**Freshman Seminar**

**Exploration: New Worlds**

**Prof. Susanah Romney**

**Spring, 2019**

FYSEM-UA 648.Tuesdays, 9:30 – 12:15

24 Waverly Place 431

Description: For millennia, the people here on earth lived in a series of separate worlds, isolated by the oceans and landscapes that divided them. Then, in the 1400s, that isolation was forever shattered as new maritime empires violently brought everyone into contact with one another. As people explored this new shared world, they repeatedly had to decide, “Who is human?” We will look at the maps, letters, journals, pamphlets, and fiction that spread the knowledge of these cultural encounters in order to understand how people understood themselves. We will consider how our own, continuing search for new worlds still raises this question today.

Each week, we will read and discuss documents from the time and scholars’ interpretations of those documents. Students will write three papers of about four pages each, building on our discussions. You will also get a chance to do research of your own, using assigned sources alongside ones you find independently, culminating in a paper of around 8-10 pages.

We are fortunate with our seminar to be part of a grant program that allows us to make visits to museums. These occur during scheduled class times, and are noted on the syllabus. They are required for all students. If you show up late for these events, your participation grade will be affected.

**Writing Tutors:**

We are very fortunate to have been granted two writing tutors for our class, Cosmo Halterman de Ochoa (Writing Tutor): [chd266@nyu.edu](mailto:chd266@nyu.edu) and Janakee Chavda: [janakee.chavda@nyu.edu](mailto:janakee.chavda@nyu.edu) . You can also contact Prof. Brian Schwartz (Faculty Mentor): [jbs321@nyu.edu](mailto:jbs321@nyu.edu) for more information about the tutoring program. Together, they will visit our class to conduct workshops. They will be available to meet with you individually to go over drafts of your papers. These meetings are required, and will figure into your grade (in addition to helping you get better grades on your papers!). Please see the bottom of the syllabus for more information on the tutor program. For this reason, the due dates for the rough drafts that you see on the syllabus are “hard” deadlines – you need to post your rough drafts by the dates listed in order for them to be able to meet with you and help you. **If you do not submit your draft on time, you will receive a 1/3rd grade deduction (B to B-, for example) on the paper grade. If you do not meet with your tutor, you will receive another 1/3rd grade deduction (B- to C+).**

**Required books:**

Keneva Kunz, trans., *The Vinland Sagas* (Penguin: 9780140447767)

Antonio Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage: A Narrative Account of the First Circumnavigation* (Dover Reprint: 9780486280998)

Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, *Chronicle of the Narváez Expedition* Norton Critical Edition (Norton: 9780393918151)

Miguel Leon-Portilla, *The Broken Spears: The Aztec Account of the Conquest of Mexico* (Beacon: 9780807055014)

Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko*, Norton Critical Edition (Norton: 9780393970142)

Charles Darwin, *Darwin*, Norton Critical, 3d ed. (Norton: 9780393958492)

\*\*Additional readings are available online through nyu classes or through electronic reserve.

**Assignments:** There are four papers assigned for this course. The length and due dates for these papers are listed below on the course schedule. You will submit these papers through NYU Classes, in the Assignments section. You will need to submit rough drafts, also, for papers 2-4. Please be prepared to submit the paper as a Word file. All papers are required for completion of the course; refusing to do one of the papers will result in failure of the course.

**Grading:**

Paper 1: 15%

Paper 2: 20%

Paper 3: 20%

Participation 15%

Paper 4: 30%

\*\*Please note: attendance is required, and poor attendance can result in a grade deduction or failure of the class. Cheating or plagiarism (the presentation of someone else’s words, ideas, or data as your own) will have similar results.

**Schedule:**

January 29: A Series of Separate Worlds: Views of Humanity. In class: Old maps. Selections from: Bible; Navajo Emergence story; Kojiki.

February 5: Early connections. Reading: *The Vinland Sagas*. Documents online: selections from *Ying-yai Sheng-lan, The Overall Survey of the Ocean’s Shores 1433*; Ibn Battutah. Today in class: establish writing groups.

Feb. 12: Reaching Out. Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage*. Also: Visit from Writing Tutors. Today in class: go over topic sheet for paper one in class and outline essays with groups.

**\*Due Monday, February 18: Paper #1.** Please write a paper of approx. three pages comparing the pre-Columbian travel narratives and Pigafetta’s tale. How did people categorize and make sense of “new” cultures and lands? Please upload your paper as a Word file through the Assignments section of NYU classes.

Feb. 19: Reading this week: How to survive a shipwreck – or not. Cabeza de Vaca, *Chronicle*, pp. 36-91. Also, documents by Columbus, Cortés, and Las Casas, pp. 138-159. Scholarship by Beatríz Rivera-Barnes, pp. 204-217 and Andrés Reséndez, pp. 200-203. Documents online by Montesinos and Sepulveda. Today in class: writing group review of paper #1.

Feb. 26: Visit to The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Please start reading *The Broken Spears.*

March 5: Meeting your Neighbors: Native Responses. *The Broken Spears*, Documents online: selections from Guaman Poma. Please see originals of Guaman Poma at: <http://www.kb.dk/permalink/2006/poma/info/en/foreword.htm>  
Today in class: writing groups go over assignment sheet to outline essays.

**\*Due Wednesday, March 6, 9 am. rough draft of Paper #2.** Please write a paper of approx. four pages. With the violence of contact and conquest, how did people from Europe and America enact the boundaries of humanity? Please upload your paper through the Assignments section of NYU Classes. You will need to meet individually with a tutor about your paper.

March 12: Visit to the South Street Seaport Museum, 12 Fulton Street.

**Due Friday, March 15, final draft of Paper #2.** Please upload your paper through the Assignments section of NYU Classes.

March 19: No class. Spring Break. Start reading on the plane, train, or in your lonely dorm room: Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko*.

March 26: Colonization. Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko*. Also, documents pp. 98-119. pp. Scholarship by Laura Brown, Charlotte Sussman, pp. 232-256. Please also see the work of Maria Sibylla Merian at <http://lhldigital.lindahall.org/cdm/ref/collection/nat_hist/id/1049>

April 2: Reading: Thomas Harriot, *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia*.A complete version can be found at: <http://www.virtualjamestown.org/exist/cocoon/jamestown/fha/J1009>  
Scholarship online: Joyce Chaplin. Please see the original John White watercolors at [the British Museum](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/search.aspx?people=103070&peoA=103070-2-9) or [Virtual Jamestown](http://www.virtualjamestown.org/images/white_debry_html/jamestown.html)

**\*Due Wednesday, April 3, 9 am. Rough draft of Paper #3.** Please write a paper of approx. four pages. With the advent of European colonies in the Americas how did people justify or challenge new racial, cultural, and political boundaries? You are required to meet with tutors about this paper. Please upload your paper through the Assignments section of NYU Classes.

April 9: Charles Darwin, *Darwin*, pp. 67-95; 175-178. Today in class: writing groups go over drafts of paper #3.

**Due Friday, April 12:** **Final draft of Paper #3**. Please upload your paper through the Assignments section of NYU Classes.

April 16: World and Self. Charles Darwin, *Darwin*, pp. 197-201; 205-206. Also, scholarship, pp. 326-328; 342-344; 386-395.Today in class: writing groups meet to plan topics for paper #4. **This week: Talk to the prof!** Meet with me to discuss your final paper and your documents. Appointments required.

April 23: Visit to Natural History Museum: Behind the scenes with Darwin. Reading: Scientific exploration: Who do we think we are today? Readings online: Jon Mooallem, “Us and Them,” *New York Times Magazine*, January 15, 2017.

April 30: Space and humanity. Readings online: Charles Cockell, “The Similarity of life across the Universe,” Molecular Biology of the Cell, 27, 10, p. 1553 (2016); Kelly Smith, “The Curious Case of the Martian Microbes: Mariomania, Intrinsic Value and the Prime Directive” in Tony Milligan and James Schwartz (Eds.), *The Ethics of Space Exploration*, Springer (2016). Today in class: writing groups go over outlines of papers.

**\*Due Friday, May 3: Rough Draft of Paper #4.** Please write a paper of approx. 8-10 pages. Use primary texts (both those assigned for the class and those you find on your own) to assess the definition of humanity and the process of exploration.

May 7: (Possible museum trip, tba) **This week:** You are required to meet with tutors. Please upload your paper through the Assignments section of NYU Classes.

**\*Due Tuesday, May 14:** Final Draft of Paper #4. Please upload your paper through the Assignments section of NYU Classes.

**Note on Writing Tutors:**  
In this class, we are fortunate to have help from the Undergraduate Writing Tutors Program. Writing tutors are curious, well-trained peers who provide feedback to students on drafts of writing assignments. Their role is to encourage and challenge students to strengthen their writing and clarify their ideas. Writing tutors are trained to support the aims of the class, learning about the expectations for writing in the class and listening and responding carefully to individual student writers. While writing tutors are not Teaching Assistants and will not assess papers, they will focus writing conferences on questions that generate clearer writing and stronger thinking about the content. Writing tutors will also look for patterns of grammatical error in student papers, explaining how students can learn to correct these errors. The writing tutors’ main goals are to help students develop their writing and thinking in response to particular assignments and to become better writers over the long term.

Writing tutors take a semester-long practicum to learn to think more deeply about writing and to develop practices for working with peers on writing during individualized conferences. Tutors audit several classes or recitations and read some course materials in the classes where they tutor. Their primary aim is, however, to work with students through a practice-based approach to writing and revising. That is, they will ask questions and work to prompt students to reread, rethink, revise, and craft new writing during conferences.

Students are required to participate in the program for each designated paper assignment, submitting of a draft of their paper on time for written feedback and attending a scheduled, 30-minute long, one-on-one conference. Writing tutors should receive *complete drafts* from students, not outlines or rough notes. *Late submission* of drafts to tutors and *missed conferences* are reported to the Professor, who may reduce a student’s final grade as a consequence.

**Help!!!**

There are many forms of support if you find yourself at sea. You can always come talk to me. I’m really not that scary: ssromney@nyu.edu

Try out NYU’s Writing Center. <https://nyu.mywconline.com/>

Students who need accommodations for any kind of disability should contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 726 Broadway, 2nd Floor, tel: [212-998-4980](tel:212-998-4980), [www.nyu.edu/csd](http://www.nyu.edu/csd)

If you are having trouble in your classes, contact the College of Arts & Sciences Advising Center: <http://advising.cas.nyu.edu>

If you are struggling in other ways, reach out to NYU’s Wellness Exchange: <http://www.nyu.edu/life/safety-health-wellness/wellness-exchange.html> 24-hour Hotline:(212) 443-9999