

American Studies 395: California Cultures

Spring 2006, Wednesday 4-7 PM

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Office Hours: Wednesday, 3-4 PM and by appointment**

In books written about California's history and culture, California is often described as a land of agricultural abundance, utopian dreams, and boundless opportunity. California represents the "last frontier" of the United States of America, a place where European-American dreams of industrial efficiency and rational social planning could be most fully and purely realized. California is a place of hope, of optimism, of sunshine.

For some writers, however, the history of California is rife with exploitation, racism, and broken dreams; a place of shadows rather than sunshine. It is a land of elite robber barons exploiting both land and workers, a land of reactionary political forces and xenophobic, intolerant, hostile attitudes towards "outsiders" and those who don't "belong." It is a place of violent contestations over power.

The questions arise: What is the meaning of "California?" What is a "Californian?"

This course examines the complex cultural interactions of people that have inhabited California over the last several hundred years, especially during the twentieth century. It uses historical sources to reconstruct struggles over power in California, struggles which persist into the present. Of particular importance in understanding California's cultural diversity is the unique racial and ethnic character of the state. Compared to the rest of the United States, California has been less invested in a "black-white binary" and more invested in constructions of race as a multiplicitous continuum. No fewer than five major ethnic groups have struggled for power throughout California's history: Native Californians, Californians of Spanish, Mexican, or Latin American descent, Asian-Americans, white Europeans, and African-Americans.

Race and ethnicity are not the only windows to understanding California's cultural diversity, however. This course will also examine the history of class identity and union politics in California. It will examine the plight of women, the meaning of gender, and the rise of sexual subcultures in California. It will also consider the cultural meaning of religion, another important source of identity, solidarity, and conflict in California's history.

Each week, our class will explore a specific topic describing cultural struggles for power in California. Most weeks are centered on particular group experiences: Native Americans at the Spanish missions, African-American migrants after World War II, or prostitutes in gold rush California, to name a few examples. Each week we will examine

the interaction of this primary group to other cultural groups. Although the reading materials and lectures are historical in nature, class discussions will allow us to compare this historical data with contemporary events. Throughout the weeks, a variety of social scientific approaches to cultural diversity will be explored and employed to analyze the meaning of California and its peoples.

Required Books:

Sucheng Chan and Spencer Olin, eds., Major Problems in California History
 Matt Garcia, A World of Its Own: Race, Labor, and Citrus in the Making of Greater Los Angeles
 Albert L. Hurtado, Intimate Frontiers: Sex, Gender, and Culture in Old California
 Jade Snow Wong, Fifth Chinese Daughter

These books are available at the Titan bookstore. Used and new copies should also be widely available on internet sites such as Amazon.com, half.com, and barnesandnoble.com.

Course Requirements:

Discussion: Each class period will consist mostly of lecture material, but there will be many opportunities for discussion throughout the semester. These discussions will allow you to analyze readings and lectures in greater detail, to offer opinions and experiences relating to the materials under consideration, and to practice the courteous free exchange of ideas in a democratic society. It will also allow us to collectively analyze the complex relationships between the past and the present. *Please complete the week's readings before class meets.*

Papers: You will write one paper during this semester, between four and six pages in length. It is due **April 19**. In this paper, you will be expected to connect primary source documents contained in Major Problems in California History with a contemporary issue in California society. Specific instructions and guidelines will be provided at least one month prior to the paper's due date.

This paper fulfills the general education program's writing requirement. According to university policy, "*writing assignments in General Education courses should involve the organization and expression of complex data or ideas and careful and timely evaluations of writing so that deficiencies are identified and suggestions for improvement and/or for means of remediation are offered. Assessments of the student's writing competence shall be used in determining the final course grade.*"

Exams: You will complete an in-class midterm and final exam. The midterm will be held on **March 15** and the final on **May 24**. On these tests you will be expected to write essays that synthesize the lectures and the readings in a sophisticated analytical manner. A list of sample questions will be distributed in class one week prior to the exam as a study guide.

Attendance: Attendance will be recorded for each class meeting. It is *your responsibility* to get notes or assignments for any missed class sessions. It is extremely difficult to get a good grade in the class without consistent lecture attendance.

Academic Dishonesty: Plagiarism or any other form of cheating will not be tolerated. Offenders will receive an F in the course. Plagiarism consists of knowingly copying another person's work without giving them credit.

Late papers: Late papers and assignments are graded down a third of a grade for each day late.

Cell phones and pagers: Please turn off cell phones and pagers before entering class.

Grading:

Your final grade will be based upon the following:

Midterm Exam:	25%	(<i>March 15</i>)
4-6 page paper:	30%	(<i>Due April 19</i>)
Final Exam (in-class essay)	35%	(<i>May 24</i>)
Attendance and discussion	10%	

Grading will be done on a +/- basis.

Assessment and Relationship to General Education Goals:

The paper and examinations will assess your ability to understand, critique, and analyze primary and secondary sources; to synthesize complex ideas from a variety of sources; and to organize brief and extended essays which are grounded in evidence and also express your individual viewpoint. These assignments, as well as the discussions, are designed to enhance your communication skills by providing the opportunity to integrate and analyze class materials and create informed and thoughtful arguments both in discussion and in writing. Your written work must demonstrate an understanding of all relevant course materials, including assigned readings, lectures, multi-media materials, and discussions.

American Studies 395 is designed to satisfy General Education requirements for Section III.C.2. (Implications, Explorations, and Participatory Experience in the Social Sciences). By carefully developing an interdisciplinary social scientific understanding of the interaction of California's culture in the past and present, student in AMST 395 must achieve the following General Education Goals:

- To understand broad, unifying themes in the social sciences from cross-disciplinary perspectives

- To solve complex problems that require social scientific reasoning.
- To relate the social sciences to significant social problems or to other related disciplines.
- To apply disciplinary concepts from the social sciences in a variety of settings, such as community-based learning sites and activities.

AMST 395 is also designed to meet the General Education requirements for Section V (Cultural Diversity). Towards this end, students in this class will also achieve the following General Education goals:

- To understand that culture is socially constructed and fundamental to social interaction.
- To appreciate the complex relationships that gender, ethnicity and class bring to a discussion of society and culture.
- To understand that because we live in an inter-connected world, we need to understand the diversity and relationships within and among cultures.
- To recognize and evaluate how one's cultural history affects one's sense of self and relationship to others.

Student Learning Goals for AMST 395:

Students of AMST 395 will:

- Develop a rigorous concept of culture and cultural processes as experienced by a diverse group of Californians;
- Understand how various cultures, including Native American, European, Latino, Asian, and African-American, have interacted in California's past and present;
- Gain a broader interdisciplinary awareness, becoming aware of connections among the social sciences and the humanities
- Acquire a thorough understanding of cultural diversity by examining the creative tension between unity and multiplicity in California experiences; theories of cultural pluralism, and the relationships between subcultures and dominant cultures;
- Understand the ways in which culture creates meaning and guides behavior by learning to critically analyze and interpret a spectrum of California artifacts, ranging from popular to folk to elite expressions, from mass media to material culture and architecture;
- Learn research, writing, and expressive skills that will allow them to see connections among complex materials and will enable them to clearly communicate their understanding of the underlying meanings and causes of cultural/historical events within our state.

Course Outline:

Week 1, February 1: Course Introduction, Historical Overview of California

Week 2, February 8: Slavery in the California Missions

Reading:

Chan and Olin, 31-32, 59-63 (The Three Worlds of the Chumash, Father Luis Jayme Criticizes..., Father Junipero Serra Reports..., Captain Alejandro Malaspina Praises...)

Hurtado, 1-44 (Chapters 1 and 2)

Week 3, February 15: Gender and Race in Gold Rush California

Reading:

Chan and Olin, 120-127 (Levy, “Women in the Gold Rush”)

Hurtado, 45-74 (Chapter 3)

Week 4, February 22: The Rise and Fall of the Californios

Reading:

Chan and Olin, 102-109 (Monroe, “The Making of Mexican Culture in Frontier California”)

Hurtado, 75-114 (Chapter 4)

Week 5, March 1: Asian-American Identities and Communities in Progressive California

Reading:

Chan and Olin, 115-116, 172-174 (J.D. Borthwicke Observes..., Henryk Sienkiewicz Appraises...)

Wong, 22-60 (Chapters 3-8)

Week 6, March 8: Okies and Braceros: Race and Labor in Early Twentieth-Century California

Reading:

Chan and Olin, 176-182 (Kazin, “The Rise of the Labor Movement in California”)

Wong, 87-136 (Chapters 11-15)

Week 7, March 15: Midterm and Black Migrations and California Dreams Deferred

Reading:

Chan and Olin, 345-354 (Broussard, “Changes in the Status of African-American...”)

MIDTERM EXAMINATION

Week 8, March 22: Labor Unions, Politics, and Hollywood

Reading:

Wong, 146-181, 227-246 (Chapters 17-20, 26-28)

Week 9, March 29: SPRING BREAK, NO CLASS

Week 10, April 5: Sunshine and Shadows: Representations of California Cultures in Film

Reading:

Chan and Olin, 245-262 (May, "Hollywood and the California Dream," Fishbein, "Hollywood Joins the Moral Crusade")
Garcia, 17-46 (Chapter 1)

Week 11, April 12: Three Displacements: Chinatown, Japanese Internment, Chavez Ravine

Reading:

Chan and Olin, 327-329, 336-345 (Charles Kikuchi Observes..., Chan, "The Incarceration of Japanese-Americans during World War II")
Garcia, 47-86 (Chapter 2)

Week 12, April 19: The Rise of Gay and Lesbian Subcultures and Politics in California

Reading:

Chan and Olin, 332-335 (Willard Waller Announces the Postwar Battle of the Sexes)
PAPER DUE

Week 13, April 26: Conservative Politics and Religious Populism in Orange County

Reading:

Chan and Olin, 363-368 (Mario Savio Defends..., Ronald Reagan Denounces)
Garcia, 87-120 (Chapter 3)

Week 14, May 3: Different Perspectives on "Car Culture" in Southern California

Reading:

Chan and Olin, 368-373 (Bobby Seale Explains..., Manifesto of the Chicano Student Conference, Declaration of the Asian American Political Alliance, Indians of All Tribes...)
Garcia, 157-188 (Chapter 5)

Week 15, May 10: Three California Race Riots in Comparison: San Francisco, Zoot Suit, Watts

Reading:

Chan and Olin, 455-458 (The McCone Commission Analyzes the Watts Riots)
Garcia, 189-222 (Chapter 6)

Week 16, May 17: Review, synthesis, discussion, and the future of California

Reading:

Chan and Olin, 460-474 (David Rieff Sees..., Mwatabu S. Okantah Protests..., Armando Navarro Offers... Eui-Young Yu Offers... Patrick J. Buchanan Condemns... John Bryant Encourages... Lynell George and David Ferrell Analyze...)

FINAL EXAM: MAY 24, 5:00-6:50 PM