

ETHN131/HIUS 159
Social and Economic History of the US Southwest, 1848-present
Summer Session II, 2010
Tuesday and Thursday, 11:00am-1:50pm, SSB 103

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Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 9am-10:30am, SSB240 or by appointment

This course is designed to contextualize the Southwest region of the United States as one of critical importance both nationally and globally. Whereas in the larger US context the Southwest has historically been seen as wasteland, peripheral, and/or deserted, in reality its history has been integral to the development of the modern US nation-state and race relations, both ideologically and materially.

In order to understand the Southwest, its peoples, and its landscapes, we will engage a variety of interdisciplinary texts, ranging from social science and the humanities, to ecology and environmental history. We will assume that “the history of the Southwest” takes place at a complex nexus of human, ecological, technological, and political relationships; therefore our study of this region and its stories will be likewise complex. Our units in this course will revolve around important moments in the historiography of the region, but will not be purely “historical” in the traditional academic sense—that is, we will not explore the Southwest through a linear timeline per se, but will rather explore it through various historically grounded themes.

Required Texts

- Course Reader, available at the AS Soft Reserves
- Electronic Reserve Readings, available online [ER]
- John Nichols, *The Milagro Beanfield War* [MBW], available at Groundworks

Assignments For this class, you will be required to write two unit papers, write ten in-class reading responses, and prepare one group research project (see below for details).

MBW paper: 30 points, due 8/24

Participation: 5 points

Discussion leadership: 15 points

Group research project: 30 points, due 9/2

Preliminary paper outline: 10 points, due 8/12

Preliminary research report: 10 points, due 8/26

MBW Paper

You will write one 1250-1500 word paper, analyzing the course themes in relation to the novel *The Milagro Beanfield War*. What kinds of course themes and key terms emerge in the novel? How does (or doesn't) the novel reflect course materials, readings, and discussions? Use readings, lectures, discussions, and films to support. Draw out themes in that novel that relate to or expand on course materials. You must cite at

least 3 readings from the syllabus, and develop a strong thesis, or argument, that supports and organizes your points in the paper.

Papers should be:

- typed;
- stapled;
- between 1250 and 1500 words, with the word count included in the heading;
- submitted on time. Electronic submissions will not be accepted.

On 8/12, you will submit a preliminary paper outline (2 pages).

Group Research Project

This project will be due during the last class of the quarter, but will be the culmination of quarter-long work with a group assigned to you in Week 1. Your group will pick a contemporary issue in the Southwest/border region, research it in media and academic sources throughout the quarter, and present it to the class as part of your final exam.

Your presentation should be able to explain your topic, give it historical and geographical context, and theorize its social and economic implications for the region's peoples and/or for the US as a whole. In other words, what are its roots and its branches?

As this is your final, your presentation should be able to treat the topic, and its discursive construction in media and academic sources, with a critical analytic lens—this is not a summary, but rather an informed analysis of material drawn from outside the course syllabus but using course themes and concepts.

On 8/26, your group will submit a preliminary research report.

Participation

You cannot get an A in this class without regular participation in class discussions and activities. Throughout the quarter we will work through themes from lecture and readings as a group, drawing on our collective knowledge to better understand the Southwest, its history, and its peoples. Your active and respectful participation will be key to your success. Participation points can also be earned by meeting with me in office hours or by appointment.

Discussion leadership

Each class this quarter, we will rely on student-led discussions for a graduate seminar-style approach to knowledge production. When you lead discussion (in pairs, once per quarter), you will prepare:

- A list of 5 key terms and explanations of what they mean;
 - The readings' "take home messages" or primary impact/relevance in the course;
 - Discussion questions and/or activities to get conversation going around the readings and larger course themes.
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Introduction—1848-1912

Tuesday, August 3—Locating the Southwest

Thursday, August 5—Violent Inclusions: US Legal and Cultural Perspectives on the Southwest and Its Peoples

-Course Reader, pp. 1-35

Discussion leaders:

****MBW pp. 1-100**

Tierra o Muerte! 1912-1941—Industrial development of the Southwest since 1848 has revolved around mines, farms, and militarization. We will explore all three, paying particular attention to the ways in which racial and ethnic identity and racialization played into both the cheapening of the labor force and into labor and environmentalist activism. The questions we begin with here revolve around community identity, land rights, environmentalism, labor rights, and industry incursion into a region quite distinct from, and commonly misunderstood by, the owners of industry and the majority of its consumers. Also at stake in this unit is how the Southwest was seen as repository of *resources* for the capitalist system of the US metropole; both human and natural, these resources came to define the Southwest and its value to the larger nation.

Tuesday, August 10—Longing for the Land: Hispanos and Land Grants

-Course Reader, pp. 63-94

-Jake Kosek, “Deep Roots and Long Shadows: the Cultural Politics of Memory and Longing in Northern New Mexico,” *Environment and Planning*, 2004, Vol. 22, pp. 329-354. [ER]

Film: “Chicano!”

Discussion leaders:

****MBW pp. 101-200**

Thursday, August 12—Longing for the Land: Native American Homelands and the Reservation System

MBW Paper outline DUE

-Course Reader, pp. 95-126

Discussion leaders:

****MBW pp. 201-300**

Tuesday, August 17—Salt of the Earth: Land and Labor

-Course Reader, pp. 127-187

Film: "Salt of the Earth"

Discussion leaders:

****MBW pp. 301-456**

Militarization and Environmental Racism 1941-1979—It has been suggested that no region in history underwent as massive and rapid a process of militarization as the US Southwest did from the beginning of World War II through the Cold War. Weapons laboratories, uranium mines, training facilities, bombing ranges, and radioactive and military waste disposal sites can all call the Southwest "home." We will explore this process as both materially and ideologically transformative for Southwestern economies, peoples, environments, and political structures, attending closely to the new meanings the region takes on during and in the wake of this process of militarization.

Thursday, August 19—Military Installments and Industries

-Course Reader, pp. 188-207

-Mike Davis, "Ecocide in Marlborough Country," *Dead Cities and Other Tales*, pp. [ER]

Film: "Atomic Café"

Discussion leaders:

Tuesday, August 24—

MBW Paper DUE

Course Reader, pp. 208-223

Jake Kosek, "Nuclear Natures: In the Shadows of the City on the Hill,"

Understories, pp. 228-275 [ER]

Film: "The 1947 Roswell UFO Crash Documentary"

Discussion leaders:

Borderlands, Gender, and Violence 1980-2009—As the Southwest has multiple identities, so too has it been multiply theorized. In this unit, we will bring the Southwest up to the present by focusing closely on feminist interpretations of the "borderlands" as

the complex symbolic and material “home” of Chicano identity and positionality *vis a vis* both the US and Mexico. We will consider contemporary issues of labor, industry, and gender violence on the border and explore the different meanings of this space for different peoples with different socially constructed identities and social positions.

Unit 3 paper due: Monday, September 7th, 5pm.

Thursday, August 26—The Borderlands

Preliminary Research Report DUE

-Course Reader, pp. 224-250

-Jessica Livingston, “Murder in Juárez: Gender, Sexual Violence, and the Global Assembly Line,” *Frontiers*, vol. 25, no. 1, 2004, pp. 59-76. [ER]

Film: “Performing the Border”

Discussion leaders:

Tuesday, August 31—What does the Southwest Mean?

Film: “Thelma and Louise”

Discussion leaders:

Conclusions—Dis-locating the Southwest

Thursday, September 2—Final Presentations

Final Research Projects DUE

“This land was Mexican once
was Indian always
and is.

And will be again,”

-Gloria Anzaldua, *Borderlands/La Frontera*
