



Global Issues on The First Trans-Atlantic Culture Professor: Natalia Cousté PhD

This course has two main objectives:

To bring awareness on one of the world's most important events: the first transatlantic culture originated by the encounter between Europe and the New World in 1492. This event changed the course of history and modern world. We will discuss the unfolding of events and ideas that shaped the minds and actions of the people of the time. We will trace a timeline of events crucial for understanding of the modern world. The first transatlantic culture based on commerce set important characteristics for our modern globalized trade system. We will discuss how it started, and how and when it ended.

The other objective of the course is to study how Seville served as the cultural axis between the New World and Europe for centuries. In 1503 the city of Seville was awarded the exclusive right to trade with the New World and the House of Trade was built. All ships bound for America had to leave from Seville, land at specified ports on the other side and return to Seville. We will explore the role of House of Trade at the time with special attention to the figure of explorer Amerigo Vespucci. How America was named after him and the impact of his findings will be studied. By 1600 Seville was the largest and richest city in Spain and one of the wealthiest in Europe. The streets, monuments, museums of the city reflect the path to that past but also projects into the future. Precisely for that reason, once a week we will meet outside of the classroom and the city will be our laboratory. Our visits to key Sevillian sites will complement the material covered in the texts. At the end of the course student will be able to answer key cultural questions and make connections between the time period studied and our own time:

What present processes in society, economy, and culture are similar to those experienced during the first transatlantic culture?

Which similar phenomena to those of the XV century in art, mass-media or architecture are we experiencing today?

All readings and discussions are in English. No knowledge of Spanish is required.

Field trips: In addition to field study trips detailed below this course will include mandatory field trips to the region's famous cultural sites including visits to Cordoba and a three-day trip to Granada.

FIELD STUDY (Seville)

Field Study: Pabellón de la Navegación. It's a new, modern, interactive museum all about Seville's role as the hub of Spain's overseas maritime and colonial empire between 1492 and the mid-1700s. In order to visit Pabellón de la Navegación we will go to the Isla de la Cartuja, past a former monastery where Columbus lived for a time and was buried for a time, and there we will visit the Museum and finish our trip at Pabellón de la Navegación.

Field Study: Torre del Oro. Today the Golden Tower is home to a naval museum which has a collection related to the city's rich maritime history and its connection with the New World. The name - Tower of Gold - probably stems from the gilded *azulejos* (ceramic tiles) that originally decorated the tower. Another explanation given for the name was the gold that was unloaded here during the time that Seville had the monopoly over the trade with the New World.

Field Study: XV Century Financial District. House of Trade. Founded by Queen Isabela in 1503 the House of Trade was set up in Seville to control all vessels, goods and passengers, including missionaries, between Spain and 'the Indies'. The House of Trade was not only established to control commerce but also to make new instruments for navigation and maps. The most famous cartographers of the time such as Amerigo Vespucci and his nephew were hired to work at the House of Trade.

Field Study: Museum of Fine Arts. Housed in a restored monastery, the museum has a collection of artworks from the Middle Ages to the modern era with a focus on Spanish masters such as Murillo, Velázquez and Zurbarán.

Assignments and Exam

15% Class attendance and active class participation.

(20%) Project. Select a text, a work of art, a monument, a painting, a street name, or a holiday that commemorates a person or event in Spanish culture or in the history of Spain's overseas empire. Write an essay or, alternatively, create an illustrated webpage or blogpost that discusses the original person or event being commemorated, and the reasons for the later decision to "remember" that event or person in a public fashion. 800-1000 words of text to accompany your images.

Proposal for the project: (350 words).

(15%) Oral presentation about your project.

(20%) Text/Field Study Responses. Choose 1 text discussed in class and 1 field visit and write a response (10% each), (300-350 Words).

(30%) Final Exam. In-class.