

## **History of the Senses in Colonial America**

HIS389H1-L0301

Classroom: University College 163  
Fall 2017 - Wednesdays 3:00-5:00  
Professor: Andrew Kettler  
Office: University College A306  
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### **Course Overview:**

The History of the Senses in Colonial America focuses on the interdisciplinary study of the five senses. Scholarship on the five senses offers a strong entrance point to combine diverse academic discourses to pursue interdisciplinary inquiry into questions of social construction, race, gender, science, and bodily experience in the Colonial Americas.

This course specifically outlines methodologies that expose the importance of seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, and smelling to historical experience. These early American sensory experiences often included religious, economic, and social concerns of diverse population groups, including Native Americans, European colonists, and African slaves.

### **Office Hours:**

Monday 9:00-11:00 or By Appointment  
University College A306

### **Learning Outcomes:**

- 1) Students will learn to synthesize their previous knowledge of history with new understandings of sensory studies gained from the lecture format, their readings of representative primary documents, and articles on Sensory History.
- 2) Students will be able to write essays on Sensory History in a standard format, with an introduction, body, and conclusion, and present persuasive papers regarding difficult questions of American history. Students will be able to present these difficult arguments through succinct, non-personal, and objective means.
- 3) Students will gain an understanding of the historian's profession through a consideration of documentary interpretation and objectivity related to understanding tacit knowledge, historical empathy, and phenomenology.
- 4) Students will learn a sensory narrative of American history from 1492 until 1815, with goals of both understanding the timeline, human experiences, and major events, but also questioning the importance of those specific events for different populations.

## **Course Outline:**

Each week the Professor will provide a PowerPoint lecture on a specific topic related to the History of the Senses in Colonial America.

The second half of each course session will be set aside for a class discussion related to the Lecture, Readings, and Test Review.

Students are expected to engage with the class and Professor during these discussions, as the level of engagement determines weekly grades for the final Participation/Attendance grade that is 25% of the final grade for the course.

## **Course Requirements:**

Sensory Experience Essay: 20%

Midterm: 20%

Final Essay: 35%

Participation/Attendance: 25%

- Sensory Experience Essay (20% of Final Grade):

Students are to submit an essay summarizing their sensory understanding of a given historical event from the Colonial Americas. This assignment is a writing exercise that does not require citations if students do not use outside sources. If students use outside sources, they must be cited. Due on 9/27.

Students are open to write a 3-5 page, double-spaced, essay that explores sensory aspects of a historical event they have studied in a previous course.

How can that event be enlivened through the use of sensory studies? Students should feel free to talk about a single sense (taste, smell, sight, sound, or touch) or many senses.

- Midterm (20% of Final Grade):

Students will spend half the class completing a Midterm test on 11/1.

This test will consist of completing a series of IDs from the preceding lectures. These IDs will focus on events in Colonial American History. Students are to explore how those events engage with Sensory History. Five IDs will be provided. Students will pick Four to write a paragraph on each.

The larger portion of the test consists of a formal essay to be answered. The Professor will provide two essay questions. Students are to pick one essay to write a 4-6 page hand-written essay.

4 ID Paragraphs – 10 Points Each – 40% of Exam/ 1 Essay – 60 Points – 60% of Exam

### Final Essay (35% of Final Grade):

The Final Essay for the course should be at least 12 pages, double-spaced, and fully cited in Chicago Format.

Students are to e-mail the Professor within the first month of the course to offer a topic for their essay.

Essays are to analyze a specific primary source from Colonial America through sensory methodology.

Each class period, a version of this analysis will be performed by the class during discussion.

Students are to expand on those analyses by choosing primary sources to analyze using sensory methods. This can include multiple sources around a theme, or a single primary source.

Optional Rough Drafts Due Through E-Mail by the Start of Class 11/29 – To Be Returned by 12/2 for Revisions.

Final Draft Due 12/9 by 5:00 PM.

### - Participation/Attendance (25% of Final Grade):

Students are to attend each class. During discussion in the second half of each class session, students should respond to questions and offer opinions on the primary sources and article for the week.

The Professor will offer a sign-in sheet at the start of each class. Students are to sign the form. At the end of the class session, students are to check next to their name the number of times they spoke during that class session.

### **Blackboard:**

The course will be run through Blackboard.

Readings are linked to the Blackboard site.

Please check your utoronto e-mail often for updates from the Professor.

Students are required to use their utotonto e-mail for this course.

### **Outside of Classroom Links:**

Academic Integrity:

<http://academicintegrity.utoronto.ca>

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The University of Toronto treats cases of plagiarism very seriously. The *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>) outlines the behaviours that constitute academic dishonesty and the procedures for addressing academic offenses. If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or research and citations methods, you should seek information from your instructor or other university resources.

See: <http://www.utoronto.ca/academicintegrity/resourcesforstudents.html>

To find out your class locations and enrolments, use the following FAS link:  
<https://timetable.iit.artsci.utoronto.ca/>

The Professor expects Academic Integrity in all phases of the course. Students should respect each other's discussion contributions. Students are expected to follow the Academic Code and not commit plagiarism within this course. Students should e-mail the Professor with any concerns regarding plagiarism prior to the submission of assignments.

Academic Success and Aid Center:

<https://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/asc>

## ACCESSIBILITY

The University provides academic accommodations for students with disabilities in accordance with the terms of the Ontario Human Rights Code. For information on services and resources, see <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as>

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or Accessibility Services at (416) 978 8060; [accessibility.utoronto.ca](http://accessibility.utoronto.ca)

## **Submission Policies and Academic Honesty:**

Students are required to turn in their two essay assignments on Blackboard links to a standard submission portal and to Turnitin. Students submit each essay twice for a complete electronic submission.

Turnitin.com. "Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site."

If plagiarism is suspected, a meeting will be set with the Professor.

### **Late Assignments and Grading Schedule:**

For each day an essay assignment is late without a formal excuse, 10% of the grade is removed.

Assignments will be graded and returned online at a maximum of one week after submission.

### **Attendance Policy:**

Each class missed without a formal excuse removes 5% of the Attendance/Discussion Grade.

If you miss the Midterm, please contact the Professor as quickly as possible after the exam with reasons for this absence and to learn possible make-up dates. To be allowed to make up the Midterm the student must provide a formal excuse, with documentation if requested.

### **Required Reading:**

Each week, prior to lecture, students are to read the article posted to Blackboard for that week. Within class, the Professor will also post a primary source reading. This will be read by students during the middle of the class, prior to discussion and in lieu of a break.

### **Suggested Readings:**

For students who hope to gain a further understanding of the topics in the course, the Professor suggests, but does not require, looking at:

- 1) Brown, Kathleen. *Foul Bodies: Cleanliness in Early America*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009.
- 2) Hoffer, Peter Charles. *Sensory Worlds in Early America*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 2003.
- 3) Rath, Richard Cullen. *How Early America Sounded*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003.
- 4) Smith, Mark. *How Race Is Made: Slavery, Segregation, and the Senses*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006.
- 5) White, Shane, and Graham White. *The Sounds of Slavery: Discovering African American History through Songs, Sermons, and Speech*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2005.

## **Course Schedule:**

### 1) 9/13 – Historical Theory and the Roots of Sensory Studies

- (Syllabus Introduction)

### 2) 9/20 - Doing Sensory History: Phenomenology and Primary Sources

Smith, Mark. "Producing Sense, Consuming Sense, Making Sense: Perils and Prospects for Sensory History." *Journal of Social History* 40, 4 (2007): 841-858. – JSTOR LINK ON BLACKBOARD

Howes, David. "Can These Dry Bones Live? An Anthropological Approach to the History of the Senses." *Journal of American History* 95, 2 (2008): 119-128. – JSTOR LINK ON BLACKBOARD

- (Essay Guidelines)
- (Research Guidelines)

### 3) 9/27 – The Sensory Encounter: New World and Old World Sensoriums

Norton, Marcy. "Tasting Empire: Chocolate and the European Internalization of Mesoamerican Aesthetics." *The American Historical Review* 111, 3 (2006): 660-691. – JSTOR LINK ON BLACKBOARD

Goody, Jack. "The Anthropology of the Senses and Sensations." *La Ricerca Folklorica* 45 (2002): 17-28. - JSTOR LINK ON BLACKBOARD

- (Sensory Experience Essay Due by the Start of Class)

### 4) 10/4 – The Atlantic Element: Sensory Prejudices, Social Power, and Slavery

Smith, Mark. "Transcending, Othering, Detecting: Smell, Premodernity, Modernity." *Postmedieval* 3, 4 (2012): 380-390. – LITERATURE ONLINE LINK ON BLACKBOARD

Classen, Constance. "The Odor of the Other: Olfactory Symbolism and Cultural Categories." *Ethos* 20, 2 (1992): 133-166. – JSTOR LINK ON BLACKBOARD

5) 10/11 – Sensory Weapons of the Weak: Resistance, Religion, and Race

Rath, Richard Cullen. "African Music in Seventeenth-Century Jamaica: Cultural Transit and Transition." *WMQ* 50, 4 (1993): 700-726. – JSTOR LINK ON BLACKBOARD

Rotter, Andrew J. "Empires of the Senses: How Seeing, Hearing, Smelling, Tasting, and Touching Shaped Imperial Encounters." *Diplomatic History* 35, 1 (2011): 3-19. – JSTOR LINK ON BLACKBOARD

6) 10/18 – Languages of the Other: Material Cultures and Sensory Communication

Bohaker, Heidi. "Reading Anishinaabe Identities: Meaning and Metaphor in Nindoodem Pictographs." *Ethnohistory* 57, 1 (2011): 11-33. – DUKE JOURNALS LINK ON BLACKBOARD

Keyes, Sarah. "'Like a Roaring Lion': The Overland Trail as a Sonic Conquest." *The Journal of American History* 96, 1 (June, 2009): 19-43. – JSTOR LINK ON BLACKBOARD

7) 10/25 – Early American Literature and the Senses

- (Test Review)

8) 11/1 – Sensory Encounters on the Middle Ground

- (Midterm at Start of Class)

11/6 – Last Day to Cancel F Section Courses without Academic Penalty

11/6 - Last Day to Add or Remove a CR/NCR Option in F Section Courses

9) 11/8 – Reading Week – No Class

10) 11/15 – Philosophy, Sensibility, and Revolution

Knott, Sarah. "The Patient's Case: Sentimental Empiricism and Knowledge in the Early American Republic." *WMQ* 67, 4 (2010): 645-676. – JSTOR LINK ON BLACKBOARD

11) 11/22 – Tasting Nationalism in the Early Americas

Klein L.F. "Dinner-Table Bargains: Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and the Senses of Taste." *Early American Literature* 49, 2 (2014): 403-433. PROJECT MUSE LINK ON BLACKBOARD

12) 11/29 – Creolization and Cross-Talk Between the Senses

White, Shane, and Graham White. "Slave Hair and African-American Culture in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries." *Journal of Southern History* 61 (1995): 45-76. – JSTOR LINK ON BLACKBOARD

Massing, Jean Michel. "From Greek Proverb to Soap Advert: Washing the Ethiopian." *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 58 (1995): 180-201. – JSTOR LINK ON BLACKBOARD

(Optional Rough Drafts Due By Start of Class – To Be Returned by 12/2 for Revisions)

13) 12/6 – Teaching History Through the Senses

Roeder, George. "Coming to Our Senses." *Journal of American History* 81 (1994): 1113-1122 - JSTOR LINK ON BLACKBOARD

Chiang, C. Y. "The Nose Knows: The Sense of Smell in American History." *Journal of American History* 95, 2 (2008): 405-416. – JSTOR LINK ON BLACKBOARD

14) 12/9-12/20 – Finals (No Standard Final) (Final Essays Due 12/9 by 5:00 PM)