Council of the Humanities

HUM 370: The Age of Discovery

Thursdays, 1:30-4:20, McCosh 34

Blackboard site: https://blackboard.princeton.edu/pucourse/HUM370-HIS302_F2015

Prof. Adam Beaver
beaver@princeton.edu
Thurs. 9:30-12:30 in G21 Dickinson [sign up]

Prof. Christina Lee
chrislee@princeton.edu

Course Description

The early modern period in European history and culture is often referred to as the “Age of Discovery” because of European encounters with the New World. In fact, the period can be characterized as one of multiple discoveries: not just of different parts of the globe (east as well as west), but of ancient texts and learning, of human biology and psychology, of the science of politics, and even of the basic disciplinary distinctions (i.e. between the “humanities,” “social sciences,” and “sciences,” and within each group) that we now assume are simply natural ways in which to classify all of human knowledge. This course will provide an introduction to the study of Early Modern Europe, from the Renaissance to the French Revolution, by focusing on these different forms of “discovery” in both historical and literary texts of the period.

Readings

The following three books are available for purchase at Labyrinth (or through another bookstore of your choosing):


All other readings for this course are available on the course’s Blackboard site. Please note that the best feature of free online readings—the fact that you can read them for free on your laptop or tablet—is also their worst feature. Because you can read them on a screen, you may be less likely to take notes on interesting or confusing passages, and you will have a hard time scrolling to the passages we are discussing in class. We strongly urge you to print them out and bring them with you in hard copy. We know that this is less friendly to the environment and to your wallet; but you are still coming out ahead of buying a *Pequod* packet, and you will learn much more.

Requirements

*Attendance and participation:* We will meet once a week for 3 hours at a time. The professors may lecture briefly on the context of the texts we are reading and/or the ways in which modern critics have tried to understand them; the primary focus of class meetings, however, will always be discussion of the text itself. Attendance—and *informed participation*—are crucial to this course: while it may be possible to acquire a general knowledge of the texts and their importance through solitary reading, that understanding will pale in comparison to what you learn by jumping into the fray and
engaging the authors and your peers in class. Each student will informally lead the discussion on two assigned readings. Class participation will count for 20% of the final grade.

Examinations: There are no examinations in this course.

Written assignments: There are three required papers; the first two will be of approximately 6 pages each, and the final paper will be approximately 15. The first paper will be due on Blackboard on 10/17 and will count for 20% of the final grade. The second paper will be due on Blackboard on 11/21, and will count for 20% of the final grade. The final paper will be due on Dean’s Date and will account for the remaining 40% of the final grade.

Schedule of Meetings and Readings, Fall 2015

Unit 1. The Discovery of the Past

17 Sep. Course Introduction: On Discovery

24 Sep. Humanism
Fernando de Rojas, *Celestina* (1502).

1 Oct. Print and Protestantism [Visit to Rare Books]
Martin Luther, *Open Letter to Leo X* and *On Christian Liberty* (1521).

8 Oct. Catholicism and the Arts [Visit to Princeton University Art Museum]
Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam, Preface to the *Paraphrase on John* (1523), and “A Pilgrimage for Religion's Sake” (1518-1533).

Unit 2. The Discovery of the Globe

15 Oct. First Encounters, from the Canaries to the Americas
Christopher Columbus, *The Journal of Christopher Columbus* (1492–1493).
Hernán Cortés, “Letters from Mexico” (1522).
Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala, “Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala's Appeal Concerning of the Priests” (ca. 1615).

22 Oct Empire and the First Globalization
Antonio de Nebrija, “Preface” to the *Gramática castellana* (1492).
Ogier Ghislain de Busbecq, *The Turkish Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, Imperial Ambassador at Constantinople 1554–1562* (1581).
Matteo Ricci (trans and ed. Trigault and Purchas) “A Discourse of the Kingdome of China” (1615).
Luis Vaz de Camoens, *The Lusiads* (1572). Cantos VIII, IX, and X.

**Unit 3. The Discovery of Mankind**

29 Oct. He is the Sun, She is the Moon: Women and Learning
Luis Vives, *Education of the Christian Woman* (1524)
Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, “Letter to Sister Filotea” (1691)

5 Nov. Fall Recess

12 Nov. The Power of Blood

19 Nov. “Human Nature”? [with Florent Masse (French and Italian)]

26 Nov. Thanksgiving Recess

**Unit 4. The Discovery of Politics**

3 Dec. The State: Divinely Ordained, or a Work of Art?
Calderón de la Barca, *Life Is a Dream* (1635).

10 Dec. The Information State and the Laws of Politics
Lope de Vega, *Fuente Ovejuna* (1619).
Baltasar Gracián, “The Hero” (1637).

17 Dec. Course Conclusion: Social Science and the Future
Student Presentations