

# **First Encounters**

A Course in Four Sessions

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Tuesdays 10:00-11:30

In this four-session course, we take up insights from first encounters by travelers and explorers that have shaped international relations. The motivations for exploration as expressed in the writings of travelers are complex. They include religious affirmations, international trade, and imperial ambition, among others. We look at these perspectives through the eyes of travelers and explorers, whose writings would shape international relations long before diplomacy established a set of norms for conduct.

The farther back in time we look, we should note how limited and asymmetric information has been available to any traveler. Early accounts typically involve great speculation about how societies are governed, what is the source of wealth, and how matters of justice and commerce are regulated. Not surprisingly, other civilizations encountered often are thought to be governed by barbarians, that is, societies that fall short of the norms of the traveler's home land. Such encounters reveal both fascination and fear that another civilization may be equal if not superior to one's one. Later travelers as well as rulers would reflect this perspective, even as wars of conquest often took precedence over peaceful exchange and cultural interactions based on mutual respect.

## **Session 1 (September 9) – Early first encounters**

- A. Herodotus, *The Histories*
- B. Julius Caesar – *The Conquest of Gaul*
- C. Tacitus – *Agricola and Germania*
- D. Unknown – *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*
- D. Iban Fadlan – *Ibn Fadlan and the Land of Darkness*

## **Session 2 (September 16) – Religion and Trade Shape Messianic Encounters**

- A. Marco Polo, *The Travels*
- B. Christopher Columbus – *The Log of Christopher Columbus*
- C. John Winthrop – *Shining City on a Hill*
- D. Levathes, Louise (1994) – *When China Ruled the Seas, the Treasure Fleet of the Dragon Throne, 1405-1433.*
- E. Murray, William Vans (1996, 1792) – *A Vocabulary of the Nanticoke Dialect*

## **Session 3 (September 23) – Conquistadors and Settler Colonialism**

- A. Smith, Captain John (1630) – *The Journals of Captain John Smith*
- B. Ezana (4<sup>th</sup> century CE) – *Stone Inscription on the Axumite Kingdom*
- C. De Las Casas, Bartolomé (1542) – *An Account*
- D. Chateaubriand, François (1801) – *Atala, René, Les Natchez*

**Session 4 (October 1) – Globalism and Nationalism in International Relations**

- A. Thomas Mun (1664) – *England's Treasure by Forraign Trade*
- B. Adam Smith (1759) – *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*
- C. David Ricardo (1817) – *Principles of Political Economy and Taxation*
- D. Godfrey Hodgson (2009) – *The Myth of American Exceptionalism*
- E. Abram C. Van Engen (2020) – *City on a Hill – A History of American Exceptionalism*

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**Source Materials**

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- Boorstin, Daniel J. (1983). *The Discoverers – A History of Man's Search to Know His World and Himself*. (New York: Vintage Books).
- Caesar, Julius (1982, 58-51 BCE). *The Conquest of Gaul*, translation by S.A. Handford, with an Introduction by Jane F. Gardner (New York: Penguin Books)
- Chateaubriand, François René (1961, 1801). *Atala, René, Les Natchez*, extraits. (Paris: Classiques Larousse).
- Columbus, Christopher (1992, 1492). *The Log of Christopher Columbus, His own account of the voyage that changed the world*, new translation by Robert H. Fuson. (Camden, Maine: International Marine Publications).
- Cosmas, An Egyptian Monk (1965, 6<sup>th</sup> Century CE). *The Aksumite Empire of the Sixth Century*, in Richard Pankhurst, editor, *Travelers to Ethiopia* (Addis Ababa: Oxford University Press).
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- Fadlan, Ibn (2012, 922). *Ibn Fadlan and the Land of Darkness, Arab Travelers in the Far North*. (New York: Penguin Books).
- Hakluyt, Richard (1582) *Divers Voyages Touching the Discovery of America and the Islands Adjacent*.
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- Mandeville, Sir John (2006, 1481). *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville, the Fantastic 14<sup>th</sup> Century Account of a Journey to the East*. (Mineola, New York: Dover Books).
- Mun, Thomas (1664) *England's Treasure by Forraign Trade, or the Balance of our Forraign Trade is the Rule of our Treasure*, pdf file.

- Murray, William Vans (1996, 1893, 1792). *A Vocabulary of the Nanticoke Dialect*, with an Introduction by Daniel Garrison Brinton. (Holland, Bucks County, Pennsylvania: Evolution Publishing)
- Polo, Marco (1999, 1298-1299). *Marco Polo and the Discovery of the New World*, translation by John Larner (New Haven: Yale University Press).
- Polo, Marco (1958, 1298-1299). *The Travels*, Translation with an Introduction by Ronald Latham. (New York: Penguin Books).
- Ricardo, David (1965, 1817). *The Principles of Political Economy and Taxation*, Introduction by Michael P. Fogarty. (London: Everyman's Library).
- Shorto, Russell (2004). *The Island at the Center of the World*. (New York: Vintage Paperback Publishing).
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- Tacitus, Publius Cornelius (2009, 1948, 98). *Agricola and Germania*, translation by Harold Mattingly. (New York: Penguin Books).
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