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**SPAN 540 Critical Issues in Colonial Studies: Nature in the New World**

I teach undergraduate and graduate courses on colonial Spanish America that often touch on the role played by nature in accounts of the "Discovery" of America and that call into question the New World/Old World binary. My research agenda includes the study of eighteenth-century scientific travelers and natural history. So I have long been interested in joining the Piedmont Project. My original intention when I applied to the 2011 Piedmont Project was to develop a 400-level seminar, taught in Spanish, with the title "Nature in the New World: Reading Green in Latin America." My goal was to address issues of nature and sustainability in Latin America by reading a range of texts from the colonial times to the present. Since a number of my colleagues (Profs. Carrión, Dillman, Reber, Santos) had already participated in the Piedmont Project, I hoped to be able to contribute to a shared project of 'threading' sustainability throughout our departmental curriculum at the undergraduate level.

But shortly before the 2011 Piedmont seminar began, my Fall 2011 teaching assignment changed, and I was asked to teach a graduate seminar. As I read and discussed the readings with fellow Piedmont Project participants and shared in the mix of delight and concern we all experienced as we learned more about current challenges regarding sustainability, I began to consider the possibility of teaching my fall graduate seminar on "Nature in the New World." I knew that this would mean venturing outside of my colonial and eighteenth-century comfort zone in order to teach at the graduate level texts not only related to my area of specialization but also works from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (in order to provide what I felt was a necessary and important overview of the material). It would also mean presenting the major issues and debates of the emerging field of ecocriticism (or green cultural studies) at the graduate level. At the same time I was excited by the opportunity to 'seed' in a graduate seminar a commitment to incorporating sustainability into the curriculum, to provide graduate students with an opportunity to explore how sustainability might be related to their own research and teaching agendas...not to mention our shared everyday life as citizens of Emory, Atlanta, and the larger global community. Finally, the seminar offered an opportunity to teach some of the canonical Latin American texts in a new context, and with a new urgency.

I still plan to teach the undergraduate version of this course in Spring 2012. Both courses -- the graduate seminar and the upper-level undergraduate seminar -- respond to a broader context having to do with the changing contours of foreign language education in the US academy, as outlined by the 2007 Report of the MLA Task Force on the Future of Foreign Language Departments, "Foreign Languages and Higher Education. New Structures for a Changed World" (<http://www.mla.org/flreport>). The MLA report called

for curricular reform aimed at developing a varied range of courses that "situate language study in cultural, historical, geographic, and cross-cultural frames within the context of humanistic learning." I believe that sustainability studies related to the Spanish-speaking world engages these issues.

In thinking about the course, I wanted also like to try to reproduce the creativity, collegiality, and interdisciplinarity that characterized our discussions during the Piedmont Project workshop in June. To that end, I plan to invite Emory colleagues with expertise (or familiarity or interest) in the issues we will be exploring in the course to join us at certain points during the semester for informal discussion, perhaps based on a brief reading or film screening. I have already discussed this possibility with Hernán Feldman (Spanish & Portuguese), Dierdra Reber (Spanish & Portuguese), and Tom Rogers (History). We will also meet with Hazel Gold and the students in her seminar, SPAN 550 (Metropolitan Imaginary), in order to consider the convergence and/or divergence of ways of viewing the relationship between the urban and the natural in Spanish America and Spain.

I struggled with the organization of the course, wanting not to fall back on a tired chronological framework yet recognizing that early representations of New World nature had created paradigms that continue to shape our reading and writing today and wanting to make connections between past and present ways of viewing and representing nature. I considered various ways of shaping the course -- through the lens of climate, terrain, flora and fauna? around the various geographies that define Latin America – islands, oceans, coastlines, rivers, mountains, jungles, deserts, pampas? I also thought about the tension between “here” and “there” that underlies much Latin American writing since 1492, between “New World” and “Old World,” between city and countryside -- tensions that demand to be explored and interrogated. I also wanted to think not just about the natural world (as it has often been imagined) as a pristine place where human beings and their ‘built environment’ have no place, but rather as encompassing their intersection.

In the end I suspect that I may have ended up with “un arroz con mango” – a chaotic mix that is, I hope, both tasty and nourishing...and that will leave us all wanting more.

**SPAN 540 Critical Issues in Colonial Studies: Nature in the New World**  
**Emory University Fall 2011**  
**Prof. Karen Stolley**  
**Wednesdays, 1-4 PM (Callaway 501 Seminar Room)**

**Description:** Taking the title of Antonello Gerbi's seminal study of the representation of "New World" flora and fauna as a contested point of departure, this seminar will provide an introduction to the key topics and theoretical issues in the increasingly important field of ecocriticism (also known as "green cultural studies") through a reading of a broad (and admittedly idiosyncratic) selection of Latin American texts from the colonial period onward. We will consider the ways in which nature figures in the geographical, commercial, bureaucratic and cultural expansion of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, with particular attention to the encounter of Amerindian and European views of nature and the role that natural history plays in early modern European accounts of the New World. We will examine the role that enlightened science (measurement, collection, taxonomy) plays in eighteenth-century debates about the alleged inferiority of New World species and explore how Spanish America functions as laboratory and museum for the production of knowledge. We will consider nineteenth-century polemics regarding *civilización* and *barbarie*, as well as early twentieth century representations of the struggle between *ciudad* and *campo* in the *novela de la tierra*. Other issues we will discuss include gendered visions of nature; gardens and the domestication of nature; Nature as utopia/dystopia/heterotopia; nature as setting and protagonist in travel narratives; the economics and commodification of nature, from mining to eco-tourism; and the ways in which earlier visions of nature are rewritten in twentieth-century texts such as Neruda's "Alturas de Machu Picchu" or Carpentier's *Los pasos perdidos*.

Readings will be drawn from the sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries; students wishing to explore more contemporary works in their final projects are encouraged to do so. The course will be taught in Spanish, but interested students from other departments should consult with Prof. Stolley regarding their level of linguistic expertise.

At certain points throughout the semester, we will invite faculty (departmental colleagues as well as faculty from other departments) whose research and teaching relates to the course to join us during the seminar meeting for informal discussion; a brief reading will generally be assigned in anticipation of these discussions. We will also meet with Prof. Hazel Gold and students enrolled in SPAN 550 ("Metropolitan Cultures and the Urban Imaginary") to consider the convergence and/or divergence of ways of viewing the

relationship between urban and natural spaces in Spanish America and Spain. Dates TBA.

The course includes a number of films that we will watch together and discuss -- dates and times TBA.

**Particulars:** Evaluation based on seminar participation; weekly response paper OR discussion questions; a book review of one of the secondary readings (submitted in writing and also presented orally to seminar participants); and a final paper or project to be determined in consultation with the professor.

**TEXTS:** Books for this course have NOT been ordered through the Emory bookstore. Students should purchase books on their own (this is usually more economical and efficient than the bookstore, in fact). See below for suggested editions (alternative editions acceptable); books should be ordered ASAP. Many readings will be available on the course BlackBoard site. Additional secondary bibliography will be provided as background in anticipation of each week's reading. Students having difficulties obtaining books should consult with the professor.

Mann, Charles C. *1491. New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus* (Vintage Books 2006, 2006) OR *1493. Uncovering the New World Columbus Created* (Knopf 2011).

Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, *Sumario de la Natural Historia de las Indias* (Dastin 2002 or Iberoamericana/Vervuert 2010).

José de Acosta, *Historia natural y moral de las Indias* (Historia 16, 1986; English translation Duke UP 2002).

Charles Darwin, *Voyage of the Beagle* (Penguin)

Alejo Carpentier, *Los pasos perdidos* (Cátedra)

Pablo Neruda *Alturas de Macchu Pichu (Canto General, Cátedra)*

Ricardo Güiraldes, *Don Segundo Sombra* (Porrúa)

José de Alencar, *Iracema*. (English translation Luso-Brazilian Books, 2006; or in Portuguese)

William Henry Hudson, *Green Mansions*.

Rómulo Gallegos, *Doña Bárbara* (Austral)

**Recommended background reading:**

Burkholder, Mark A. & Lyman L. Johnson, eds. *Colonial Latin America*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (Oxford UP 004).

Coupe, Laurence, ed. *The Green Studies Reader. From Romanticism to Eco-criticism*. (Routledge 2000).

Glotfelty, Cheryll & Harold Fromm, eds. *The Ecocriticism Reader. Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. (U Georgia P 1996).

*Cambridge History of Latin American Literature*, eds. Roberto González Echevarría and Enrique Pupo Walker, 2 vols. (Cambridge UP 1996). An extremely useful general resource; selected chapters available on BlackBoard.

**\*Weekly response papers / discussion questions:** The response papers and discussion questions will help to orient our seminar discussions by linking the primary reading with the secondary theoretical readings, offering a reading of a particular textual passage, suggesting a comparative reading, or posing broader theoretical questions. Each student must post a 250 word response paper OR two discussion question per seminar meeting. Both the response paper and the discussion questions should provide specific textual references when appropriate and articulate clearly and succinctly the issues suggested by the readings. In order to allow for careful consideration of the papers/questions before the seminar meets, they must be posted to the seminar LearnLink site by midnight on Tuesday evening (that is, the night before our seminar meeting).

**\*Book review:** Students will be asked to write a 1000 word review of one of the secondary readings. The review may be written at any point during the semester, and upon submitting the review the student will be asked to share/discuss the review with seminar participants. Occasionally book reviews will be assigned as secondary reading

to provide models for this important professional and academic sub-genre. Students should consult as soon as possible with the professor regarding the choice of a book to review; ideally the book review will also serve a background research for the final paper or project.

**\*Final paper or project:** Students should also make every effort to identify a final paper/project topic as soon as possible, but no later than fall break. Students are encouraged to consult the *Colonial Latin American Review* for examples of current scholarly work and book reviews, and to consult with the professor at any point regarding development of the paper/project.

**Following are suggestions of secondary readings for the book review (this list is only a starting point; students are encouraged to explore the literature widely and make their own selection of a book to review):**

Alonso, Carlos J. *The Spanish American Regional Novel. Modernity and autochthony* (Cambridge UP 1990).

Gerbi, Antonello. *The Dispute of the New World. The History of a Polemic, 1750-1900* (U Pittsburgh 1973).

Laura Barbas-Rhoden, *Ecological Imaginations in Latin American Fiction* (UP Florida 2011)

Barrera-Osorio, Antonio. *Experiencing Nature. The Spanish American Empire and the Early Scientific Revolution* (U Texas P 2006)

Bauer, Ralph. *The Cultural Geography of Colonial American Literatures. Empire, Travel, Modernity.*(Cambridge UP 2003).

Daniela Bleichmar, Paula De Vos, Kristin Huffine, Kevin Sheehan, eds. *Science in the Spanish and Portuguese Empires, 1500-1800* (Stanford UP 2009).

Castro-Gómez, Santiago. *La Hybris del Punto Cero.ciencia, raza e ilustración en la Nueva Granada (1750-1816)* (PENSAR Editorial Pontificia Universidad Javeriana 2005).

Coronil, Fernando. *The Magical State: Nature, Money, and Modernity in Venezuela* (U Chicago P 1997).

- DeLoughrey, Elizabeth M., George B. Handley, and Renee K. Gosson, eds. *Caribbean Literature and the Environment: Between Nature and Culture* (U Virginia P, 2005).
- Ewalt, Margaret. *Peripheral Wonders. Nature, Knowledge and Enlightenment in the Eighteenth-century Orinoco* (Bucknell UP 2008).
- French, Jennifer. *Nature, Neo-colonialism, and the South American Regional Writers* (Dartmouth College P 2005).
- García Canclini, Nestor. *Culturas híbridas, estrategias para entrar y salir de la modernidad* (Paidós 2001).
- Kristal, Efraín. *The Andes Viewed from the City* (Peter Lang 1987).
- Laird, Andrew. *The Epic of America. An Introduction to Rafael Landívar and the Rusticatio Mexicana* (Duckworth, 2006)
- Masiello, Francine. *Between Civilization and Barbarism: Women, Nation, and Literary Culture in Modern Argentina* (U Nebraska P 1992).
- Melville, Elinor G. K. *A Plague of Sheep. Environmental consequences of the conquest of Mexico* (Cambridge UP 1994, 1997).
- Mignolo, Walter. *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Princeton UP 2000).
- Mosby, Dorothy. *Place, Language, and Identity in Afro-Costa Rican Literature* (U Missouri P 2003).
- Nouzeilles, Gabriela, ed. *La naturaleza en disputa. Retóricas del cuerpo y el paisaje en América Latina* (Paidós 2002)
- Pratt, Mary Louise *Imperial Eyes. Travel Writing and Transculturation* (Routledge 1994; 2008)
- Sale, Kirkpatrick. *The Conquest of Paradise. Christopher Columbus and the Columbian Legacy*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990.
- Schiebinger, Londa and Claudia Swan, eds. *Colonial Botany. Science, Commerce, and Politics in the Early Modern World*. (U Pennsylvania P, 2005).
- Stepan, Nancy Leys, *Picturing Tropical Nature* (Reaktion Books, 2001).

Walker, Charles. *Shaky Colonialism. The 1746 Earthquake-Tsunami in Lima, Peru, and Its Long Aftermath* (Duke 2008).

### CALENDAR

\*Starred texts should be purchased

Selected primary readings and additional secondary readings TBA will be available on BlackBoard

**24 de agosto Prolegomena. Nature in the New World: 1491, 1492, 1493**

Colón, *Carta a Luis Santangel* (sent electronically to enrolled students)  
Mann, *1491* and/or *1493*

**31 de agosto New World Natural History**

\*Fernández de Oviedo, *Sumario de la Natural Historia de las Indias* (1526)  
Fernández de Oviedo, *Historia general y natural de las Indias* (1535). Selections available on BlackBoard

\*Antonello Gerbi, *Nature in the New World: From Christopher Columbus to Gonzalez Fernández de Oviedo* (or Woodruff Course Reserves; English, Spanish and Italian editions available)

**7 de septiembre New World Natural History, cont.**

\*Acosta, *Historia natural y moral de las Indias* (1590)



Gerbi, *Nature in the New World*, cont.

**14 de septiembre      Reporting on Imperial Nature**

*Relaciones geográficas de Indias*. Selections available on BlackBoard

Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora, *Manifiesto filosófico contra los cometas despojados del imperio que tenían sobre los tímidos (1681)*. Available on BlackBoard

**Film Screening of *Aguirre, the Wrath of God* (Herzog, West Germany 1972)**  
**TBA**

**21 de septiembre      Criollo *Rusticatio*; Enlightened Sublime**

José Celestino Mutis Selections on BlackBoard

Landívar, *Rusticatio Mexicana*, Selections on BlackBoard

**28 de septiembre      “On the shoulders of giants:” Humboldt and Darwin**

Azara, Selected writings available on BlackBoard

Humboldt, *Personal Narrative of a Journey to the Equinoctial Regions of the New Continent [1818-1829]* Selections available on BlackBoard

\*Darwin, *The Voyage of the Beagle*

**5 de octubre              Writing the River**

Gumilla, *El Orinoco ilustrado* (1731) Selections available on BlackBoard

\*Carpentier, *Los pasos perdidos* (1953)

**12 de octubre            Writing the Andes**

*El Mercurio Peruano* (1790-1795). Selections available on BlackBoard

Charles Walker, *Shaky Colonialism*

\*Neruda, *Alturas de Macchu Pichu*

**19 de octubre            Writing the Pampa**

[Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, *Civilización y barbarie: vida de Juan Facundo Quiroga...* (1845)]

\*Ricardo Güiraldes, *Don Segundo Sombra* (1926)

**26 de octubre            Writing the Jungle**

\*José Eustacio Rivera, *La Vorágine* (1924)

**Film screening of *Fitzcarraldo* (Herzog, West Germany 1982) TBA**

**2 de noviembre Failed Foundational Fictions: Love and *mestizaje***

\*José de Alencar, *Iracema* (1865)

\*William Henry Hudson, *Green Mansions* (1904)

**Film screening of *The New World* (Malik; US 2005) TBA**

**9 de noviembre Writing the Llanos**

\*Rómulo Gallegos, *Doña Bárbara* (1929)

**\*Film Screening of *Doña Barbara* (México 1943) TBA**

**16 de noviembre Fruit Salad**

Bello, “Silva a la agricultura de la zona tórrida”

Gabriela Mistral, “Fruta” (all available on BlackBoard)

Beauman, *The Pineapple. King of Fruits* (Chatto & Windus, 2005)

Silver, “Locke’s Pineapple and the History of Taste”

Koeppel, *Banana. The Fruit that Changed the World* (Hudson Street Press, 2008)

**23 de noviembre \*Pre-Thanksgiving. Class cancelled; make-up class TBA)**

This session will involve a visit to Emory’s Michael C. Carlos Museum.

Stone-Miller, R. *Seeing with New eyes: Highlights of the Michael C. Carlos Museum Collection of Art of the Ancient Americas*

**30 de noviembre Conclusions and discussion of final projects**

**ALSO OF INTEREST:**

Friday, Nov. 4, 4:00 pm. Vann Seminar in Premodern History. Timothy D. Walker, Associate Professor of History at U. Massachusetts (Dartmouth), will discuss his paper “The Medicines Trade in the Portuguese Atlantic World: Dissemination of Plant

Remedies and Healing Knowledge from Brazil, c. 1580-1830." Abstract and paper will be circulated beforehand.