

**History 715:**

**Topics in the Atlantic World**

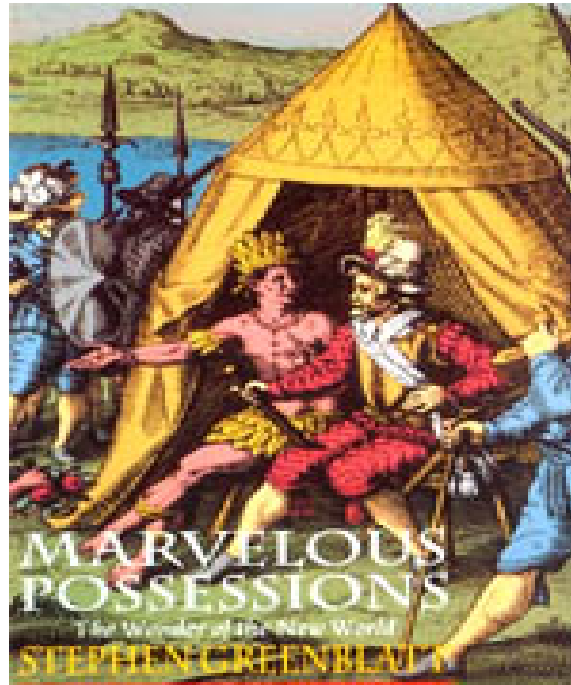
**Spring 2010**

Dr. Phyllis Hunter

Office: 2119 MHRA Bldg

Hours: Mon 3:30-4:30; Tues 5-6:00 pm

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**“Marvelous Possessions:”  
How Europeans “Produced” the Americas  
(Topics in the Atlantic World)**

This readings course will examine how Europeans took possession of new lands and peoples and how, on occasion, Americans resisted or adapted European culture for their own ends. For Europeans, enlightenment goals to catalogue uncharted lands and utopian aims to build new societies often collided with longings for riches and missionary crusades to convert souls. Each of these competing impulses generated different ways of possessing, producing, and consuming the idea and experience of America. In effect, this course will address the cultural production of imperialism and the multiple interactions between “old” and “new” worlds. Through reading secondary sources in history, literature, and anthropology this course will explore how scholars have interpreted the different motives and methods that shaped cultural encounters with and images of the new world and Africa during the sixteenth to twentieth centuries.

**Required Texts:**

- Crosby, Alfred W. *Ecological Imperialism : The Biological Expansion Of Europe, 900-1900*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Seed, Patricia. *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe's Conquest of the New World, 1492-1640*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Greenblatt, Stephen. *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.
- Games, Alison. *Web of Empire* Oxford; Oxford University Press, 2008  
(Amussen, Susan, *Caribbean Exchanges: Slavery and the Transformation of English Society, 1640-1700*) Not ordered yet.)
- Mintz, Sidney W. *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*. New York: Penguin Books, 1986.
- Breen, T. H. *The Marketplace of Revolution: How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence* Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2004
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Rev. ed. New York, Verso, 2006.
- Daniels, Christine & Michael V. Kennedy, eds. *Negotiated Empires: Centers and Peripheries in the Americas, 1500-1820*. New York: Routledge, 2002
- \* Texts are available at the UNCG bookstore

### **Requirements:**

This is designed to be an intensive readings course at the graduate level. Your first and primary requirement is to come to class prepared for an in-depth discussion of the assigned readings. You will be asked to prepare short response papers or to produce in-class writings from time to time. No late papers will be accepted. Students will also be asked to do class presentations and a final paper that explores “a possession.” Needless to say, attendance is required and absences will affect your grade.

**Class Presentations:** Each week students will present and discuss material related to the assigned topic and reading. They might have the class analyze a short primary document, image, or artifact in terms of the concepts of that week’s reading; they might present work of other scholars that challenges or supports the week’s readings or present another historical episode that highlights or problematizes the week’s readings. Students should meet with me to discuss their plans well in advance of their week(s).

**Final Paper:** This is not designed to be a typical primary research paper but rather a chance to apply one or more of the interpretations studied in the course to a source or group of sources relevant to your own research interests thereby arriving at a new interpretation of your chosen material. The paper should be 10-15 pages and show evidence of original thinking and careful assessment of the secondary sources from the

class and their relationship to the primary materials. The primary source(s) used for the final paper may include written documents, visual images, or material artifacts.

### **Student Learning Outcomes:**

- \* Students will acquire a knowledge of some of the key developments in European interaction with the New World from initial exploration thru the eighteenth and nineteenth century.
- \* Students will gain familiarity with key concepts in cultural history with a focus on cultural encounters
- \* Students will be introduced to classic and recent work on capitalism and imperialism
- \* Students will learn how to apply theoretical and conceptual texts to their own research topics.
- \* Students will have an opportunity to enhance their ability to express ideas and historical analysis in writing, class discussion, and class presentation.

### **Grading**

Class Participation (includes presentations)	40%
Shorter Written Work	30%
Final Paper	<u>30%</u>
Total	100%

## CLASS SCHEDULE:

### Introduction

Wed Jan 20

Introduction: Representing and Interpreting Cultural Encounters

### ECOLOGICAL HISTORY

Wed Jan 27

Class Discussion: Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism* and Donald Worster, “**Transformations of the Earth: Toward an Agroecological Perspective in History.**” *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 76, No. 4. (Mar., 1990), pp. 1087-1106 [on JSTOR via Jackson Library Databases]

### RITUAL AND ENCOUNTERS

Wed. Feb 3

Class Discussion: Seed, *Ceremonies of Possession*:

Wed. Feb 10

Class Discussion: Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions*:

**Due:** Short Essay (3-5 pp) comparing how Seed and Greenblatt address the moment of encounter and the use of ritual.

### ENGLISH ENTERPRISE AND COSMOPOLITAN CULTURE

Wed. Feb 17

Class Discussion: Games, *Web of Empire*

Wed. Feb 24

Class Discussion: Amussen, *Caribbean Exchanges*

### CAPITALISM AND CONSUMPTION

Wed. Mar 3

Class Discussion: Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*:

Recommended: Phillip Curtin, *Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex*

Wed. Mar 10

SPRING BREAK!

Wed. Mar 17

Class Discussion : Breen, *Marketplace of Revolution*:

Recommended: Richard Bushman, *The Refinement of America*

**Due:** Short Essay (3-5 pp) on the role of consumption in the making of the new world.

Wed. Mar 24

Individual Meetings with Dr. Hunter on final paper

**Due:** 1 page proposal and brief bibliography for final paper

## INTERPRETING EMPIRE

Wed. Mar 31

Class Discussion: Anderson, *Imagined Communities*

Wed. Apr 7

Daniels & Kennedy, eds., *Negotiated Empires* – selected chapters

Wed. Apr 14

Class Discussion: Lears, T. J. Jackson, “The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities.” *American Historical Review* [AHR] vol. 90 (1985): 567-593. (Available on JSTOR)

**And** article of your choice on historical interpretation of Empire or how Empires are formed, and maintained. (Can be from any place or period.)

**Due:** One page report, synopsis, précis, of your article.

**Due:** Short essay (3-5 pp) on ideas about empire and nationalism

## RETHINKING AMERICAN HISTORY

Wed. Apr 21

Class Discussion: Bender, *Rethinking American History in a Global Age* (selections – on e-Reserve); Peter Wood, “North America in the Era of Captain Cook: Three Glimpses of Indian-European contact in the age of the American Revolution.” (on e-Reserve)

Wed. Apr 28

Last Class: Brief presentations (5-10 min) on final paper.

**Due: Final Papers in my office by 5 PM. Wednesday May 5**