

ENGL 963 - Gender and Colonialism in the Modern Period

Women were a critical part of later European imperial projects around the globe, but what role did they play in the earliest English and Spanish settlements in the Americas? How did a “virgin” land relate to the Virgin Queen on the throne in England? How were masculinities constructed or adapted to encourage colonization or conversion, and how did these differ between England and Spain? What roles did indigenous women in the Americas like “Pocahontas” or “Malinche” play in these settlement projects as compared to European women? This course will explore such questions through reading primary documents by travelers and colonizers, colonial promoters at home, and the imaginaries created by playwrights and other literary authors. We will necessarily take a trans-Atlantic approach to these questions, studying the geopolitical situation in Europe and the Middle East as a framework for understanding Europe’s move westward into American lands. We will also pay careful attention to intersectional modes of difference, including religion and “race”, in the way that gender difference played out in the imperial projects of both nations.