**PORTUGUESE OCEANIC EXPANSION AND THE DAWN OF MODERNITY**

**Arts & Sciences 1138.xx Freshman Seminar**

**1 Semester-hour Credit**

**Thursday, PM Room TBA**

##### Instructor Name: Pedro Pereira

##### Office Hours: Wednesdays and Fridays, 11:30 - 12:30, or by appointment

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# Course Description

When Christopher Columbus arrived in the Antilles in 1492, Portuguese navigators had already crossed the equator in their move southward to round the African continent, charted South Atlantic currents, mapped the southern hemisphere’s skies, and established outposts along the western coast of Africa, which they dubbed as a “new world.” Soon they would also reach India and Malaysia, and eventually circumnavigate the globe. This pioneering movement of oceanic expansion produced troves of new knowledge, and forever changed the conception that Europe had of itself and of its place in the world. It also had an unprecedented impact upon indigenous communities in Africa, South America, and Asia, where the arrival of these avid newcomers meant different things, but always brought transformation, most often violent in nature. At a time when the global dimension of everything we do is taken for granted, this seminar invites students to revisit their own assumptions about what is modern in globalization by promoting a dialogue with early modern accounts of intercontinental travel, intercultural contact, and self-transformation. By examining long-neglected textual sources, including chronicles, plays, poems, letters and prose narratives, students will have a chance to realize the extent to which non-European subjects contributed to the formation of the modern world and to the affirmation of ideals of freedom that we now find at the core of our culture. If the voyage changes the voyager and those s/he encounters along the way, it is the goal of this seminar that by the end of the journey students will have acquired invaluable tools to help them better navigate through their college experience and the journey ahead.

# Texts

All readings will be available on Canvas.

Caminha, Pero Vaz de. “Letter of Pero Vaz de Caminha to King Manuel, Porto Seguro de Vera Cruz, May 1, 1500.” Burkholder, Mark A, and Lyman L. Johnson. *Colonial Latin America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990. Print. 43-55.

Camões, Luís Vaz de. “About Barbara, a Beautiful Indian Slave.” Trans. Randolph Pope. Internet Resource.

—. *The Lusiads*. Trans. Landeg White. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2008. Excerpts.

Hair, P. E. H. “Before Vasco da Gama.” *BSS*, LXXIX (2002). 55-66.

Macedo, Helder. “Recognizing the Unknown. The discoveries and the discovered in the Age of European Overseas Expansion.” *Camões Center Quarterly*, 4.1, Spring-Summer 1992. 8-13

Pessoa, Fernando. *Selected Poems*. Ed. Richard Zenith. Newy York: Grove Press, 1998.

Pinto, Fernão Mendes. *The Travels of Mendes Pinto*. Ed. Rebecca Catz. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990. Selections.

Sweet, James H. “The Iberian Roots of American Racist Discourse.” The William and Mary Quarterly, Third Series, Vol. 54, No. 1 (Jan., 1997). 143-166

Thornton, John K. “The Portuguese in Africa.” *Portuguese Oceanic Expansion, 1400-1800*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2007. Print. 140-160.

Trouillot, Michel-Ralph. “Good Day, Columbus.” *Silencing the Past. Power and the Production of History*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1995. 108-153

# Vicente, Gil. “Auto da Índia.” *Gil Vicente: Three Discovery Plays: Auto da Barca do Inferno, Exortação da Guerra, Auto da India*. Aris & Phillips, 1997.

Zurara, Gomes E, C R. Beazley, and Edgar Prestage. *The Chronicle of the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea*. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2010. 78-87

**Course Policies**

Attendance: Students are expected to come to class on time every day and to stay until the end of class. Unexcused late arrivals and early departures will each count as ½ of an unexcused absence. Since the class meets only once a week, students will be allowed just two unexcused absences. After that, 2 points for each unexcused absence will be discounted from final course grades. **Excused absences** (or adjustments to attendance or participation) should be discussed with the instructor and documented.

Examples of excused absences are: Participation in a scheduled activity of an official University organization, verifiable confining illness, serious verifiable family emergencies, subpoenas, jury duty, and military service. A note from Student Health Services that indicates, “The patient was not seen here during this period of illness,” is not acceptable. It is the student's responsibility to notify his/her instructor of any excused absence as far in advance as possible. Documentation for excused absences must be presented as soon as possible. **No documentation will be accepted after the last day of regularly scheduled classes**.

Use of Technology and Internet Resources:

1. Technology: **The use of cellular phones is not allowed in this class at any time**. Your phone should be silent or disconnected when you enter the classroom. Students who insist on using their personal phones (whether for making/receiving calls or for text messaging) will be invited to leave the class.

The use of personal computers and laptops is restricted to note taking and any assigned research activities. **Students are not allowed to check email, Facebook or any social media utilities for personal use while in class**. It is expected that students devote class time in its entirety solely to the activities that the instructor designs and assigns for each class. Using class time for work related to other courses—such as homework—is unacceptable and constitutes grounds for dismissal. Any student engaging in this type of activity will be given an opportunity to correct his/her behavior; **persistence in this behavior or defiance will result in an invitation to leave the class, and one percentage point being deducted from the final grade**.

2. Internet Resources: Any materials used as sources for your work need to be properly acknowledged following the MLA style. **Please be advised that while you can certainly use the Internet as a tool for your research, Google, Wikipedia and other sites will not be accepted as authoritative sources.** If used correctly, the Internet is an important research tool, but does not replace traditional bibliographic research.

Office Hours: It is expected that students will attend office hours at least once during the semester.

# Grading

Type of Grade: Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U). A percentage of 60 or above will constitute a satisfactory grade.

Grade Composition:

Attendance and participation 30%

Written commentaries 30%

Oral presentation 20%

Final essay 30%

Class participation: Participation is key to the success of the seminar. This grade will be based on appropriate and proactive in-class contributions to discussions. In order to achieve productive and live class discussions, students are required to choose a key passage (between one and two paragraphs-long) from that day’s readings, provide a brief (one to two paragraph-long) commentary and discuss it in class with peers. Additionally, students will have to prepare one question about the readings assigned for that day.

Oral Presentations: Topics for research will be assigned to groups of four in the sixth week, and by the tenth week the groups will conduct a 15 minute-long oral presentation on their subject. Each group will have to prepare one question for each presentation. Groups will be evaluated for the clarity of the presentation, as well as their level of active participation in the ensuing discussions.

Final Essay: On the last day of class students will turn in a 3-page essay where they reflect upon their entire trajectory in the seminar. The essay should include a brief discussion of the three readings that most impressed students, along with a succinct chronicle of what they consider to be the key moments of the personal learning they will have undergone (i.e. major discoveries, assumptions challenged, skills trained, etc.)

**Academic Misconduct**

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (<http://studentlife.osu.edu/pdfs/csc_12-31-07.pdf>).

**Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>.

#### Weekly Schedule

### **Week 1 – Topic:** Before Columbus, and why that is important

READ: Hair, P. E. H. “Before Vasco da Gama.”

DUE: \*\*\*

### **Week 2 – Topic:** A New World:The Portuguese in Africa

READ: Thornton, John K. “The Portuguese in Africa.”

DUE: \*\*\*

### **Week 3 – Topic:** “They must have come from a netherworld.” First encounters with sub-saharan Africans.

READ: Zurara, Gomes E, C R. Beazley, and Edgar Prestage. *The Chronicle of the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea*.

DUE: \*\*\*

### **Week 4 – Topic** Intimations of race

READ: Sweet, James H. “The Iberian Roots of American Racist Discourse.”

DUE: \*\*\*

### **Week 5 – Topic** The Portuguese in Brazil. Recognizing the Unknown.

READ: Caminha, Pero Vaz de. “Letter of Pero Vaz de Caminha to King Manuel, Porto Seguro de Vera Cruz, May 1, 1500.”

DUE: \*\*\*

### **Week 6 – Topic** Recognizing the Unknown.

READ: Macedo, Helder. “Recognizing the Unknown. The discoveries and the discovered in the Age of European Overseas Expansion.”

DUE: \*\*\*

### **Week 7 – Topic** “An East, east of the East”

READ: Vicente, Gil.“Auto da Índia.”

DUE: \*\*\*

### **Week 8 – Topic** Exotic *donna angelicata*

READ: Camões, Luís Vaz de. “About Barbara, a Beautiful Indian Slave.”

DUE: \*\*\*

### **Week 9 – Topic** Inventing Oneself as Another

READ: Camões, Luís Vaz de. *The Lusiads*. Excerpts.

DUE: \*\*\*

### **Week 10 – Topic** Group Presentations

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### **Week 11 – Topic** Europe is reading. The impact of Portuguese travel literature on the European imagination.

READ: Pinto, Fernão Mendes. *The Travels of Mendes Pinto*. Selection.

DUE: \*\*\*

### **Week 12 – Topic** A new sense of history

READ: Trouillot, Michel-Ralph. “Good Day, Columbus.”

DUE: \*\*\*

### **Week 13 – Topic:** Forever someone else:Portuguese Oceanic Expansion and Modernity.

READ: Pessoa, Fernando, *Selected Poems*.

DUE: \*\*\*

### **Week 14 – Topic** Concluding remarks

READ: Final Essay Due.

DUE: \*\*\*