

Cross-Cultural Encounters: Europe & the World, 1400-1800

HIS 401.01

Satisfies: EXP+, SPK, WRTD

Mondays, 1-3:50pm

Prof. Alix Cooper

This course will explore the ways in which, during the early modern period, European cultures came into contact with non-European ones, changing the course of history in the process. Examining a series of case studies, from the discovery and conquest of the Americas, through interactions between Christians, Muslims, and Jews on the European continent itself, all the way through Enlightenment Europe's contacts with Asia and ultimately the violent era of the French and American Revolutions, which swept away much of the old order of both Old World and New, the course will investigate the many different forms cross-cultural encounters can take and have historically taken. During this period, new avenues for contact between peoples were opened up; yet hopes were also shattered by tragedy. The course will study the moral dilemmas early modern people faced as their world became a global one, and as they came to struggle with issues of "civilization" and "barbarism", slavery and freedom, and "nature" and human rights. Course requirements will include doing the readings (approx. 60-80 pages per week), regular attendance and participation in discussion of the readings, carrying out occasional in-class writings in class, and work on a series of assignments (like a preliminary bibliography) designed to lead up to the writing of an 8-10 page research paper based on primary sources.