

Newberry Library Seminar

Fall, 2011

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Crossing Boundaries

Frontiers, borders, and “middle grounds” define the geographic and cultural spaces that shape the experiences of people living in locations where interactions with “others” are common. The Seminar will focus on geographic, national, racial/ethnic, and gender role boundaries and the myriad ways in which those boundaries were crossed and re-crossed between 1492 and 1900 as Europeans traversed the Atlantic, indigenous people confronted newcomers, and Africans crossed the ocean and cultures, usually by force. It will also emphasize the constructions and representations of identities in the border spaces.

Possible Texts

Daniel DeFoe, *Moll Flanders*, *The Life of Captain Singleton*, *The King of Pirates*, or *Colonel Jack*

G. A. Henty [one of Henty’s nineteenth-century boys’ adventure novels]

Kenneth Holmes, Ed., *Covered Wagon Women* (Diaries and Letters)

Clorinda Matto de Turner, *Birds Without a Nest*

Samson Occom, Letters and Essays

Nell Irvin Painter, *The History of White People*

Mary Rowlandson, *Sovereignty and Goodness of God* (captivity narrative)

Susanna Rowson *Reuben and Rachel*

Leonora Sansay *Secret History; or, The Horrors of St. Domingo* and *Laura*

Jon F. Sensbach, *Rebecca's Revival: Creating Black Christianity in the Atlantic World*

Selection of articles or book chapters from some of the following authors: Gloria Anzaldua, Homi Bhaba, Kamau Brathwaite, Kathleen DuVal, Paul Gilroy, bell hooks, Chandra Mohanty, Richard Price, Frederick Jackson Turner, and Richard White.

PART 1 Introductions (Weeks 1 and 2)

A. The Newberry as a distinctive institution – how a research library functions as a collection of rare and specialist materials but also as a center for exchange of ideas among scholars at all stages of their careers -- from undergraduates to senior academics. The Library’s own staff and resident fellows will provide overviews of their own work and accounts of their own journeys as scholars through the research and writing process.

B. Welcome to Chicago

1. Field trips (throughout the semester)
2. Mapping activity

C. Welcome to the “Crossing Boundaries and Forming Identities” Seminar

1. First Theory– “Crossing Boundaries”: FJ Turner’s Frontier Thesis
2. Second Theory– “Forming Identities”: bell hooks

D. Begin work in the Collections

Sample assignment: Locate an intriguing item from any of the collections., and write a one-page description of the item, and report to the group.

E. Begin Research Log recording progress and considering new problems, questions, or ideas for future work.

PART 2 Boundary Crossing: Maps as Texts (Weeks Three and Four)

A. How to read historical maps

Sample assignment: Draw a map of the Newberrys location in Chicago. Then, compare this map to an historic map in the Ayer Collection. Write a one page comparison, and make a brief presentation to the group of the maps and the comparison.

B. Common Reading

1. Primary Source reading Mary Rowlandson and the removes
2. Secondary/Conceptual reading: Anzaldua
3. Conceptualizing an interesting research problem: *They Say, I Say* chs. 1-3

PART 3 Constructing Identities (Weeks five and six)

A. How to use unfamiliar sources, or familiar sources in new ways.

1. Use Newberry Library resources for "show and tell." Possibilities include materials from the Driscoll Collection and the Ayer Collection.
2. Sample assignment: Study several sheet music albums in the collections. Peruse the collection of loose and bound sheet music. Then, create an imagined album of existing music and explain the rationale for the collection.

B. Common Reading: Forming Identities. Understanding the processes by which new identities are formed in historical contexts.

1. Fiction as a Source -- Clorinda Matto de Turner, *Birds Without a Nest*
2. Brathwaite on the creolization process.

PART 4 Research and Writing

A. Understanding the nature of academic arguments (Week Seven)

1. Students continue to work on identifying areas of research interests and plan a research agenda.

B. Common reading

1. *They Say, I Say* chapters 4-6
2. Articles or chapters by Richard White and Kathleen DuVal

C. Student presentations on their research plans (Week Eight)

1. Preparation of research proposal and annotated bibliography
2. Compose a one-page preliminary research plan
3. Continue to maintain the research log
4. Come to Seminar prepared to present your own research plan and to make comments and suggestions on your peers' work.

D. Substantive first draft (Weeks Nine--Thirteen)

1. Brief presentations
2. Revise drafts

E. Conclusion (Week Fourteen)

1. Final paper
2. Final student presentations