Lecturer: PD Dr. Stefan L. Brandt
Room and time: AR-K 307/1, Tuesdays 14-16
Course type: Hauptseminar
Modules:
- Berufskolleg: M 6.3: Literatur und Kultur: Spezialisierung / Autoren(gruppen)
- Gymnasium: M 7.4: Literatur und Kultur: Spezialisierung / Autoren(gruppen)
- Master: M 2.2 Epochen der Literatur-, Kultur- und Mediengeschichte: Mittelalter, frühe Neuzeit, 17. Jahrhundert

First session: April 13, 2010

Course description: This class examines cultural encounters between the early pioneers and the ‘Indians’ on American soil. How were such interactions utilized in literature and the visual arts to negotiate the problems and opportunities of colonial experience? Symbolic constructions like that of an ‘uncivilized’ territory beyond the frontier inhabited by heathen tribes were instrumental in endowing the settlers with a firm sense of religious and cultural identity. The dominant self-image of puritan America was marked by a number of myths and legends that helped shape social and cultural practice in the colonies. What role did the narrative of Pocahontas have in the constitution of early America? In what way did the clash of world views and spiritual backgrounds influence the rhetorical as well as the political shaping of colonial life? How did Europeans respond to the New World in words and images? To what degree did the process of colonization change the indigenous ‘old world’? What function did the genre of captivity narratives assume? Why did some captives decide to remain in Indian captivity while others modeled native Americans into epitomes of Satan? We will discuss important foundational texts of colonial America, especially sermons, jeremiads, and spiritual autobiographies as well as documents crafted by Native Americans. Texts will include John Smith’s writings on Pocahontas, Jean de Brébeuf’s missionary accounts in New France as well as Mary Rowlandson’s tales of her captivity. We will also look at a few films, such as Black Robe and New World.

Grading: For 5 or 7 CP: regular attendance, participation in discussions, at least nine entries in the discussion forum (1/3), oral presentation as part of an expert group (1/3), and final paper (8-10/ 15-17 pages) (1/3). For 2 CP: attendance, participation in discussions, at least seven entries in the discussion forum (50%), oral presentation as part of an expert group (50%).

Deadline for Final Papers: Friday, August 31 (Tuesday), 2010. Note: There is no extension of this deadline. Please throw papers into my box (2nd floor of the AR-H building) or send them in postal form. Do not (!) send papers via email.

Syllabus

13 April Introduction: Puritan-Indian Encounters and the Making of ‘America’
- Basic texts:

20 April Mythologies of Early Encounters between Pioneers and Native Americans
- Main film (required):
  - The New World (dir. Terrence Malick, 2005).
- Additional text (optional):

27 April Pocahontas – The Construction of a (Trans-)Cultural Myth
- Main text (required):
  - Captain John Smith, from The Generall Historie of Virginia (1624), pp. 1-9.
- Additional text (optional):

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1 All texts for this course are available on the BSCW server, http://bscw.avmz.uni-siegen.de/
04 May  "Man Being a Mortall God" – Narratives of a “Divine Empire” on the Soil of the Plantations
   Main text (required):
      Samuel Purchas, from *A Discourse on Virginia* (1625), pp. 22-33.
   Additional text (optional):

11 May  Film screening – White Settlement and the Rhetoric of Conversion

18 May  Evangelizing the Heathens – Christianity as a Beacon against ‘Barbarism’
   Main text (required):
   Additional text (optional):

25 May  Pentecost Holiday (Pfingsten)
   Relax and enjoy!

01 June  The Colonial Community as a City upon a Hill – John Winthrop’s Call for a “Covenant with God”
   Main text (required):
   Additional text (optional):

08 June  Sermons of a Christian Utopia – John Cotton’s “True Holy Commonwealth”
   Main text (required):
   Additional text (optional):

15 June  Waging War against the Indians – John Underhill’s Account of the Pequot War (1636-37)
   Main text (required):
      John Underhill, “Newes from America: A New and Experimental Discoverie of New England” (1638), pp. 49-86.
   Additional text (optional):

22 June  The Birth of the American Jeremiad – Michael Wigglesworth and the Community in Crisis
   Main text (required):
   Additional text (optional):

29 June  The Revival of Piety – Mary Rowlandson’s Spiritual Autobiography
   Main text (required):
   Additional texts (optional):

06 July  Indian Captivity as an Instrument of the Dominant Rhetoric – Cotton Mather’s *Magnalia Christi Americana*
   Main text (required):
   Additional text (optional):

13 July  Conversions to the Christian Religion – The Native American Perspective
   Main text (required):
   Additional text (optional):
      Samson Occom, “A Sermon Preached at the Execution of Moses Paul, an Indian” (1772), pp. 1-17.

20 July  The Disneyfication of Colonial Experience – Pocahontas goes Hollywood
   Main film (required):
      *Pocahontas* (prod. by Walt Disney Company, 1995).
   Additional text (optional):