

American Indian Studies/CLS/History 516:  
**Indians and the Spanish Borderlands**

Professor Ned Blackhawk

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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 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 imaginings through classroom discussion and analytical responses.

### **Course Readings:**

Six texts are required for this course. We will read some in their entirety and others selectively as well as articles/chapters 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*
- Colin G. Calloway, *One Vast Winter Count: The Native American West before Lewis and Clark*
- Ted Warner, ed. *The Dominguez-Escalante Journal: Their Expedition Through Colorado, Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico*
- David Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*
- 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 (3-page) response papers will comprise **25%** 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.

Midterm Exam:

A midterm will also comprise **25%** of the class grade. The exam will consist of ID's based on class readings and classroom lectures. Each ID will be graded for its accurate identification of the subject and analysis of its significance, and a review list of potential ID's will be handed out in class. There will also be an essay question drawn from a list of previously introduced questions. There will be no final exam.

Research Paper or Literature Review:

A final research paper and brief presentation constitute the remaining course grade (**30%**). The research/review paper should be 12-14 pages long, organized around one of the general areas below, supported with secondary and/or primary source materials, and referenced according to standard historical notation. A fifteen-minute presentation of the research topic as well as a general outline and thesis paragraph 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 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 topics of their own.

a) The history of a local Spanish settlement, colony, expedition/campaign, individual, or family. Tracing the history of an individual Spanish "community," select specialized topics/themes of analysis, find relevant published works and/or 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, etc.

b) Native groups within and/or outside of Spanish colonial society. Focusing on particular Indian group(s), select themes of historical analysis, identify relevant published work/documentary records to support your interests, and relate your findings to existing scholarly debates. 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 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, the impact of colonialism on Indian gender roles, 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. Topics should address prominent course

themes, paying particular attention to the use of Indian imagery and representations. Potential topics might include: 19<sup>th</sup>-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:**

**Week 1**

September 5 Course Introduction  
September 7 Broadening American History: the Rise of the Borderlands

Weekly Readings: Weber, 335-360; Calloway, xiii-21; Anaya, Chapters 1-4

**Week 2**

September 12 Conceptualizing Pre-Columbian Native North America  
September 14 The Columbian Exchange and the formation of Spain's North American Empire

Weekly Readings: Weber, 1-29; Calloway, 25-115, Anaya, Chaps. 5-18

**Week 3**

September 19 The Conquest of New Mexico  
September 21 Spain, Florida, and the Making of the Atlantic World  
**(Paper #1 due in class)**

Weekly Readings: Anaya, Chaps. 19-23; Weber, 30-91; Calloway, 154-163

**Week 4**

September 26 The Pueblo Revolt and After  
September 28 Disease, War, and Alliances: The Rise of the Equestrian

Weekly Readings: Weber, 122-146, 165-171, 195-235; Calloway, 165-211

**Week 5**

October 3 Equestrianism Cont'd: New Mexico, 1720-1776  
October 5 Converging Spheres of Imperial Influences

Weekly Readings: Weber, 236-270; Calloway, 213-312

**Week 6**

October 10 Dominguez and Escalante in an Expanding Spanish Empire  
(Individual group work/presentations from *D-E Journal*)  
October 12 ***Video Presentation: Surviving Columbus***

Weekly Readings: *Dominguez and Escalante Journal*; Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land*, Chap. 3

**Week 7**

October 17 "Spanish California" Before 1769: Myth vs. Reality  
 October 19 Spanish-Indian Relations in California to 1821

Weekly Readings: *Contested Eden*, 1-77, 111-146

**Week 8**

October 24 The Crisis of U.S. Expansion, 1783-1821  
 October 26 The Crisis of Mexican Independence, 1821-1846

Weekly Readings: Weber, 271-301; Calloway, 367-426; Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land*, Chap. 4

**Week 9**

October 31 U.S.-Mexican War and Its Aftermath: California  
 (Individual group work/presentations from *Contested Eden*)  
 November 2 U.S.-Mexican War and Its Aftermath: New Mexico/Colorado

Weekly Readings: *Contested Eden*, 1 out of Chaps. 8-12; Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land*, Chap. 6; Calloway, 427-434

**Week 10**

November 7 Review Session: Delivery of IDs and Exam Questions  
 November 9 **Midterm Exam**

**Week 11**

November 14 Individual Consultations **no classroom meetings this week**  
 November 15 Individual Consultations **individual research**  
 November 16 Individual Consultations **individual research**

**Week 12**

November 21 Group Research Discussion/Presentation  
 November 23 Thanksgiving (NO CLASS)

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

**Week 13**

November 28 *Ramona* and the Romance of Spanish Colonialism  
 (**Paper #2 due in class**)  
 November 30 Individual Research and Writing **No Classroom Meeting**

Weekly Readings: *Ramona*, Chaps. 9-26

**Week 14**

December 5 Individual Presentations, Group 1

December 7                    Individual Presentations, Group 2

**Week 15**

December 12                Individual Presentations, Group 3

December 14                Individual Presentations, Group 4

**Papers Due Wednesday, December 20<sup>th</sup> by 4pm**