

**Tentative Title of Dissertation:**

Odor and Discipline in the Americas

**Dissertation Abstract:**

Odor and Discipline in the Americas assesses the sense of smell as a contested discursive battleground upon which the apparatuses of European states were used to codify European and Atlantic subalterns as “other” during the Enlightenment. To analyze sensory understandings of the past historians study the position of different sensations on culturally educated sensory hierarchies. For Europeans, the five sense hierarchy has described sensation since the time of Aristotle. Depending on the historical era, different sensations on the five sense order have been judged as more significant than other sensory perceptions. During the early modern era, a focus placed on texts within Protestant religious practice, and an increased Enlightenment emphasis on visual science, influenced European sensory hierarchies to heighten the importance of vision and hearing to the detriment of the putatively lower sense of smelling. Odor was a threat to these early modern scholars because it was mobile and linguistically unclassifiable when compared to the visual objectivity that most European writers desired. English, French, and Iberian officials reacted to this linguistic mobility through applying scented metaphors to socially constructed scientific scholarship while rhetorically fashioning racial others. However, within the Atlantic littoral, odor was used as a counterpoint to these English, French, and Iberian attempts to assert state and economic power through the sense of smell. The nearness to indigenous sensory aesthetics, and the subaltern’s use of odor within religious rituals, kept specific colonists, Africans, and Native Americans vitally in tune with their noses.