HISTORY 243C/343C

People, Plants, and Medicine: Atlantic World Amerindian, African, and European Science

Professor Londa Schiebinger  Spring 2022
E-mail: schiebinger@stanford.edu  Mondays: 1:30-4:30
Office Hours: please email me for an appt.  Classroom:

This course explores the global circulation of plants, peoples, disease, medicines, technologies, and knowledge. Colonial sciences and medicines were important militarily and strategically for positioning emerging nation states in global struggles for land and resources. This seminar considers primarily French and British colonialism in the West Indies, but also takes examples from Iberia, Jesuit, and other traditions. Readings treat science and medicine in relation to voyaging, colonialism, slavery, and environmental exchange.

Readings are listed below. Students will be asked in advance to lead our weekly discussions of the readings. The class runs on active discussion! Students will present readings in class.

Paper topics (paragraph plus a beginning bibliography) are due April 25. Presentations of final papers begin May 16. Final papers due June 6 at 5:00 PM (via email). Undergraduate: 8-10 pages, double spaced, 12-point font, plus notes (notes are not included in the page count); graduate: 15-17 pages, 12-point font, plus notes (notes are not included in page count). Stanford Honor Code applies.

Tutors at the Hume Writing Center are available to consult on history assignments at any stage of the writing process from brainstorming a topic to revising a final draft.

All reading materials are on Canvas (unless other access is noted). “Research Resources,” is also on Canvas with resources for papers—this is simply a place to begin. See also “Paper + Preparation” and “Critical Reading.”

Grading: Class discussion plus reading presentations: 50%; Paper presentation: 20%; Final paper: 30%.

March 28 Week 1 Introduction

Muwekma Ohlone peoples acknowledgement; Ohlone plant use
The Atlantic World and Colonial Science
The Actors: London Natural History Museum, Slavery and the Natural World: Chapter 2, People and Slavery. Canvas
Using images in historical research
http://americanhistory.si.edu/onthewater/exhibition/1_3.html
Historical Research: http://www.willamcronon.net/researching/
How do we evaluate historical work? Critical Reading
Watch: Botany of Desire https://watchdocumentaries.com/the-botany-of-desire/ (40 minutes)
You may wish to watch: Belle or Amistad, which stream on some services.
April 4 Week 2 Background
London Natural History Museum, Slavery and the Natural World: Chapter 3, Commercial Plants, intro, tobacco, sugar, cacao. Canvas
Maria Sibylla Merian, Metamorphosis insectorum Surinamensium, Plate XLV. Look at indigenous names. Original Dutch available at: http://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/129308#page/15/mode/1up

April 11 Week 3 Four Great Articles on Various Topics

April 18 Week 4 Atlantic World Agnotology and Gender; Circulation of Knowledge in the Atlantic World
Maria Sibylla Merian, Metamorphosis insectorum Surinamensium, Plate 45. Original Dutch available at: http://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/129308#page/15/mode/1up
Canvas
Listen to song: **Weed Woman**

**Circulation of Knowledge in the Atlantic World**


**April 25 Week 5 Presentation Tips; Who Owns Nature? Circulation of Knowledge**
Guest 1:30-2:00: Helen Lie, Program in Writing and Rhetoric and Oral Communication Program, Interactive Workshop on Oral Presentations, hlie@stanford.edu

**Paper Topics plus Bibliography Due. Initial discussion of papers:**
**Sources, methods, narrative, images.**

**Who Owns Nature?**
Schiebinger, *Plants and Empire*, 39-46. E-book, Green Library or Canvas

**May 2 Week 6 Taíno Artifacts and Design; Medical Experiments with Slaves**
N.B. not all pages were scanned. Please read as background.

**Medical Experiments with Slaves**

Watch in class: Alexandra Stern, segments of video. The password is
May 9 Week 7 Atlantic World Plant Exchange; Clash of Knowledges and Medical Regimes

Atlantic World Plant Exchange: European, African, Amerindian

Clash of Knowledges and Medical Regimes
Benjamin Moseley on Obeah (“Obi”), *A Treatise on Sugar with Miscellaneous Medical Observations, 2nd ed.* (London, 1800), 190-205. Canvas

Watch in class Voodoo documentary: CNN & National Geographic

May 16 Week 8 Paper Presentations

May 23 Week 9 Paper Presentations

May 30 Week 10 Memorial Day, no class.

June 6, Final paper due, 5:00 pm PDT