

1 Session at RSA (Philadelphia, 11–13 Mar 27)

Philadelphia, PA, Mar 11–13, 2027

Deadline: Aug 3, 2026

Allison Caplan

Roundtable: When the Colonial is Creaturely.

Multispecies histories. Extractivism. Histories of shifting epistemologies, and of land, water, reproduction. Black and Indigenous–settler relations. Scholarship on animals has increasingly entered debates on all of these topics. Yet what it has meant—or might still mean—to orient studies of early modern colonialism to animals remains very much an open question. It is this openness that prompts our roundtable: how can and should scholarship on and about animals reshape current thinking about colonialism in early modern worlds?

Moving beyond additive narratives, in which colonial history is expanded to include animals beyond humans, this roundtable focuses on the interpretive entanglements and implications of animal studies for early modern and colonial studies. What assumptions become newly visible—or less tenable—when animals are taken seriously in histories of colonialism? How might work with animals recast scholars' thinking about evidence, temporality, or gender and sexuality? Or, taking a cue from Kelsey Dayle John, what questions about Indigeneity and settler colonialism become visible under the rubric of "animal colonialism" (2019)?

Bringing together scholars working across the early modern world, this roundtable asks each participant to begin with a historiographic problem, conceptual conundrum, or epistemological challenge raised by early modern colonialism and to consider how—and why—animal studies might intervene.

Please send to Allison Caplan (allison.caplan@yale.edu) and Dana Leibsohn (dleibsoh@smith.edu), by 3 August, a short paragraph on your historiographic problem, conceptual conundrum, or epistemological challenge. Please also include a 2-page CV and contact info.

Reference:

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