POR4036 COM5036 Colonial power and desire: Narratives of Dissent in Portugal and Brazil

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Assessment: Two 2000-word essays (50 per cent each).
Credit Value: 15
Level: 4 for Portuguese and 5 for Comparative Literature
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ASSIGNMENT DEADLINES

Deadline for Essay 1: Sunday Nov 8th, 2020 at 23:55

This course is designed as a foundational module for students of Portuguese as a joint degree (compulsory, level 4) and also for level 5 Comparative Literature and Associate students. Texts will be taught in English translation but will be also available in Portuguese. Heritage Speakers and Post A Level students of Portuguese are expected to read and quote from the original.

The differentiation of learning outcomes for level 4 and level 5 will be made explicit in the module outline and in assessment guidelines.

LEARNING OUTCOMES OF THE MODULE

Level 4 Learning Outcomes

Academic Content:
Analyse visual, written and oral texts as historical documents.
Discuss the relation between the historical past and its impact on today's social movements
Understand the role of religion, desire and race in imperial projects
Understand narrative agency by the powerless
Understand possession and dispossession

Disciplinary Skills- able to
demonstrate an understanding of cultural criticism
demonstrate interpretive skills related to contrasting historical perspectives
define the relation between the texts discussed in class and cultural history

Attributes
Engage critically with knowledge
Clarity of communication
Research capacity

Level 5 Learning Outcomes

Academic Content:
Identify the defining characteristics of different text types (epic, epistolary, testimonial, oral narrative, fictional)
Analyse visual texts
Discuss the relation between the historical past and its impact on today's social movements
Understand the role of religion, desire and race in imperial projects

Disciplinary Skills- able to
demonstrate the understanding and application of key theoretical and critical concepts,
demonstrate interpretive skills necessary to processing different text types
Define the relation between the texts discussed in class and cultural history

ATTRIBUTES
Engage critically with knowledge
Clarity of communication
Research capacity

MODULE DESCRIPTION
In this module you will study a range of texts problematising sexual, religious and racial domination within the context of the Portuguese Empire, starting with the epic *The Lusiads* (Camões, 1570). Desire in the epic will find a vocal expression in the report to the King of Portugal by the scribe of the first Portuguese expedition to Brazil (1500). A critique of the land concentration model, prominent in *Raised from the Ground*, a novel by the Portuguese Nobel Prize José Saramago, in turn, will find a vivid visual deployment in Brazilian Sebastião Salgado's photography and in the Landless Children’s drawings. African slaves’ agency against racial domination will surface in their testimonials embedded in biographies. The agency of both slaves and the dispossessed will be seen to play out in the narratives of two major social movements in Brazil today: the quilombola’s and the landless rural workers’. All texts are available in English and Portuguese.
SET TEXTS

ORAL NARRATIVES CAST INTO FILM


PHOTOGRAPHY AND DRAWINGS


WRITTEN NARRATIVES


de Camões, L. Vaz. The Lusiads. Transl. with an Introduction by Landeg White. OUP, 1997 (excerpts from Cantos I, Iv and IX)


FURTHER READING


Hébrard, Jean M. (2013) ‘Slavery in Brazil: Brazilian Scholars in the Key Interpretive Debates’ In *Translating the Americas Volume I* (http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/lacs.12338892.0001.002)


**MARKING CRITERIA**

*Please consult the student handbook.*

**SUBMISSION OF COURSEWORK**

*Via QMplus only.*

Your final version of coursework for this assignment must be uploaded to the module QMplus page by the deadline given above. *You must submit your coursework as a Word file*
All coursework for this assignment will be submitted via Turnitin. If you wish to see a Turnitin report on your assignment before submitting the final version you will be able to do so. However, you must ensure that you submit your draft version well in advance, allowing at least 24 hours before the deadline to receive and review your report, and amend and upload your final version of the coursework by the deadline. If you plan to review your work more than once, you must plan your initial submission to allow at least 24 hours between reports.

MODULE SCHEDULE

WEEK 1

Introduction to the Module: Weeks 2-6

In weeks 2-6 of you will study power hierarchies and rituals of possession/dispossession through sexuality and religion in the context of the Portuguese Empire, with a particular focus on the discovery of Brazil. You will compare and contrast the point of view of the nobility, through excerpts from one of the most important texts in World Literature, the epic poem *The Lusiads* by Luís Vaz de Camões (1570), and popular expressions, such as Pero Vaz de Caminha’s letter to the King of Portugal (the scribe of the first maritime voyage to Brazil). The legacies of Empire and the perspective of the dispossessed (the sailors, the natives, the native woman and the landless children) will be approached through film, drawings and the photography of Sebastião Salgado. Cultural criticism is the thread weaving this part of the module.

Outcomes: Research skills, critical thinking; ability to work across different subject areas; awareness of local and global issues; understanding of ethical behaviour;

Skills: Multi/interdisciplinary and critical thinking fostered by studying across a range of areas (does this category overlap with outcomes?)

WEEK 2:

The Portuguese Empire. The voyage of Vasco da Gama to India (1498); the libidinal reward to the sailors in the Isle of Love, Canto IX of Camões’s *The Lusiads* (1572); The “discovery” of Brazil by Pedro Álvares Cabral (Easter Day, 1500); colonial desire and the eroticization of the native woman in *The Letter of Pero Vaz de Caminha do the King of Portugal*; the natives’ nudity: visions of paradise (the Garden of Eden?)
Historical Context (Europe): Pope Alexander VI’s 1493 Bull *Inter Coetera* and the donation of land discovered and yet to be discovered to Portugal and Spain for the propagation of Christianity.

Readings:

Note: There is no need to go over the long footnotes in Caminha's letter.

(a) The Isle of Love (The Lusiads, Canto IX, stanzas 70-74).

(b) The Letter of Pero Vaz de Caminha to the King of Portugal (pages 8, 10, 11, 16, 17, 20, 21). Note: the word “shame” refers to the women’s genitals.

(c) “No goods, no home, no money – the woman” and “Signifying bodies” in Santiago’s article ‘Destinations of a letter, predestinations of a country’, pages 335-338 and 340-342

How do these passages relate to “No goods, no home, no money – the woman” and “Signifying bodies” in Santiago's text?

WEEK 3

The amalgamation of Faith and Empire. Power. The nobility. Popular dissent

Historical context: Lisbon 1498. The nobility. Vasco da Gama departure from the Torre de Belém, Lisbon, 1498; the discovery of the maritime route to India. Popular dissent: The old man of the Restelo (Canto IV, stanzas 94-103)

For discussion:

*The Lusiads* (to recap., by Luís de Camões (1572), celebrating Vasco da Gama's 1498 maritime expedition to India and his momentous achievement of finding this maritime route and returning triumphantly to Portugal)

Canto I of *The Lusiads* (stanzas 1-6)

It starts with the narrative of the departure of Vasco da Gama's maritime expedition from Lisbon in search of the maritime route to India.

Who are the social/historical actors featured in Canto I?

How is power projected in Canto I? How does it relate to class?

Locate the explicit reference to Faith and Empire in Canto I. How does it relate to Pope Alexander's 1493 *Inter Coetera* bull? How do faith and empire amalgamate?
Name some characteristics of the epic genre in Canto I.

Why does Camões use the epic genre?

**Canto IV of The Lusiads (stanzas 94-103)**

Who is protagonized in Canto IV?

In which ways does the part known as 'O velho do Restelo' / 'The old man of Bethlehem' (a beach in Lisbon) differ from Canto I with reference to social class, power and theme? What about tone and language?

'O velho do Restelo' is considered by some a reactionary. Do you agree with the categorization?

**Readings**

*The Lusiads*: (Canto I, stanzas 1-6 and, for the Old Man of the Restelo, Canto IV, stanzas 94-103)


**WEEK 4**

**Possession/ Dispossession.** The establishment of power hierarchies. the criterion of absence/negation; Conversion; The mercantile dimension: the immensity and fertility of the land

**Historical context: Brazil 1500.** Faith: The religious ceremonies: ritual annexation of the new foundland to Christendom.

**Analytic Categories:** religion, power, desire, power hierarchies,

**Genres:** the epic and the epistolary

**Readings**
Caminha’s letter: pages 12-13 for power hierarchies; pages 17 and 30 for the religious services and the ritual annexation of the land to the Portuguese Empire and Christendom

Silviano Santiago’s “Destinations of a letter, predestinations of a country”: Sidenote 6 (p. 333); “Ecclesiastical Patronage” (pages 332-35); “A mercantile trade system -- or game” (pages 338-340)

Pero Vaz de Caminha's letter (written by the scribe of Pedro Álvares' Cabral's 1500 expedition and the 'discovery' of Brazil)

Analyze the establishment of power hierarchies between the Portuguese and the natives.

Elicit the mercantile subtext in the letter. How does it tie with the propagation of Christianity and 'Faith and Empire' in Canto I of The Lusiads?

Analyze the role of religion in the letter.

Convicts were left behind for the propagation of Christianity as Pedro Álvares Cabral returned to Portugal. How legitimate is this?

The letter gives a sense of immediacy to the event described (Cabral's discovery of Brazil in 1500). In which ways is it different from The Lusiads?

How do the two texts create verissimilitude?

What bearing do the two genres (the epic and the epistolary) have on the language and style respectively used?

Cultural Criticism

Please complement your textual analysis with Silviano Santiago’s “Destinations of a letter, predestinations of a country”: Sidenote 6 (p. 333); “Ecclesiastical Patronage” (pages 332-35); “A mercantile trade system -- or game” (pages 338-340)

Terminology/ concepts;

Drawing upon existing work not addressing Brazil/Portugal but relevant in terms of concepts and precise terminology and broadening your critical
horizons: Todorov on the Discovey f America (sharpening terminology on alterity);

WEEK 5

Landlessness in Brazil – An Introduction

The legacies of empire: dispossession, landlessness, aggravation with globalization.

“Landless Ahoy!” Thus read the headlines of a major newspaper in Brazil on April 21st 2000, on the quincentenary of the country’s “discovery”.

The paradox of landlessness in the world’s fifth largest country. Colonization: Portugal’s division of Brazil into 14 hereditary strips (1534-36). Land concentration. The latifundia. Land concentration aggravated by globalization and bravura mechanization of the countryside (1960s on): 20 million landless workers. The 1984 emergence of Latin American’s major social movement (Movement of the Landless Rural Workers).

Readings:

Pages 115-118 of the article “Enhancing Cultural Studies through a Web-enabled Database” (Vieira 2007)

Powerpoint on Land Concentration (Schwendler and Vieira) on QMPLUS

WEEK 6

Photographer Sebastião Salgado and the Landless Children on landlessness in Brazil

Texts:

The landless children’s drawings: powerlessness; identity defined by an absence; agency; self-expression of the marginalized by history

Sebastião Salgado’s photography Terra

The Landless Children’s drawings in (Vieira 2003). Rereadings of history on the quincentenary of the discovery of Brazil in 2000. The perspective of the landless children

[http://landless-voices.org/vieira/archive-04.php?sc=1&ng=e&se=0&th=11]
Guidance and questions

Analyze the drawings of the landless children produced on the quincentenary of the “discovery of Brazil” (Vieira 2003). How do those children describe their experience of landlessness? How do they interpret the history of Brazil?

How does dispossession relate to Pope Alexander IV's 1493 Bull *Inter Coetera*?

How does dispossession relate to the performative function of Caminha's letter?

How does landlessness relate to the mercantile subtext in Caminha’s letter?

WEEK 7: READING WEEK
WEEKS 8-10
The latifundium in Portugal

WEEKS 8 –
Nobel Prize José Saramago's photobiography. Peasant's poverty in Portugal

Week 9
WEEK 9 - RAISED FROM THE GROUND - CHAPTERS 1-8

A critique of the land concentration model, prominent in Raised from the Ground, a novel by the Portuguese Nobel Prize José Saramago and the revolt of the peasants.

Criticism


Comparative Literature and Culture 11.3


WEEK 8: READINGS FROM SARAMAGO
[chapter 1] The latifundium
[chapter 6] The Republican period

WEEK 9: READINGS FROM SARAMAGO
[chapter 17] The struggle for better working conditions
[chapter 18] The torture of Germano Vidigal
[chapter 25] The incarceration of João Mau-Tempo

[chapter 29] Workers’ protests
[chapter 31] The end of conformism
[chapter 33] The Carnation Revolution
WEEKS 10-12

In weeks 10-12 you will be studying the African slaves' biographies and autobiographies and how their agency against racial domination will surface in their testimonials embedded in biographies. You will also study ways the agency of the slaves will be seen to play out in the narratives of one of the two major social movements in Brazil today: the quilombola's

PRIMARY READING