



**Join us Thursday, April 25th
for our Atlantic History Talk with
José Monge**

**Thursday, April 25th, 2024
12:00 - 1:30 pm
6275 Bunche Hall and on Zoom (link to follow)**

A Wide Variety of Vessels: On the technical and social aspects of American Whaling, 18th-19th century

This presentation explores American whaling vessels as spaces of labor since 1750. It focuses on whaling ships, but seeks to include less explored types and scales of vessels: barrels, pots, and try-works, among others. Each vessel, I argue, was equally important for the trade. They revolutionized whaling, virtually causing its industrialization and allowing ships to travel further and longer than ever before.

Vessels were built, maintained, and/or operated by crews of sailors, encompassing a wide range of complexities, and demanding specific skills. This talk shows how vessels as technical solutions to problems of resource scarcity and transportation efficiency, cannot be understood without labor.

It examines whaling as an interplay of vessels that both contain and repel -wooden ships transporting bodies over water, brick try-works isolating ships from fire, and wooden barrels containing oil on the lower decks- revealing material, social, economic, and historical specificities.

José Monge is a PhD candidate in the Department of Architecture and Urban Design. His dissertation, titled *Maritime Labor, Candles, and the Architecture of the Enlightenment (1750-1872)*, focuses on the role that whale-originated illuminants, specifically spermaceti candles and oil, played in the American Enlightenment as an intellectual project and the U.S. as a country. By unravelling the tension between binaries such as intellectual and manual labor—the consumers that bought these commodities and the producers that were not able to afford them—the project understands architecture as a history of activities that moved from sea to land and land to sea, challenging assumptions about the static “nature” of architecture.

The Atlantic History Colloquium generates innovative scholarship on the relations linking Africa, Europe and the Americas by investigating the expansion of markets during the slave trade; the production of literary texts and forms of historical memory; the politics of religious dissent and conversion; the growth of colonial science and cartography; Native American ethnogenesis; the rise of abolitionist and Pan-African ideologies; and the dynamics of race, gender and creolization throughout the Atlantic world.

Please visit [UCLA Atlantic History](#) for more information and a complete schedule of events in 2023.