

W107

Ethnic Studies 87: Understanding Los Angeles' Racial and Ethnic Past

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*Please write "87" in the subject line or the e-mail might be directed to my spam folder

Office Hours: Tuesday, 10:15-10:45 and Thursday, 2-4

Goals of course:

In the last ten years, scholars have turned their attention to Los Angeles more than ever before. They have used Los Angeles as a site of study to understand various processes from identity to community formation. We will use these works to better understand LA's history as well as *how* LA is studied in order to gain a better sense of the politics of writing history.

In addition to learning about LA's racial and ethnic past, we will work on mastering analytical skills to help you succeed in your social science and humanities courses. You will learn how to identify and break-down an author's argument and give your informed opinion.

In order for this class to be successful, you need to come to class prepared to share your ideas. What sparked your interest in the readings? Where did you place a checkmark, a question mark, a note in the readings. What will you discuss with your friends about the course when you walk out the door? What connections are you making between the lectures, readings, and discussions? You and your classmates will learn much more from discussion than a straight lecture.

Writing assignments:

Based on the readings, each student will write a 1-1 1/2 page paper answering the following questions:

What is the author's thesis?

What supporting evidence does the author give?

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the argument?

I will then use these responses to shape the agenda for class discussion that week. E-mail your papers to me by Thursday at 6 am. You must bring your paper to class if you do not meet the deadline. These papers are a way of ensuring that your questions and ideas are addressed in the course.

Format: All papers should be paginated, have one-inch margins and be in times or times new roman, 12 point. Since you only need to reference assigned texts, the following citation format is acceptable: (Willard, 27).

Grading:

The grading in this course is pass/no pass. You will receive one point for every class you attend beginning October 6 and two points for every e-mail response you turn in before Thursday at 6 am. Papers turned in after Thursday at 6 am lose 1 point. No papers will be accepted after Thursday's class. Papers that do not follow the format or fail to engage the material lose 1 point. There are a total of 16 points. You need 11 points to pass the class.

Readings: *Los Angeles and the Future of Urban Cultures* available at Groundworks Bookstore, 858.452.9625.

*** Bring your book to class so that we may discuss the articles in depth.**

Reading Schedule:

- 2nd meeting: October 13, Michael Willard, "Nuestra Los Angeles"
 - How has Los Angeles been written about in scholarship?
 - Why is *how* Los Angeles is written about significant?
- 3rd meeting, October 20: Greg Hise, "Border City: Race and Social Distance"
 - What difference does it make that Los Angeles has a racially and ethnically diverse past?
 - What is social distance and what do you think of that concept?
- 4th meeting, October 27: Josh Sides, "Straight into Compton"
 - Why do we think of some neighborhoods as "good" or "bad" and how do they transition from one to the other?
- 5th meeting, November 3, Anthony Macias, "Bringing Music to the People"
 - What can looking at cultural spaces, such as dance halls, show us that might be different from looking at more traditional spaces, such as institutions?
- 6th meeting, November 10, Henry Yu. "Los Angeles and American Studies in a Pacific World of Migrations."
 - How is Yu asking us to look at Los Angeles from an angle the other authors have not?