

BLHV-402 Discover: The History, Politics and Future of Human Exploration

Dates: January 12 to May 14, 2021; Tuesdays 5:20 pm to 7:50 pm

Location: TBD

Professor: Mark M. Gray

Professor Contact Information: mmg34@georgetown.edu, 202-687-0885

Virtual Office Hours: By appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course uses a multi-disciplinary approach, incorporating the sciences (social and physical) and the humanities, to explore the history and future of human exploration and discovery. It begins with the most distant story we can tell of early Homo sapiens venturing out of Africa some 60,000 years ago and ends with our reach into space—speculating on the future of human exploration. What are the catalysts for human beings to leave one place for another into the unknown? Often this has come as a response to climate changes, disasters, disease, and/or changes in food sources. In other cases, the movement is caused by human conflict, seeking out new wealth and trade, or the development of a new technology that reduces the risks of travel. On some occasions the impetus was simple human curiosity. In most cases these movements have had lasting effects on human politics and culture. This course takes a global approach—in some cases literally out of this world—to study the causes and effects of these human journeys. It also looks to the future to all that has not yet been explored to answer where we might go next and what impacts this may have. Texts include scientific studies, historical narratives, and primary source document excerpts.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Utilize physical anthropology and biology to understand evolution and mobility of early humans and their biological ancestors
2. Explain economic and political motivations behind human journeys of discovery
3. Describe cultural and political problems arising from migration and contact between civilizations
4. Compare travel literatures to known historical experience. Describe the impact of these narratives on popular cultures
5. Explain the development of colonial systems and international slavery as well as the historical, social, and economic consequences arising from these institutional designs
6. Compare and contrast the history of human explorations undersea and in air/space. Describe the impact of military conflict on the development of undersea and air/space technologies

7. Describe the circular connection between technological development and “discovery cultures”

COURSE READINGS

The following are the required reading material for this course:

Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind

Yuval Noah Harari

Harper; 1st edition (February 10, 2015)

ISBN-10: 0062316095

Pathfinders: A Global History of Exploration

Felipe Fernández-Armesto

W. W. Norton & Company (October 17, 2007)

ISBN-10: 0393330915 / ISBN-13: 978-0393330915

Mankind Beyond Earth: The History, Science, and Future of Human Space Exploration

Claude A. Piantadosi

Columbia University Press (January 1, 2013)

ISBN-10: 0231162421 / ISBN-13: 978-0231162425

Additional Journal Articles to Be Discussed in Class (sequential order; all available on JSTOR)

Ward, Carol. 2004. “The Evolution of Human Origins” in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 105, No. 1, (Mar., 2003), pp. 77-88.

Chang-Qun, Duan, Gan Xue-Chun, Jeanny Wang, and Paul K. Chien. 1998. “Relocation of Civilization Centers in Ancient China: Environmental Factors” in *Ambio*, Vol. 27, No. 7 (Nov., 1998), pp. 572-575.

Christian, David. 2000. “Silk Roads or Steppe Roads? The Silk Roads in World History” in *Journal of World History*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Spring, 2000), pp. 1-26.

Davies, Hugh E. H. 1998. “Designing Roman Roads” in *Britannia*, Vol. 29 (1998), pp. 1-16.

Zumthor, Paul and Catherine Peebles. 1994. "The Medieval Travel Narrative" in *New Literary History*, Vol. 25, No. 4, 25th Anniversary Issue (Part 2) (Autumn, 1994), pp. 809-824.

McGhee, Robert. 1984. "Contact between Native North Americans and the Medieval Norse: A Review of the Evidence" in *American Antiquity*, Vol. 49, No. 1 (Jan., 1984), pp. 4-26.

Clanchy, M.T. 1982. "Looking Back from the Invention of Printing" in *The Quarterly Journal of the Library of Congress*, Vol. 39, No. 3 (SUMMER 1982), pp. 168-183

McElroy, John Harmon. 1978. "The Integrity of Irving's Columbus" in *American Literature*, Vol. 50, No. 1 (Mar., 1978), pp. 1-16.

Wheeler, Valerie. 1986. "Travelers' Tales: Observations on the Travel Book and Ethnography" in *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 59, No. 2, Ethnographic Realities/Authorial Ambiguities (Apr., 1986), pp. 52-63.

Roland, Alex. 1977. "Bushnell's Submarine: American Original or European Import?" in *Technology and Culture*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (Apr., 1977), pp. 157-174.

van Muffling, Adrian. 1927. "Human Flight throughout the Ages" in *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 131, Aviation (May, 1927), pp. 1-6.

Amundsen, Roald. 1912. "Amundsen's Expedition to the South Pole" in *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society*, Vol. 44, No. 11 (1912), pp. 822-838.

McLaughlin, Steven A. and H. Newton Malony. 1984. "Near-Death Experiences and Religion: A Further Investigation" in *Journal of Religion and Health*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (Summer, 1984), pp. 149-159.

Koman, Rita G. 1994. "Man on the Moon: The U.S. Space Program as a Cold War Maneuver" in *Organization of American Historians (OAH) Magazine of History*, Vol. 8, No. 2, Rethinking the Cold War (Winter, 1994), pp. 42-50.

Stone, Richard. 2012. "A New Dawn for China's Space Scientists" in *Science, New Series*, Vol. 336, No. 6089 (29 June 2012), pp. 1630-1635, 1637.

Fong, Kevin. 2004. "The Next Small Step" in *BMJ: British Medical Journal*, Vol. 329, No. 7480 (Dec. 18 - 25, 2004), pp. 1441-1444.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING CRITERIA

Graded Assignments

Class assignments represent 25% of your overall grade. These assignments include a 1) travel writing essay, 2) an analysis of travel/exploration literature, 3) a comparative film study essay, 4) an essay on technology and travel, 5) a biographical essay about an explorer, and 6) an essay on the future of exploration. These assignments will be given every other week. One exam will be given at the end of the semester gauging your grasp of the material. This is 20% of your grade. The examination is open-book and open-note. The centerpiece of the course is a research project. The topic will be determined by you or your group in consultation with your professor. Each project will be summarized in a research paper. Throughout the semester we will be discussing and developing these projects together as a class. Results will be presented at the end of the semester in an informal presentation session. This presentation and other online participation will account for 15% of your grade. The final paper should consist of a minimum of 3,000 words and is worth 40% of your grade (due by May 13).

Grading Scheme

93 - 100 % = A

90 - 92 % = A-

87 - 89 % = B+

83 - 86 % = B

80 - 82 % = B-

77 - 79 % = C+

73 - 76 % = C

70 - 72 % = C

67 - 69 % = D+

60 - 66 % = D

Below 60 % = F

COURSE SCHEDULE

This course begins with an Orientation and is divided into **14** modules. Below is an outline describing the course structure. Each Module will be released on a weekly basis every Sunday at 11:59 pm (ET). Students are required to move through each module in sequential order.

<u>Class</u>	<u>Topics and readings</u>
Distant Journeys	
Jan. 17-23: I. Introduction; The George Bailey-Walter Mitty Factor; II. The “Unremembered” Journey Out of Africa; Physical Anthropology, Human Origin, and Migration	Readings: Harari Chs. 1-3; Ward article Media discussion: The Incredible Human Journey
Jan. 24-30: I. Ancient Seas: Early Asian and European Explorers; II. On Ancient Roads; III. Growing Empires and War; IV. Encounters with the “Other”	Readings: Harari Chs. 4-6; Chang-Qun article Media discussion: Tower of Babel
Jan. 31-Feb. 6: I. Exploration in Early Literature; II. Spread of Salvation Religions: Evangelization and Pilgrimage	Readings: Harari Chs. 7-9; Fernández-Armesto, Chs. 1-2; Christian and Davies articles Media discussion: The Art of War, Journey to Mecca: In the Footsteps of Ibn Battuta, Arabian Nights
Classical Explorations	
Feb. 7-13: I. Europeans Meet “New Worlds”; II. Globalization and the Spread of Disease	Readings: Harari Chs. 10-12; Fernández-Armesto, Chs. 14-15; Zumthor and McGhee articles Media discussion: Life and Voyages of Columbus, The New World, Apocalypso,
Feb. 14-20: Theater of the Mind: The printing press in Asia and Europe, expanding literacy, and the travel tale	Readings: Harari Chs. 13-16; Fernández-Armesto, Ch. 4; Clanchy and McElroy articles Media discussion: Arthurian Legends and Quests
Feb. 21-27: Frontiers: Colonialism and culture clash around the world; International slavery	Readings: Harari Chs. 17-19; Fernández-Armesto, Ch. 5; Wheeler article Media discussion: The Mission, Amistad
Feb. 28-Mar. 4: I. Enlightenment age and travel technology; II. Emergence of global capital markets, commodities, and trade	Readings: Fernández-Armesto, Ch. 6 Media discussion: Moby Dick, The Voyage of the Beagle, Two Years Before the Mast, Gulliver’s Travels
SPRING BREAK	
Modern Explorations	

Mar. 14-20: I. A New World Below: Under the seas, The National Geographic Generation; II. Travel in the Industrial Age

Readings: Fernández-Armesto, Ch. 7; Roland and Corbin articles

Media discussion: *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, *Around the World in Eighty Days*

Mar. 21-27: I. Dawn of Flight: balloons, dirigibles, gliders, and planes; II. World at War; I. Race to the Poles: North and South;
II. World at War, cont.

Readings: Fernández-Armesto, Ch. 8-9; van Muffling article; Amundsen article

Media discussion: *Wings*, *High Road to China*, *Lawrence of Arabia*, *Seven Years in Tibet*

Mar. 28-Apr. 3: Other Modern “Journeys”: Quantum worlds, birth of the vacation, ideas of afterlife, “tripping out”

Readings: Fernández-Armesto, Ch. 9; Piantadosi, Intro & Chs.1-2; McLaughlin article, Amundsen article

Media discussion: *Lawrence of Arabia*, *Seven Years in Tibet*, *Altered States*, *Flatliners*, *The Elegant Universe*

Journeys Ahead

Apr. 4-12: The Final Frontier: Early journeys into space; International competition and the “Space Race”

Readings: Harari Chs. 20, Afterword; Piantadosi, Chs. 3-5; Koman article

Media discussion: *A Trip to the Moon*, *2001: A Space Odyssey*, *Interstellar*

EASTER BREAK

Apr. 19-24: Second Lives: Traveling in digital worlds; II. Post-modern Globalization; What’s Next?: The global race to get off the planet;

Readings: Piantadosi, Chs. 6-13; Stone article, Fong article

Media discussion: *The Matrix*, *Digital Nation*, *Plato’s Allegory of the Cave*

Apr. 25-May 1: The Long-term future of Human Exploration: What is possible and probable? Connecting past to future

Exam

May 2-3: Presentations

Presentations

Paper due by May 13

Computer Requirements

- You will need access to a computer (Windows or Mac) and adequate Internet service to complete this course. Although you can use other devices such as smartphones and tablets for some online coursework, please note that some tools, may not work on tablets or smartphones.

The minimum requirements needed to use Canvas can be found in this [Canvas guide](#).

COURSE POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

Student Expectations

You are expected to complete all readings, assignments, and activities on time. Participation is essential to your success in this class. You are expected to actively participate in discussions with your peers, and contribute to the group assignments. It is important to subscribe to the course discussion boards so that you receive notifications when new messages are posted. In order to get full credit for participation, you will have to complete all of your module assignments and quizzes on time.

Time Expectations

Our online classes are designed to meet the same academic standards as our place-based (face-to-face) courses. You can think of each module equal to the same level of participation, commitment, and academic rigor as a face-to-face class. Students should plan on spending approximately 10-12 hours per week on the work for each online module.

Communication Expectations

Communication with Peers

You will be expected to engage with your peers on a regular basis.

Communication with Professor

Please feel free to email me with your questions, concerns, and/or to schedule a time to meet. When sending emails please remember to follow the guidelines outlined below.

Netiquette Guidelines

To promote the highest degree of education possible, we ask each student to respect the opinions and thoughts of other students and be courteous in the way that you choose to express yourself. Students should be respectful and considerate of all opinions.

In order for us to have meaningful discussions, we must learn to genuinely try to understand what others are saying and be open-minded about others' opinions. If you want to persuade someone to see things differently, it is much more effective to do so in a polite, non-threatening way rather than to do so antagonistically. Everyone has insights to offer based on his/her experiences, and we can all learn from each other. Civility is essential.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Students with Disabilities

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, individuals with disabilities have the right to specific accommodations that do not fundamentally alter the nature of the course. Some accommodations might include note takers, books on tape, extended time on assignments, and interpreter services among others. Students are responsible for communicating their needs to the [Academic Resource Center](#), the office that oversees disability support services, (202-687-8354; arc@georgetown.edu; <https://academicsupport.georgetown.edu/disability/>) before the start of classes to allow time to review the documentation and make recommendations for appropriate accommodations. The University is not responsible for making special accommodations for students who have not declared their disabilities and have not requested an accommodation in a timely manner. Also, the University need not modify course or degree requirements considered to be an essential requirement of the program of instruction. For the most current and up-to-date policy information, please refer to the [Georgetown University Academic Resource Center website](#). Students are highly encouraged to discuss the documentation and accommodation process with an Academic Resource Center administrator.

Accessibility and Inclusion

One of the central tenets of Georgetown's educational mission is *cura personalis*, a Latin phrase meaning "care of the whole person." Georgetown is committed to showing care and concern for each student by creating an inclusive and accessible learning environment that follows universal design principles to meet the needs of its diverse student body.

I am committed to creating a learning environment for my students that supports a diversity of thoughts, perspectives and experiences, and honors your identities (including race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ability, etc.). If your name or pronoun needs to be corrected, please let me know early in the semester so that I can make the appropriate changes to my records.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students at Georgetown University are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic and personal integrity. Although most Georgetown students conduct themselves in accordance with these standards, occasionally, there are students who violate the code of conduct. Cheating harms the University community in many ways. For example, honest students are frustrated by the unfairness of cheating that goes undetected and students who cheat can skew the grading curve in a class, resulting in lower grades for students who worked hard and did their own work.

Academic dishonesty in any form is a serious offense, and students found in violation are subject to academic penalties that include, but are not limited to failure of the course, termination from the program, and revocation of degrees already conferred. All students are expected to fully adhere to the policies and procedures of [Georgetown's Honor System](#) and to take the Honor Code Pledge.

Honor Code Pledge

In pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life I commit myself to respect and to uphold the Georgetown University honor system; to live out a commitment to integrity in all my words and actions; to be honest in every academic endeavor; and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community as we live and work together; to live out the ideals of Georgetown University I commit myself to be a person for others in my daily life, respectful of difference and disagreement; To care for this venerable campus and all of those with whom I share it; and to fulfill in all ways the trust placed in me to carry on the Georgetown tradition.

Plagiarism

Stealing someone else's work is a terminal offense in the workplace, and it will wreck your career in academia, too. Students are expected to work with integrity and honesty in all their assignments. The Georgetown University Honor System defines plagiarism as "the act of passing off as one's own the ideas or writings of another." More guidance is available through the [Gervase Programs](#). If you have any doubts about plagiarism, paraphrasing, and the need to credit, check out [Plagiarism.org](#).

All submissions must be your original work. Any submission suspected of plagiarism will be immediately referred to the Honor Council for investigation and possible adjudication. All students are expected to follow Georgetown's honor code unconditionally. If you have not done so, please read the honor code material located online at the [Honor Council website](#).

SUPPORT SERVICES

Georgetown recognizes that COVID-19 has a significant impact on everyone in the Georgetown community. Georgetown offers a variety of support services for students that can be accessed online and has put together [this newsletter](#) which aims to provide you with information about well-being resources and virtual meetings that can connect you with mental health professionals on and off campus during this time. Below are some resources available to you:

- [Academic Resource Center](#)
202-687-8354 | arc@georgetown.edu
- [Counseling and Psychiatric Services](#)
202-687-6985
- [Institutional Diversity, Equity & Affirmative Action \(IDEAA\)](#)
(202) 687-4798

Sexual Misconduct

Georgetown University prohibits sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, and stalking. Discrimination based on sex, including sexual misconduct and discrimination based on pregnancy or parenting status, subverts the University's mission and threatens permanent damage to the educational experience, careers, and well-being of students, faculty, and staff. Please know that as a faculty member I am

committed to supporting survivors of sexual misconduct, including relationship violence and sexual assault.

Please also note that University policy also requires faculty to report any disclosures about sexual misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator, whose role is to coordinate the University's response to sexual misconduct. Georgetown has a number of fully confidential professional resources who can provide support and assistance to survivors of sexual assault and other forms of sexual misconduct. These resources include:

- Jen Schweer, MA, LPC, Associate Director of Health Education Services for Sexual Assault Response and Prevention (202) 687-0323 | jls242@georgetown.edu
- Erica Shirley, Trauma Specialist, Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS), (202) 687-6985 | els54@georgetown.edu

More information about campus resources and reporting sexual misconduct are available on [this](#) website.

Pregnancy and Parenting Accommodations

Georgetown University is committed to creating an accessible and inclusive environment for pregnant and parenting students. Students may request adjustments based on general pregnancy needs or accommodations based on a pregnancy-related complication. Specific adjustments will be handled on a case by case basis and will depend on medical needs and academic requirements. Students seeking a pregnancy adjustment or accommodation should follow the process laid out on the [Title IX website](#).

Georgetown Library

If you have a question for a librarian you can go to their [“Ask Us”](#) page where you will have the option to chat online, send an email, or schedule a Zoom appointment to discuss a research topic, develop a search strategy, or examine resources for projects and papers. Librarians offer an overview of and in-depth assistance with important resources for senior or master's theses, dissertations, papers and other types of research. This service is available to currently enrolled students who need assistance with Georgetown-assigned projects and papers. Please review the [Services & Resources Guide for Online Students](#) for additional information.

eResources

Students enrolled in courses have access to the University Library System's eResources, including 500+ research databases, 1.5+ million ebooks, and thousands of periodicals and other multimedia files (films, webinars, music, and images). You can access these resources through the [Library's Homepage](#) by using your NetID and password.

Learning Resources

Georgetown offers a host of [learning resources](#) to its students. Two that you might find particularly helpful in this course are the [Writing Center](#) and [Refworks](#).

- [The Writing Center](#) offers peer tutoring by trained graduate and undergraduate students who can assist you at any point in the writing process. They help at any stage of your writing process, from brainstorming to revision. Tutors can offer advice on thesis development, use of evidence, organization, flow, sentence structure, grammar, and more. The Writing Center will not proofread or edit papers; rather, they will help to improve your proofreading and editing skills to become a better writer. Appointments can be booked online through their website.
- [Refworks](#) is an online research management tool that aids in organizing, storing, and presenting citation sources for papers and projects.

Technical Support

All students have 24/7 access to Canvas technical support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including live chat and a support hotline at 855-338-2770. Use the 'Help' icon in the lower left of your Canvas window to view all available support and feedback options. If you're looking for help on a specific feature, check out the [Canvas Student Guide](#).