE STERNE RULE: “we want to avoid ‘seek and destroy’ sessions. If you have something critical to say, be ready to explain how the piece could be improved.” There is of course a fundamental role for critique in discussion; but this must be complemented by attention to what better stories we might tell, how, and with what materials. NOTE ON READINGS: each week, students are expected to complete readings marked “ALL” and in addition one of the set of readings (grouped by geography). Students may wish to read both but this is not expected. PRESENTATIONS: presentations will begin week 3 and be assigned by the professor in consultation with students. Each presenter will email 2-3 questions to the class by noon on the day before class (Monday) and will be asked to lead discussion with 15 minutes max. in which they will be asked to do 3 things: summarize the main argument(s) of the assigned reading; refine their 2-3 discussion questions; and pick one object (or image) from the reading as a show-and-tell example that materially embodies the questions/issues they see as most interesting in the reading.

SCHEDULE

All Books (including anthologies) on Reserve in Alexander Library

† distributed via email

Tues 20 Jan: INTRODUCTIONS + Framings I – Imperial, Postcolonial, Global
ALL READ:

**Tues 27 Jan: Framings II – Humans, Nonhumans & Hybrids**

*ALL:*

**Tues 3 Feb: Columbian Exchange and Great Divergence**

*ATLANTIC:*

*GLOBAL:*

*Short Response Paper due in class: hard copy please*

**Tues 10 Feb: Environmental Histories**

*BRITISH EMPIRE/ GLOBAL:*

*ATLANTIC:*

**Tues 17 Feb: Animals**

*ALL:*

*ATLANTIC:*

*OTTOMAN:*

**Tues 24 Feb: Natural History & Bio-Prospecting**

*EUROPE/ EMPIRE:*

*INDIA AND CHINA:*

**Tues 3 March: African Knowledges: Diaspora & Slavery**

*ALL:*

**AGRICULTURE:**

[Roundtables in *AHR* in 2007 and 2010]

**MEDICINE AND MICROHISTORY:**

**Tues 10 March**

*No Class: *Term Paper Prospectus due by Email

**Tues 17 March**

*No Class: SPRING BREAK*

**Tues 24 March: Creole Epistemology**

*ALL:*

**TEXTUAL KNOWLEDGE:**

**VISUAL KNOWLEDGE:**

**Tues 31 March: What is a Global Network, Really?**

*ALL:*

**BRITAIN, GLOBAL AND WEST AFRICA:**

**ATLANTIC/SOUTH AMERICA:**
Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Transculturation & Travel Writing*, Routledge, 1992, ch. 6


**Tues 7 Apr: Go-Betweens and Indigenes**

*ALL:*


*ATLANTIC:*

-- James Delbourgo, “Fugitive Colors: Shamans’ Knowledge, Chemical Empire and Atlantic Revolutions,” in *Brokered World* (Guiana/London)


*PACIFIC:*

-- *Brokered World* essays by Robert Liss (Japan) and David Turnbull (Australasia)

-- Florence Hsia, *Sojourners in a Strange Land: Jesuits and their Scientific Missions in Late Imperial China*, Chicago, 2009

**Tues 14 Apr: Mapping Peoples: Cartography and Ethnography**

*ALL:*


*ATLANTIC:*


*CHINA:*

Laura Hostetler, *Qing Colonial Enterprise: Ethnography and Cartography in Early Modern China*, Chicago, 2001

**Tues 21 Apr: Technique, Technology & Instrumentation**

*ALL:*


*ATLANTIC:*


*INDIA, PACIFIC AND ASIA:*


-- David Turnbull, *Masons, Tricksters and Cartographers*, ch. 4 (Pacific Islanders)

 Tues 28 Apr: Conclusion – What Time is it There?

ALL: