

AMERICANS ABROAD: MAPPING NINETEENTH-CENTURY TRAVEL NARRATIVES
AMST 300-level
Spring 2022

Times: Mondays and Wednesdays, 8:20am-9:40am
Location: CAMS

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CAMS 115

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 1:00pm-3:00pm; Wednesdays, 10:00am-12:00pm; or by appointment

Description

In this course, we will explore international travel in the long nineteenth century. We will focus on narratives published by Americans who had the opportunity to travel beyond the United States. Through individual and collective activities, we will survey the trajectories of activists, diplomats, doctors, entertainers, entrepreneurs, journalists, missionaries, sailors, scientists, soldiers, students, teachers, tourists, and many others who engaged with foreign societies. Through their narratives we will glimpse a globalizing new order of expanding empires and integrating capitalist economies. The main product of this course will be a Digital Humanities Project, which we will call NCTN (Nineteenth-Century Travel Narratives). Throughout the semester, we will conceptualize, design, build, and improve it together. Each student will develop their own individual project focusing on a set of three narratives. These individual projects will be the component parts of our collective NCTN project.

Classes will alternate between historical and conceptual discussions about travel in the nineteenth century and technical matters related to Digital Humanities. Our goal is to reflect on the broad history of American foreign relations and the use of new technology to produce and communicate knowledge about the past.

Assignments and Grading

You need to complete all assignments to obtain a passing grade in this course. In case you miss an assignment or cannot submit it in time, please contact the professor to discuss what to do.

- Participation (20%): Students are expected to prepare for class by following the instructions on the syllabus, attend our meetings, participate in discussions, and engage in collective and individual tasks to build the NCTN project.
- Digital Humanities Presentation (10%) (due Week 4): Search the internet for a Digital Humanities website that interests you. Explore the website, analyze its content, play around with its data and/or materials, look for strengths and weaknesses, think of ways to improve it. Prepare a 5-7 minute individual presentation about what you found.
- Travelers Report (20%) (due Week 6): Choose three travel narratives written by nineteenth-century Americans who went abroad. Make sure that each one deals with a different parts of the world. Write a 10-12 page report about them. The report must cover the following topics: authors' bios; locations visited; purposes of travels; major themes addressed. Feel free to add other topics that you find relevant.

- Travel Narrative Presentation (10%) (due Week 10): Choose one of your (previously selected) travel narratives and prepare a 5-7 minute individual presentation about it. Reflect on how this travel narrative contributes to the NCTN project, which we will be collectively designing.
- Draft Entries (10%) (due Week 12): Insert the preliminary data you have collected about your travelers into the NCTN website.
- Final Report (20%) (due Week 16): Write a 10-12 page report on the NCTN project. Reflect on what you have learned while helping to build it. Reflect on how it may help scholars and the public at large understand the place of the United States in the world during the nineteenth century. Reflect on ways to carry this project forward and continue expanding the study of transnational US History.
- Final Entries (10%) (due Week 16): Revise the data you had entered to the NCTN website on Week 12 and add any new data you have found since.

Time Commitment

While the exact time commitment for the class will vary individually and over the course of the semester, I recommend that you budget approximately three out-of-class hours for every class hour to complete the readings and assignments. If you are spending more time than this on a regular basis I encourage you to check in with me.

Required Readings

Books are available for purchase at the bookstore and online. All other required texts (articles and chapters) will available on Moodle.

- Emily Conroy-Krutz, *Christian Imperialism: Converting the World in the Early American Republic* (Cornell University Press, 2015).
- Nancy Shoemaker, *Pursuing Respect in the Cannibal Isles: Americans in Nineteenth-Century Fiji* (Cornell University Press, 2019).
- Andrew Zimmerman, *Alabama in Africa: Booker T. Washington, the German Empire, and the Globalization of the New South* (Princeton University Press, 2010).

SCHEDULE

Week 1: Welcome

Prepare for class:

1. Start searching the Wesleyan Library and the internet for nineteenth-century travel narratives that you would like to work with

01/24: Syllabus and Personal Introductions

01/26: Brief Intro to NCTN

Week 2: Travel, Encounters, Otherness

Prepare for class:

1. Read Edward Said, *Orientalism*, Chapter 1: "The Scope of Orientalism"
2. Read Natalie Zemon Davis, "Decentering History: Local Stories and Cultural Crossings in a Global World," *History and Theory* 50 (2011): 188-202

3. Continue searching for travel narratives.

01/31: A Connecting World

02/02: The “West” and the “Rest”

Week 3: Digital Humanities I

Prepare for class:

1. Start reading Shoemaker, *Pursuing Respect in the Cannibal Isles*
2. Explore the following Digital Humanities Projects:
 - American Panorama: An Atlas of the United States - <https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/>
 - Civil War Letters - <http://cwl.dhinitiative.org/>
 - The Living New Deal - <https://livingnewdeal.org/>
 - Orbis - <https://orbis.stanford.edu/>
 - Pleiades - <https://pleiades.stoa.org/>
 - Six Degrees of Francis Bacon - <http://www.sixdegreesoffrancisbacon.com/>
 - Slave Voyages - <https://www.slavevoyages.org/>
 - Spacial History Project - <http://web.stanford.edu/group/spatialhistory/cgi-bin/site/index.php>
3. Select the three travel narratives you will be working with and start analyzing them

02/07: Memory, Archives, and the Internet

02/09: Exploring Websites + DECISION ON THREE TRAVEL NARRATIVES

Week 4: Digital Humanities II

Prepare for class:

1. Continue reading Shoemaker, *Pursuing Respect in the Cannibal Isles*
2. Browse the internet and find a Digital Humanities project to present in class
3. Continue analyzing the travel narratives and start writing your report

02/14: Digital Humanities PRESENTATIONS - Part 1

02/16: Digital Humanities PRESENTATIONS - Part 2

Week 5: Travel Books

Prepare for class:

1. Finish reading Shoemaker, *Pursuing Respect in the Cannibal Isles*
2. Read Robert Darnton, *The Case for Books: Past, Present, and Future*, Part III: “Past”
3. Continue analyzing the travel narratives and writing your report

02/21: Writing and Publishing

02/23: Reading and Using

Week 6: Designing NCTN I

Prepare for class:

1. Start reading Conroy-Krutz, *Christian Imperialism*
2. Finish writing your report
3. Reflect on what NCTN should include and look like

02/28: Brainstorming

03/02: Sketching NCTN + TRAVELERS REPORT DUE

Week 7: Spring Break
03/07 - SPRING BREAK
03/09 - SPRING BREAK

Week 8: Spring Break
03/14 - SPRING BREAK
03/16 - SPRING BREAK

Week 9: Geographical Imagination

Prepare for class:

1. Finish reading Conroy-Krutz, *Christian Imperialism*
2. Start reading Zimmerman, *Alabama in Africa*

03/21: Environments

03/23: Peoples

Week 10: American Travelers

Prepare for class:

1. Continue reading Zimmerman, *Alabama in Africa*
2. Select one of your travel narratives to present in class
3. Start processing data from your travel narratives

03/28: Travel PRESENTATIONS - Part 1

03/30: Travel PRESENTATIONS - Part 2

Week 11: Designing NCTN II

Prepare for class:

1. Finish reading Zimmerman, *Alabama in Africa*
2. Continue processing data from your travel narratives
3. Reflect on how to improve NCTN

04/04: Brainstorming

04/06: Finalizing NCTN

Week 12: Illustrations

Prepare:

1. Read Susan Schulten, *Mapping the Nation: History and Cartography in Nineteenth-Century America*, Part Two: "Mapping the Present"
2. Read Joan M. Schwartz, "The Geography Lesson: Photographs and the Construction of Imaginative Geographies," *Journal of Historical Geography* 22 (1996): 16–45
3. Insert data from your travel narratives into NCTN

04/11: Engravings and Photography

04/13: Maps and More + DRAFT ENTRIES DUE

Week 13: Text

Prepare for class:

1. Read Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, Part II: "The Reinvention of América, 1800-1850"

2. Read Ricardo D. Salvatore, “North American Travel Narratives and the Ordering/Othering of South America (c. 1810–1860),” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 9 (1996): 85-110
3. Start writing your final report and working on final entries

04/18: Sources and Informers

04/20: Genres and Debates

Week 14: American Travel, American Power

Prepare for class:

1. Read Ann Laura Stoler, “Imperial Debris: Reflections on Ruins and Ruination,” *Cultural Anthropology* 23 (2008): 191-219
2. Jürgen Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World: A Global History of the Nineteenth Century*, Chapter IV: “Mobilities” and Chapter XIV: “Networks: Extensions, Density, Holes”
3. Continue writing your final report and working on final entries

04/25: Capitalist Expansion

04/27: Imperial Expansion

Week 15: Concluding Reflections

Prepare for class:

1. Continue writing your final report and working on final entries

05/02: What Did They See?

05/04: What Do We See?

Week 16: Finals

Prepare for class:

1. Insert new and revised data into NCTN
2. Finish writing your final report

FINAL REPORT + FINAL ENTRIES DUE