# HIST412 - World's Fairs: Nation, Industry, Empire and Globalization

Elizabeth Della Zazzera

edella@sas.upenn.edu

Class: Monday 5:00p-8:00p

Office Hours: Monday 2:45p-4:45p, College Hall 308E

At the center of the Great Exhibition of 1851, held in London, was the Crystal Palace, a huge glass and steel structure lit by electricity. Inside this display of industrial might, countries from around the world set up booths to demonstrate their own technological and industrial achievements. This was the first World’s fair. World’s fairs continued to be held through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in cities like Paris, Philadelphia, Chicago, New York, and Montreal. This course will trace the history of World’s fairs – beginning with the Great Exhibition of 1851 and ending with the 1967 Expo in Montreal – in order to trace the histories of industry, imperialism, nationalism, and globalization, all of which were represented in the booths and structures of these international exhibitions. In displays, presentations, and through souvenirs, countries show-cased not only their industrial production, but also their imperial power. And the fairs, despite their internationalism, were strongly nationalist, especially in Philadelphia in 1876 and Montreal in 1967: both celebrations of their host country’s centennial. The course will ask questions about what countries were trying to accomplish through their displays at these fairs, and what host cities and countries wanted to gain by hosting these events. By looking at these fairs in detail, we can follow shifts in conceptions of nations and of the world, and ask questions about the role pomp and display play in national and international power. All course assignments will build toward the production of a final research project.

**Grading:**

Class Participation 30%

Primary Source Analysis 10%

Annotated Bibliography 10%

Introduction/Outline 10%

Presentation 10%

Final Paper 30%

**Course policies:** Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings. They are expected to be respectful and courteous in class, and particularly in discussions. Seminars thrive on student participation and it is everyone’s responsibility to collectively foster a positive learning environment where all students feel respected and encouraged to participate. Students are expected to complete work on time, and late assignments will be penalized one third of a letter grade per day (so a B becomes a B-, etc.)

In compliance with Penn policy and equal access laws, I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that you may require as a student with a disability. Requests for academic accommodations need to be made during the first two weeks of the semester, except under unusual circumstances, to arrange reasonable accommodations. Students must register with Student Disabilities Services (SDS) for disability verification and for determination of reasonable academic accommodations.

**Academic Integrity:** Academic honesty is fundamental to our community and to academic work and research. The Pennbook contains our Code of Academic Integrity, and students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with that Code. A violation of that Code in this course will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for adjudication.

**Books** available for purchase at Penn Book Center, all other readings on Canvas or at links provided.

Bruno Giberti, *Designing the Centennial*, University Press of Kentucky, 2008.

# Daniel Stephen, *Empire of Progress: West Africans Indians, and Britons at the British Empire Exhibition 1924-25*.

Cheryl Ganz, *The 1933 Chicago World's Fair: Century of Progress*

Robert W. Rydell, *All The World’s a Fair*

Alexander C.T. Geppert, *Fleeting Cities: Imperial Expositions in Fin-de-Siècle Europe*

Tracey Jean Boisseau, Abigail M. Markwyn, *Gendering the Fair: Histories of Women and Gender at World's Fairs*

**Course Schedule**

**January 11– Introduction**

Alexander C.T. Geppert, *Fleeting Cities: Imperial Expositions in Fin-de-Siècle Europe*, Introduction

**January 16 – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – NO CLASS**

**January 23 – The Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, 1851**

# Paul Young, *Globalization and the Great Exhibition*, selections

# J. Auberbach, *The Great Exhibition of 1851: A Nation on Display*, selections

# Francesca Vanke “Degrees of Otherness: The Ottoman Empire and China at the Great Exhibition of 1851,” in *Britain, the Empire, and the World at the Great Exhibition*, ed. J. Auerbach and Peter H. Hoffenberg

# Official catalogue of the Great exhibition of the works of industry of all nations, 1851

**January 30 – 1876 Philadelphia and the American Centennial**

Bruno Giberti, *Designing the Centennial*

Robert W. Rydell, *All the World’s a Fair*, chapter 1

Thompson Westcott, *Centennial portfolio: a souvenir of the international exhibition at Philadelphia: comprising lithographic views of fifty of its principal buildings, with letter-press description*

International Exhibition of 1876: message from the President of the United States

**February 6 – Library Visit**

**February 12 – Expositions Universelles in 1889 and 1900**

PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS DUE

Deborah Silverman, *Art Nouveau in Fin de Siècle France*, introduction and conclusion

Alexander C.T. Geppert, *Fleeting Cities: Imperial Expositions in Fin-de-Siècle Europe*, chapter 2

William Thompson “’The Symbol of Paris:’ Writing the Eiffel Tower” *The French Review* 73, no. 6 (May 2000): 1130-1140.

John W. Stamper “The Galerie des Machines of the 1889 Paris World’s Fair,” *Technology and Culture* 30, no. 2 (April 1989): 330-353.

Shawn Michelle Smith “’Looking at One’s Self through the Eyes of Others’: W. E. B. Du Bois’s Photographs for the 1900 Paris Exposition,” *African American Review* 34, no. 4 (Winter 2000) pp. 581-599.

**February 20 – World Columbian Exposition of 1893**

John E. Findling, *Chicago’s Great World’s Fairs*, selections

Robert W. Rydell, *All the World’s a Fair*, chapter 2

Tracey Jean Boisseau, Abigail M. Markwyn, *Gendering the Fair: Histories of Women and Gender at World's Fairs*, chapters 3 and 5

Karol Ann Marling “Writing History with Artifacts: Columbus at the 1893 Chicago Fair” *The Public Historian* 14, no. 4 (Autumn 1992): 13-30.

Virtual tour: <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~MA96/WCE/introduction.html>

**February 27 – Individual meetings to discuss research projects**

**March 6 – Spring Break – NO CLASS**

**March 12 – European Fairs in the Fin de Siècle: Great Industrial Exposition of Berlin 1896 and Franco-British Exhibition (London )1908**

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHIES DUE

Alexander C.T. Geppert, *Fleeting Cities: Imperial Expositions in Fin-de-Siècle Europe*, chapters 1 and 3

Franco-British Exhibition Illustrated Review (read Introduction, and browse rest of document) <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/100184151>

Franco-British Exhibition Official Souvenir https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/100241176

**March 20** **– Pan-American and Panama-Pacific Expositions, Buffalo 1901 and San Francisco 1915**

Robert W. Rydell, *All the World’s a Fair*, chapters 5 and 8

Tracey Jean Boisseau, Abigail M. Markwyn, *Gendering the Fair: Histories of Women and Gender at World's Fairs*, chapters 4 and 9

Keith L. Eggener “Maybeck’s Melancholy: Architecture, Empathy, Empire, and Mental Illness at the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 29, no. 4 (Winter 1994) pp. 211-226.

Howard Payson, *The Boy-Scouts at the Panama-Pacific Exposition*, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/009260174

**March 27 –British Empire Exhibition 1924**

INTRODUCTIONS/OUTLINES DUE

# Daniel Stephen, *Empire of Progress: West Africans Indians, and Britons at the British Empire Exhibition 1924-25*, selections

Tracey Jean Boisseau, Abigail M. Markwyn, *Gendering the Fair: Histories of Women and Gender at World's Fairs*, chapter 6

Alexander C.T. Geppert, Fleeting Cities: Imperial Expositions in Fin-de-Siècle Europe, chapter 4

**April 3 – Chicago 1933-1934, A Century of Progress International Exposition**

John E. Findling, *Chicago’s Great World’s Fairs*, selections

Cheryl Ganz, *The 1933 Chicago World's Fair: Century of Progress*, selections

Charles A. Beard, ed. *A Century of Progress* (1932)

Official Guide Book: https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uiuo.ark:/13960/t02z1gn74;view=1up;seq=11

Virtual tour: <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~ma99/kidd/century/begin.html>

Newberry Online exhibit: http://dcc.newberry.org/collections/picturing-a-century-of-progress-the-1933-34-chicago-world's-fair

**In class:** A Century of Progress Exposition film

**April 10 – New York 1939-1940, "Building the World of Tomorrow"**

Hart, Jeffrey. "Yesterday's America of Tomorrow." *Commentary* 80 (1985): 62-65.

Becker, Ron. "Hear - and -See Radio: In the World of Tomorrow: RCA and the Presentation of Television at the World's Fair, 1939-40." *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 21:4 (2001): 361-378.

Cogdell, Christina. "The Futurama Recontextualized: Norman Bel Geddes's Eugenic World of Tomorrow." *American Quarterly* 52: 2 (2000): 193-245.

Gelvin, James L. "Zionism and the Representation of Jewish Palestine at the New York World's Fair, 1939-40." *International History Review* 22 :1 (2000): 37-64.

Cull, Nicholas J. "Overture to an Alliance: British Propaganda at the New York World's Fair, 1939-40." *Journal of British Studies* 36: 3 (1997): 325-54.

Images: http://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/wooda/39fair.html

 http://newdeal.feri.org/library/d\_z\_an.htm

Virtual Tour: http://xroads.virginia.edu/~1930s/DISPLAY/39wf/frame.htm

**April 17 – “Man and His World”: Montreal Expo ’67**

Erin Hurley, “National Construction: Quebec's Modernity at Expo 67,” in *National Performance:* [*representing Quebec from Expo 67 to Céline Dion*](http://franklin.library.upenn.edu/record.html?q=expo%2067%20nationalism%20quebec&meta=t&id=FRANKLIN_4950121&) **

Expo ’67 raw footage: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fzb-o4Q0\_KY

In class: Film – *Expo 67: Back to the Future*

**April 24 - Presentations**