

FA 2011-12

Hum/H 3B, Section 3

Brave New Worlds: The Discovery of America and the Rise of Global Empire

An introduction to the history of exploration, trade, conquest, and colonization that forged European kingdoms as globalizing empires on the eve of modernity. We study the very testimonies of those individuals who shaped, or attempted to document, Europe's great territorial expansion during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Readings include Gomes Eanes Zurara's chronicle of Prince Henry the Navigator's exploits in Atlantic Africa; Christopher Columbus's letters on the exploration of the Caribbean Basin; Vespucci's emblematic account of the continental mass later known as "America" and of its peoples; Cortes's epic letter to Charles V on the conquest of Mexico; Titu Cusi Yupanqui's lamentation over the loss of the Inca empire to the Pizarro brothers; and the bizarre pilgrim's tale by Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca, who went "native" during his exploration of the southern U. S. mainland and later proposed a novel alternative to the bloody conquest of the Americas. Instructor: Wey-Gomez