Inscribing the New World

This course will explore the ways in which Europeans sought to make sense of their encounter with landscapes, peoples, cultures, and religions for which they had no categories. At the same time, it will also explore efforts of indigenous authors to record the memory of the world before Europeans arrived even as they themselves negotiated European governance, education, and missionizing. It will explore, in other words, the ways in which the story of the Americas has been told and the ways in which those narratives ground certain understandings of self, human agency, culture, and religion.

Requirements: participation in weekly discussion: 60%
- complete readings in advance of class meeting date
- come with one or two prepared questions for discussion
final essay: 40%
- topic to be discussed in first class meeting

Readings: for purchase and on reserve at College Library:


Weekly topics and assignments:

Week 1  What happened?
1/20  📖 *Christopher Columbus and the Enterprise of the Indies*, documents numbers 1-9, 23-33.

Week 2:  Columbus and the Indies

Week 3  The Indies Observed

Week 4  The Possibility of Alternative Worlds
2/10  📖 More, Text of *Utopia*, entire.

Week 5  The Conquest of Mexico: Telling the Story

Week 6  The Conquest of Mexico: Conquistadores
2/24  📖 *Cortes, Letters from Mexico*, First and Second Letters.

Week 7  The Conquest of Mexico: Aztec Accounts

Week 8  Cannibals and Europeans

Week 9  Cannibals and Europeans

Week 10  Memories of the Incas

**SPRING BREAK**

Week 11  Memory and Narrative
4/7  📖 *Betanzos, Narrative of the Incas*, Part One.

Week 12  Reconstructing the Inca Empire

Week 13  The Conquest of Peru
4/21  📖 *Cieza de León, The Discovery and Conquest of Peru*, TofC,

Week 14  Reconstructing Imperial History
4/28  📖 *Cobo, History of the Inca Empire*, pp. 3-107, 185-256.
Week 15  Memory and Identity
    http://www.kb.dk/elib/mss/poma/

Secondary literature:


Rabasa, José. *Inventing America: Spanish Historiography and the Invention of Eurocentrism* (Oklahoma, 1993).