

Experience Day

English language and culture

27 March 2020



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

Lecturer: Dr. Joke Kardux (PhD Cornell University) teaches American Studies at Leiden University. She is a.o. co-author of *Newcomers in an Old City: The American Pilgrims in Leiden*, of which a new edition is coming out in 2020. She is co-organizing an international conference, “Four Nations Commemoration, 1620-2020: The Pilgrims and the Politics of Memory,” which will be held at Leiden University (August 26-28, 2020).

Lecture:

Title: Pilgrims to the Promised Land: The Puritan Beginnings of American Literature

Abstract: In 2020 it is exactly 400 years ago that a group of 100 English men, women, and children sailed on the Mayflower to America, where they founded Plymouth Colony, the second British colony in North America (after Jamestown, Virginia). 50 of these so-called Pilgrims aboard the Mayflower were English refugees who had settled in Leiden in 1609 and lived here for eleven years. They were radical Puritans, who were persecuted in England for their “nonconformist” religious views. The Pilgrims formed the vanguard of a much larger exodus of English Puritans, who in 1630 founded the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Who were these Pilgrims and Puritans, how was their view of America informed by their religious beliefs and how did they help shape American culture and literature for centuries to come?

Tutorial:

Title: America’s Leiden Roots: A walk to Pilgrim sites in historic Leiden

Abstract: Instead of a regular seminar, we’ll go on a walk in historic Leiden, tracing the Pilgrims’ footsteps, visiting, for example, the site of the house of their beloved pastor John Robinson, opposite the Pieterskerk. We’ll learn what kind of city Leiden was in the early 16th century, why the Pilgrims were welcome, where they lived and found employment, their involvement in religious disputes between Leiden professors, and why after eleven years they decided to leave for America (though many of them stayed and eventually merged with the Leiden population).

Reading assignments:

- William Bradford (Leiden Pilgrim and second governor of Plymouth Colony), 2 chapters from *Of Plymouth Plantation*: [Chapter IV](#) (about reasons of Pilgrims’ departure from Leiden) and [Chapter IX](#) (about the Mayflower voyage and their arrival in New England)
- Excerpt from John Winthrop’s lay sermon aboard the ship that led the exodus of English Puritans to America, starting in 1630: [“A City upon a Hill.”](#) Winthrop became the first governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony they founded
- Anne Bradstreet, [“Verses Upon the Burning of Our House”](#)

Recommended: Chapter III in Bradford’s chronicle is about their stay in Leiden, focusing on their pastor John Robinson and also discussing his involvement in religious disputes at Leiden University. Since I have not found a modern English version of this chapter online, you may listen to [this audio](#) of chapter 3.