

American Indian Studies/Chicano/a Studies/History 516:
Indians and the Spanish Borderlands

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Course Description:

Most histories of the United States begin with Englishmen along the Atlantic. Within these narratives, American history starts with English settlement and expands through eastern North America in an inevitable and often glorious process. While two generations of historians have reworked this traditional storyline to include the experiences of many American Indians, women, African Americans, workers, and ethnic and religious minorities, histories of early America remain overwhelmingly wedded to the Atlantic and to British North America—i.e. England’s colonies and territories in North America before the American Revolution—with the fate of the continent and its many indigenous and creole populations set in stone.

This course seeks a different origins and narrative. It centers on the experiences of Indian peoples during centuries of relations with North America’s first imperial power, Spain. With colonies from Florida to San Francisco, Spanish colonialism shaped the continent centuries before many of these regions became a part of the United States; (indeed, large portions of what is now the western United States remained under Spanish and Mexican rule longer than they have been under American control). Amidst such reverberations, Native peoples remade themselves and the worlds around them in creative and often surprising ways. Many Native groups migrated into new lands, adopted new technologies and customs, and often developed generations of economic and social relations with Spanish settlers and officials. Other Native populations provided the backbone for Spanish colonial societies with their labor, lands, and bodies while everywhere peoples, goods, and customs intermixed.

This course explores the history and legacies of such mixtures. Long consigned to the margins of historical inquiry, North America’s Spanish “borderlands” have become the focal points for recent debates not only about the parameters of early American history but also increasingly about the meanings of America. Many groups, often for divergent reasons, now call upon the histories of these regions to justify, validate, or confirm their current goals. This course considers the history of these “borderlands” from the vantage point of the continent’s indigenous populations.

Course Organization:

The course is organized around three interrelated goals. First, students will develop historical understandings of the Spanish Borderlands through a variety of readings and assignments. Focusing largely on the works of a new generation of borderlands historians, the course will chart the experiences of Indian peoples within Spanish colonial societies as well as adjoining imperial hinterlands. Readings of scholarly

as well as “primary source” materials will steer the course through centuries of Indian-Spanish relations.

Secondly, students will engage the legacies of the Spanish Borderlands through individual research projects. Topics will be determined in consultation with the instructor and may include the histories of particular Spanish settlements, colonies, campaigns, or individuals; select Indian societies within or outside of Spanish rule; or the historical and/or contemporary representations, e.g. literary, artistic, or musical, of the Spanish Borderlands. Students will craft their own interpretive works relating to the overall course themes. Revising interpretations of the past is central to the study of history, and students will partake in such revisions through their own research and analysis.

Lastly, students will engage literary representations and narratives of these regions. For over a century, American authors from different communities have imagined the history of the early West in divergent and often contradictory ways. Myths, as literary theorists now maintain, turn history into nature, and the Spanish colonial past has held particular mythological resonance for American Indian, Chicano/a, and Euro-American authors since the time of American conquest. Students will interrogate the power and pull of such literary imaginings through classroom discussion and analytical responses.

Course Readings:

Seven texts are required for this course. We will read some in their entirety and others selectively as well as minor articles and documents to be purchased at the Humanities Copy Center. The required texts are also on reserve at College Library.

Books: (Available at Underground Textbook Exchange)

- Rudolfo Anaya, *Albuquerque*
- Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca, *The Narrative of Cabeza de Vaca*
- Ted Warner, ed. *The Dominguez-Escalante Journal: Their Expedition Through Colorado, Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico*
- David Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*
- David Weber, *The Mexican Frontier, 1821-1846: The American Southwest Under Mexico*
- Ramon Gutierrez and Richard Orsi, eds. *Contested Eden: California Before the Gold Rush*
- Helen Hunt Jackson, *Ramona*

Course Requirements:

Attendance and Participation:

Since the entire class is engaged in related, common projects and dependent upon each other’s insights and feedback, active readings and discussion of class materials are essential. Regular attendance and consistent participation are mandatory and constitute **20%** of the final grade.

Short Papers:

Two (2-3 page) responses based on Week 2 and Week 13’s readings will comprise **20%** of the final grade. Paper #1 investigates Rudolfo Anaya’s vision of New Mexican and American history in *Albuquerque* while Paper #2 examines Helen Hunt

Jackson's *Ramona*. Paper guidelines, potential topics, and writing tips will be discussed in greater length. Papers are due in class on September 20th and December 1st.

Midterm Exam:

A combined classroom and take-home midterm will also comprise **20%** of the class grade. The in-class portion will be a series of ID's based on the first half of the course's readings and classroom discussion and lectures. Each ID will be graded for its accurate identification of the subject and analysis of its significance. There will be a selection of terms, individuals, concepts, etc. to choose from. The take-home portion will be an essay question drawn from a selection of choices. Each essay should be typed, double-spaced, and organized along the writing guidelines discussed for Paper #1 and should be no more than 4 pages.

Research Paper:

A final research paper and brief presentation constitute the remaining course grade (**40%**). The research paper should be 14-16 pages long, organized around one of the general research areas below, supported with secondary and primary source materials, and referenced according to standard historical notation. A fifteen-minute presentation of the research topic as well as a general outline, thesis paragraph, and a preliminary bibliography of primary and secondary sources will be scheduled during the second half of the course. Students must consult with the instructor prior to the selection of their topics and can select from one of the general research areas below: (Subject areas will become increasingly familiar following introductory weeks of reading and are meant to guide students to more specialized topics. Students can feel free to develop research topics of their own. Additionally, given the scope of these assignments, students will overwhelmingly rely upon existing published and translated Spanish colonial documents, if needed, when formulating these assignments.)

a) The history of a local Spanish settlement, colony, expedition/campaign, individual, or family. Tracing the history of an individual Spanish "community," select specialized research topics/themes of analysis, find relevant documentary records to support your analysis, and relate your findings to existing scholarly debates and secondary literature as well as the themes of the class, esp. the relationships between Native groups and Spanish colonial society. Potential paper topics might include: Architecture of the northern Rio Grande, *Tejano* colonial attitudes about miscegenation, selected Spanish missions in California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, or Florida, Spanish military campaigns, the careers of particular colonial administrators or governors, etc.

b) Native groups within and/or outside of Spanish colonial society. Focusing on particular Indian group(s), select themes of historical analysis and research, identify relevant documentary records to support your research, and relate your findings to existing secondary literature. Given the difficulty in accessing Native communities outside of colonial control, questions of historical methodology should also be considered, i.e. what benefits and/or perils do certain documentary materials offer when used to access Native history. Possible topics might include: the economy of Apache

raiding in New Mexico, Arizona, and northern Mexico, Pueblo mobilization during the Pueblo Revolt, Indian slavery in the Southwest, *Genizaro* and “mixed blooded” communities, Indian military relations, missionization and Native religious change, the impacts of colonialism on gender roles in Native societies, etc.

c) Representing the Borderlands. Using specific imagery and narratives—intellectual, artistic, literary, musical, cinematic, photographic—of the Spanish Borderlands, assess the representations of the Spanish Borderlands within particular creative genre(s) or within the oeuvre of selected artists. Identify specialized themes of analysis, relate them to the works of other artists, intellectuals, etc., and compare and contrast them with the findings of historians and possibly selected primary sources. Topics should address prominent course themes, paying particular attention to the use of Indian imagery and representations. Potential topics might include: 19th century landscape art of the Southwest, tropes of masculinity with the works of Rudolfo Anaya, Pueblo Indian literary or poetic innovations, Southwestern mural projects and the Chicano Movement, Ansel Adams’ Southwestern photography, the rise of borderlands literary theory, etc.

Course Schedule:

PART I: SPAIN AND THE EARLY WEST

Week 1

September 6 Course Introduction
 September 8 Broadening American History: the Rise of the Borderlands

Weekly Readings: Weber, *Spanish Frontier*, 1-30; Anaya, *Albuquerque*, Chaps. 1-4

Week 2

September 13 The Columbian Exchange and the formation of Spain’s North American Empire
 September 15 The Conquest of New Mexico

Weekly Readings: Weber, 30-91, 335-360; Anaya, Chaps. 5-18; *NYT* article

Week 3

September 20 Spain, Florida, and the Making of the Atlantic World
 (short paper #1 due in class)
 September 22 The Curious Career of Cabeza de Vaca

Weekly Readings: Anaya, Chaps. 19-23; de Vaca, 1-19, 44-178

Week 4

September 27 The Pueblo Revolt and After
 September 29 Disease, War, and Alliances: The Rise of the Equestrian

Weekly Readings: Weber, 122-146, 165-171, 195-235; Blackhawk, 1-43

Week 5

October 4 Equestrianism Cont'd: New Mexico, 1720-1776
 October 6 The Bourbon Reforms and Spanish Colonial Expansion

Weekly Readings: Weber, 236-270; *Journal of Dominguez and Escalante*, Part I

Week 6

October 11 Discussion of Dominguez and Escalante
 October 13 "Spanish California" Before 1769: Myth vs. Reality

Weekly Readings: *Dominguez and Escalante*, Part II; *Contested Eden*, 1-77

Week 7

October 18 Spanish-Indian Relations in California, Cont'd: Review Session
 October 20 **Midterm Exam**

Weekly Readings: *Contested Eden*, 111-146

**PART II:
 MEXICAN-INDIAN RELATIONS AND THE U.S. CONQUEST**

Week 8

October 25 The Crisis of Mexican Independence: California
 October 27 The Crisis of Mexican Independence: New Mexico and Texas

Weekly Readings: Weber, *Mexican Frontier*, 1-82; *Contested Eden*, 173-229

Week 9

November 1 Equestrians and Republicans: Indians in Northern Mexico
 November 3 The Growing Tide of American Commerce
(Selection of Research Topics, Bibliography, and Thesis Paragraph Due)

Weekly Readings: Weber, *Mexican Frontier*, 83-157; *Contested Eden*, 299-330

Week 10

November 8 U.S.-Mexican Conflict and War
 November 10 Indians in the Aftermath of American Occupation

Weekly Readings: *Mexican Frontier*, 158-178, 242-285; *Contested Eden*, 331-355

Week 11

November 15 Group Discussion of Research Topics, I
 November 17 Group Discussion of Research Topics, II

Week 12

November 22 Individual Consultations
 November 24 Thanksgiving (NO CLASS)

Weekly Readings: *Ramona*, Chaps. 1-9

Week 13

November 29 *Ramona* and the Romance of Spanish Colonialism
 December 1 Gender and the Politics of National Identity: *Ramona* and the racial borders within and between nations
(short paper #2 due in class)

Weekly Readings: *Ramona*, 9-26; *Contested Eden*, 230-259

Week 14

December 6 Individual Presentations, Group 1
 December 8 Individual Presentations, Group 2

Week 15

December 13 Individual Presentations, Group 3
 December 15 Individual Presentations, Group 4

Papers Due Monday, December 19th by 4pm