

Portuguese 159

Narratives of Travel and Intercultural Contact in the Early Modern Imperial World

How this course meets the general principles of the GEC Model Curriculum and the specific goals of the category(ies) for which it is being proposed

(From Model Curriculum)

ARTS AND HUMANITIES

Humanistic inquiry is most often pursued through the study of what are commonly called the humanities and the arts. The humanities, according to a definition accepted by the National Endowment, are “fields of study and branches of learning which record, investigate, analyze, and evaluate the products of human imagination, activity, and culture.” This broad definition is meant to include the history and criticism of the arts. To it must be added production of all forms of artistic expression and the capacity to understand and judge them aesthetically and in cultural context. Humanistic inquiry assesses, across temporal, cultural, or theoretical divisions, how humans view themselves in relation to other humans, to nature, to the divine; what questions they ask about important concerns; and how they express their responses to the conditions of their existence. Language, memory, and symbol are central to the study of both the humanities and the arts. Both also ask questions about the values by which individuals and societies live and the tolerance and mutual understanding needed to allow the full realization of human potential and diversity. Therein they cultivate an appreciation for the unique, particular, and distinctive, for the dated and the placed, often focusing on “tradition” as well as on the intangible aspects of human activity and on the ability of individuals to push against constraints. Therefore, the continuing forms by which humans communicate with, advise, and entertain one another are important, but equally so are those individuals and moments through which new possibilities are opened for the human experience.

The overall goal of this component is to develop knowledge of the humanities and the arts and a humanistic perspective that fosters capacities for: (1) aesthetic and historical response and judgment; (2) interpretation and evaluation; (3) critical listening, reading, seeing, thinking, and writing; and (4) experiencing the arts and reflecting on that experience. As a result of meeting this requirement, each student should have studied significant writings and works of art that can be shown to be of lasting and fundamental importance for humanistic inquiry.

2. C. (1) Arts and Humanities-Literature

The guidelines approved in 2008 for GEC courses in the Arts and Humanities category state that expected learning outcomes for the sub-category of Literature are the following:

(1) Literature Expected Learning Outcomes:

1. Students learn to analyze, appreciate, and interpret significant literary works.
2. Through reading, discussing, and writing about literature, students learn to understand and evaluate the personal and social values of their own and other cultures

1. Students learn to analyze, appreciate, and interpret significant literary works.

- In this course students will read from major works in the Portuguese and other European traditions that represent, critique, and/or participate in early modern imperial expansion. The course studies the significant but often overlooked role of the Portuguese as forerunners not only in the process of European expansion but also in the textual representation of intercultural contact. Analytical skills will be developed through the practice of close reading and comparative analysis, with particular attention to the ways in which cultural difference is constructed, represented, and evaluated in literature.
- The course will ensure full student participation, and associated practice of analytical skills, in class discussion by requiring each student to select a passage to comment on in each class, whether in small groups or with the entire class. Allowing students to orient the discussion in this way will sharpen their ability to select appropriate passages and prepare comments capable of generating dialogue. The writing assignments, in turn, build on these oral interventions by requiring students to present their textual

commentaries in writing, and the professor's written feedback on each of the assignments will sharpen their ability to communicate more effectively and persuasively in writing.

2. Through reading, discussing, and writing about literature, students learn to understand and evaluate the personal and social values of their own and other cultures

- The course readings will consist of primary sources that document, participate in, and reflect on early modern intercultural contact between Europeans and non-Europeans (including letters, travel accounts, shipwreck and captivity narratives, ethnographic reports), as well as secondary sources that reflect the changing historiography on the early modern imperial era and particularly the Portuguese role in navigation and exploration of the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. Through careful readings of, and oral and written commentaries on, the primary sources, students will learn to critique the ways in which cultural differences and imperial ideologies are constructed, represented, and evaluated. Secondary historical sources will help students to critically assess the way that the history of European expansion has traditionally been told from a northern European/Anglophone perspective.
- For each class students will be required to select a passage from one of the primary readings to comment on in class.
- Each week, students will be required to prepare a one-page, single-spaced response paper on the required reading assigned, in which they offer a close reading of a passage selected from the primary readings.
- Based on professor's feedback on these oral and written commentaries, students will be expected to improve their performance and increase the sophistication of their analyses.
- Three essays, which will require students to combine and expand their work in the response papers, will assess the degree to which they have developed, on the one hand, the ability to analyze literary texts and craft coherent arguments based on textual evidence, and, on the other hand, a critical awareness of the ways in which texts represent, reinforce, or challenge social, political, and cultural values. exceptionalist paradigms.