



The 2009-2010 Klopsteg seminar series in SCIENCE IN HUMAN CULTURE presents:
SPRING 2010: LATIN AMERICA SERIES

JORGE CANIZARES-ESGUERRA

"Fighting Demons while Crossing the Oceans: The Iberian Roots of British and Dutch Cosmography"

University of Texas-Austin

Monday, April 12, 2010

4:00 - 5:30 pm

Hagstrum Room

University Hall 201

Evanston Campus

reception to follow

ABSTRACT: The early colonial expansion to the Americas, Africa, and India assumed the oceans to be plagued with dangers, many deliberately created by Satan. The crossing of the oceans became thus an epic battle against Leviathan and his many minions: demons knowledgeable in the preternatural. Cosmographic knowledge was not immune to these ideas. On the contrary, cosmographers had a view of the world in which evil and angelic forces battled over control of the oceans and storms. Not surprisingly, the Spanish and the Portuguese developed many of these tropes in the sixteenth century. More surprising, however, is that both the British and the Dutch, allegedly at the cutting edge of the so-called Scientific Revolution, conceived of their imperial expansion in very similar terms in the seventeenth century. My paper seeks to show that Dutch and British cosmographic knowledge was steeped in earlier Iberian models.



BIO: Jorge Canizares-Esguerra is the Alice Drysdale Sheffield Professor of History at the University of Texas-Austin. He is the author of *How to Write the History of the New World: Histories, Epistemologies, and Identities in the Eighteenth-century Atlantic World* (Stanford University Press, 2001); *Puritan Conquistadors* (Stanford, 2006); and *Nature Empire and Nation* (Stanford 2006). He has coedited with Erik Seeman, *The Atlantic in Global History* (Prentice Hall, 2006).