ES 250: Methods and Approaches to Inter-Racial Histories of the United States

Spring 2019
Barrows 180
Fr 2-5pm

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OH: Tuesdays 5-7 pm or by appt

The course is intended to introduce students to the burgeoning field of inter-racial histories of the United States. It draws from past and contemporary discussions on racial formation and its relationships to nationalism, settler colonialism, slavery, migration, gender and sexuality. The weekly readings aim to foreground the scholarship's central questions - such as the instances and failures (and/or conditions for) solidarity, the seeming incommensurability of multiple social critiques and the pitfalls of simplified portraits of ever-shifting power constellations. The require readings also model scholars’ diverse approaches to and methods for writing histories of inter-racial relations, and they cumulatively provide a substantial background in United States history.

Seminar requirements: (1) You are expected to attend all class sessions and be prepared to participate in the discussions. Each student will also be required to lead one week's discussion. You need to submit your discussion questions to the class as a whole on Blackboard’s discussion page at least 24 hours before our session. Attendance, participation, and leading discussion will make up 20% of your grade; (2) Weekly Reading Reflections (1-2 pages) will make up 20% (3) Two 2-3 page book reviews of one of the books from the supplementary lists for Weeks 2 thru 8, and one from Weeks 9 thru 15. Good models for this assignment are the book reviews in the Journal of American History; 20% of your grade; (4) A final paper on a topic you and I have chosen together. Every three to four weeks you will be asked to submit written work delineating the progress of your final paper: 1) a one-page statement describing the historiographical topic your paper will address (4th week); 2) a working bibliography of the books and articles central to your paper (7th week); 3) a five-page draft of text taken from anywhere in the essay (11th week); 4) the final project (due May 13). The paper should be about 15 to 20 pages in length; 40% of your final grade.

Each week's discussion centers around a required book and two or three articles. All required books for this course have not been ordered and need to be bought from area bookstores, online or obtain them from the library or through inter-library loan. All required articles will be available electronically on bcourse. Texts from the recommended reading lists have not been ordered.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:
Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with the Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me
as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and can be contacted at (213) 740-0776.

WK1 – 1/25: Introductions

WK2 – 2/1: Theoretical Approaches

- Shana L. Redmond, “‘As Though It Were Our Own’: Against a Politics of Identification,” in *Critical Ethnic Studies: A Reader* (Duke University Press, 2016)

Extra:


UNIT 1 – Local Histories and National Racial Projects

WK3 – 2/8:

- **Required:**

- **Recommended:**
WK4 – 2/15:
• **Required:**
  o Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, “Introduction: This Land” in *An Indigenous People’s History of the United States* (Beacon, 2015)
  o Tiya Miles, “‘His Kingdom for a Kiss’: Indians and Intimacy in the Narrative of John Marrant,” in *Haunted by Empire*.
• **Recommended:**
  o Albert L. Hurtado, *Intimate Frontiers: Sex, Gender and Culture in Old California* (University of New Mexico Press, 1999)

WK5 – 2/22:
• **Required:**
• **Recommended:**
  o Linda Gordon, “Internal Colonialism and Gender,” in *Haunted by Empire*.

UNIT 2: The Space of Race: Transnationalism, Empire and Global Racial Projects

WK 6 – 3/1:
• **Required:**

**Recommendation:**
- Natalia Molina, Fit To Be Citizens?: Public Health and Race in Los Angeles, 1879-1939 (UC Press, 2006)

**WK 7 – 3/8:**

**Required:**

**Recommended:**
- Lisbeth Haas, Conquest and Historical Identities in California, 1769-1936 (UC Press, 1995)

**WK 8 – 3/15:**

**Required:**
• **Recommended:**

**WK 9 – 3/22:**
• **Required:**

• **Recommended:**
  o Nayan Shah, “Policing Privacy, Migrants, and the Limits of Freedom,” *Social Text* 23 (3-4 84-5), 275-284
  o Gilberto Rosas, “The Thickening Borderlands: Bastard Mestiz@s, ‘Illegal’ Possibilities, and Globalizing Migrant Life,” in *Critical Ethnic Studies*.

**WK 10 – 3/29:** Spring Break

**WK 11 – 4/5:**
• **Required:**
  o Steven Salaita, “How Palestine Became Important to American Indian Studies,” In Inter/Nationalism: Decolonizing Native America and Palestine (Univ. of Minnesota, 2015).

- **Recommended:**

**Unit 3: Social Movements, Imperial Citizenship and the Question of Solidarity**

**WK 12 – 4/12:**

- **Required:**

- **Recommendation:**
WK 13 – 4/19:
- **Required:**
- **Recommended:**
  - Paul Ortiz, *An African American and Latinx History of the United States* (Beacon, 2018)

WK 14 – 4/26:
- **Required:**
  - Renya Ramirez, *Native Hubs: Culture, Community, and Belonging in Silicon Valley and Beyond* (Duke University Press, 2007)
  - Natalia Molina, “Examining Chicana/o History through a Relational Lens,” *Pacific Historical Review*.
- **Recommended:**

WK 15 – 5/3:
LEADING DISCUSSION

These points are intended as helpful suggestions to prepare you to lead discussion among your graduate peers. Do not hesitate to use your own ideas or to contact me before your turn if you have any questions or concerns. Your major responsibility is to lead the discussion involving the required book that is assigned, but feel free to venture beyond that if you think it is appropriate.

In Preparation
- Read the week’s readings as early as possible in order to have plenty of time to contact the professor and/or your peers with questions and ideas.
- Be sure to take notes during your readings of the main points of each of the assigned texts, but particularly of the assigned book.
- Form questions during your reading of points that you think are unclear and of crucial issues that you want to be sure and discuss.

Framing a Discussion
- Know where you want to start, but also where you want to end up. Be willing to be flexible in your guidance, but be sure to cover those points you think are crucial.
- Decide whether you want to give a brief synopsis of the main points of the book, or whether you want the class as a whole to do this.
- Have a ready list of questions for your peers to answer, in an order that makes sense intellectually. If you have a set of points or issues (as opposed to questions), you may end up talking more than your peers.
- Remember that if everyone is talking (a good sign!), ½ hours will go by quickly. Be sure you allow enough time to cover major points. Don’t leave everything important for the end!

Suggestions for Questions
- Let students begin by giving their general impression of the book. This can often serve to launch discussions into unexpected, but productive areas.
- What evidence does the author use to make his/her point? Is it convincing?
- Move in the general direction of questions that reach across the whole text, jumping off from specific questions about particular points in one chapter/section.
- Have questions that refer back to a previous week’s readings and/or points raised in the required articles.
- PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION TO THE WHOLE CLASS ON BCOURSE AT LEAST 24 HOURS BEFORE OUR SESSION (Thursday at 2 pm).

In the Classroom
- Don’t be afraid to follow up a comment with a relevant question to that specific speaker.
- On the other hand, be careful not to stop an exciting discussion that has not yet run its course by asking a diverting question.
- Give each separate chapter or section its due time, but gauge your peers’ interest and disinterest in certain sections and shift accordingly.
- Feel free to hand the discussion over to me at any time. I will undoubtedly have other issues that I will want to raise and will do so in the second half of each session.
HOW TO WRITE A SEMINAR BOOK REVIEW

Book Reviews and the Profession:
One of the duties you will be called upon as a professor is to write book reviews for scholarly journals. Most journals will ask you to review and evaluate a new book in the space of 500-800 words (or 2 to 3 pages), while others may allow you to write a longer review essay. In any case, you will probably find yourself writing one or two reviews every year, and this is one way for you to get published early in one’s career.

So what should you do in these reviews? How much space should you devote to placing the book in its larger context? To summarizing the author’s arguments? To offering your own praise and criticism of the book? There are not hard and fast rules about writing reviews. One gets a feel for them over time, particularly if one is reading them regularly. However, I believe that there is a general formula one can apply when writing reviews, but how you apply it will vary from individual to individuals. Nevertheless, all class reviews should have three basic components:

1. **The Context:** If you read through reviews in history journals you will see that most reviewers devote their opening paragraph(s) to placing the book in its larger historiographical framework. The author you are reviewing is probably attempting to use their work to address larger debates within their field. In short, you want to tell the reader the “big picture” into which this book fits.

2. **Summary:** My own belief is that the greatest service a review can do is offer an intelligent summary of the book’s main themes and arguments. This means trying to be fair to the author. You can praise, condemn, or equivocate in your conclusion. But the bulk of the review (3-4 paragraphs) should provide the reader with an insightful summary of what this book is about. It means distilling several hundred pages into a few paragraphs. How does the author prove his/her case? What kind of evidence does he/she provide? What kinds of sources and methodologies? This section should provide the reader with a clear summary of the book’s thesis and main arguments.

3. **Analysis:** It is difficult to know when to intrude with your own voice and analysis. Sometimes it can be mingled throughout a text. However, I find that in mastering the review, the easiest way to begin is placing your analysis at the end. Spend the last paragraph(s) offering us your critical scholarly opinion of the book and its ideas. Many of you will find this the most difficult part of writing a review. Analysis is a difficult skill to master and the only way to master it is to do it.

All these are merely suggestions. You will find that writing reviews will get easier over time. You will learn by writing, by reading the reviews of your classmates, and by reading the reviews in journals. For the purposes of this course, look at reviews in the American Historical Review and the Journal of American History, but also in the American Quarterly, the Western Historical Quarterly.
WRITING A HISTORIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

Each student is required to write one major paper for the course. This paper is a historiography paper, 15 to 20 pages in length, on a topic you and I have chosen together. This paper is an examination of the assumptions, methods, and findings of the body of literature on a topic relevant to the course. “Relevant” can mean either an elaboration of one of the formal themes introduced in the course, an analysis of a thematic issue drawn from across the course, or an analysis of one neglected in the seminar. Whatever topic chosen, you should be willing to read deeply in the literature and to discuss its place in the field.

Every three to four weeks you will be asked to submit written work delineating the progress of your final paper: 1) a one-page statement describing the historiographical topic your paper will address (4th week); 2) a working bibliography of the books and articles central to your paper (7th week); 3) a five page draft of text taken from anywhere in the essay (11th week); 4) the final project (due May 13). You will receive feedback on each of these assignments from me, insuring that you are on the right track for the final project. It has been my experience that if you make each of these deadlines, you will do well with this final paper; if, on the other hand, you miss one of these deadlines, you will indeed struggle to complete an adequate version of this historiography paper.

The class syllabus of required and recommended readings is a guide to various works and historiographical debates in the field, but issues and specific works germane to the topic to be reviewed will be approved by Prof. Paiz through the one-page statement and the working bibliography. This historiography paper should focus on how various writers have represented some significant aspect of inter-racial history in the United States in the past, exploring the intellectual debates, methodological issues and directions in the study. As a guide to framing your historiography paper, I offer the following guidelines:

1. While it is fine to start with a general topic in mind, you should move forward quickly with a more formal statement of the intellectual problem you hope to study. This statement is probably best put in the context of a question. While you should state this question early in the statement due in September, inevitably that question can and should be further refined as you complete more of the reading for the course and the paper.
2. If you are having trouble coming up with a framing question for your paper, you should see me in office hours as early in the semester as possible to discuss potential paper topics.
3. This statement/question must be placed in the context of a thorough review of most relevant secondary literature surrounding your problem. Therefore, it is critical to pick a question that is not so large that the reading for the paper is overwhelming; on the other hand, it is important that your question is large enough to have sufficient literature already written by various authors addressing the topic.
4. Try to avoid a historiography paper that is simply a series of book reviews with an introduction and conclusion. Framing your question well will allow you to organize a historiography paper with various sub-questions, each of which can help drive the main sections of your final project.
5. You should select your two book reviews from the supplementary reading list as works that can also be used in your final paper. Do not hesitate to incorporate as much of the
required reading for the course as possible for your final paper. This will substantially cut down on the additional reading you will need to do to successfully address your topic.

6. Because inter-racial history is still a young field that is growing, many topics have yet to be exhaustively addressed. Therefore, it is usually important to incorporate your own thoughts about pathways to new research in the future on your topic within your conclusion.