

San Diego State University History Department

Fall 2020 Topical Courses

History 400: Junior Seminar on Methods and Historiography: Gender in American Culture **Professor Eve Kornfeld**

This seminar is designed to introduce you to historical methods and historiography through a focus on gender in American culture. The main objective is for you to learn about the range of historical questions, arguments, methods, and types of evidence used by historians of gender in American culture, and to apply what you learn in a culminating independent paper. You will also learn to write and speak more clearly and powerfully in a seminar setting.

During the first part of the semester, we will consider a variety of outstanding recent historical studies of gender in American culture. From these models, you will learn about the types of questions, arguments, sources, and methods used in the history of gender in American culture. The usual reading assignment will be one book chapter or article per week. During this part of the course, you will also give an informal oral presentation to the seminar each week about the chapter or article you have read, and complete a short writing assignment each week analyzing your reading. By the time we have completed our shared reading and scaffolded writing assignments and discussions, you should be comfortable in talking and writing about how historians pose questions, construct arguments, analyze sources, and apply different methods to reach their conclusions.

In the second part of the semester, you will choose and develop a topic for your culminating independent paper, in which you will compare and contrast the historical questions, arguments, methods, and types of evidence used by three different historians about a single issue or topic in the history of gender in American culture. Over the course of a month, you will draft your paper in five-page chunks, share your drafts with a partner or small group within the seminar with similar interests, and offer each other constructive critiques and suggestions for revision. Finally, you will revise your drafts into a compelling, coherent, polished paper that demonstrates your understanding of historical methods and historiography – and that might serve as the launching point for a History 450 research paper or an Honors Thesis.

History 450:
Professor Ed Blum
Coming soon!

History 451:
Professor David Cline
Coming soon!

History 496: Issues in History: Bloodlands and Borderlands

Professor Annika Frieberg

H496 is an intellectual exploration of cultural, political, and military issues specific to the borderlands of East Central Europe. Set in the geographical region between Berlin, Moscow, and Vienna, it dates from the late 19th century into the 1990s. We study questions of national and transnational cultures, including multilingual, bilingual or hybrid cultures. In addition, we turn our attention to the darker sides of this history including anti-Semitism, discrimination of minorities, ethnic cleansings, and genocide.

History 580: America and the Cold War

Professor Gregory Daddis

This course examines the Cold War as a political, ideological, economic, and military contest from a global perspective. Though it gives special attention to the American role and experience, both at home and abroad, the course also investigates how other nations influenced the conduct and scope of the Cold War. We will explore the origins of the conflict, the interplay between periods of tension and détente, the relationship between the “center” of the conflict in the North Atlantic/European area and the global “periphery,” and, finally, the end of the Cold War and its historical significance.

History 581: The Green City

Professor Andrew Wiese

Can cities be Green? What can we learn from the past? Focusing on the environmental history of metropolitan areas in the United States from the industrial revolution to the present, **The Green City** explores the long relationships between 'city' and 'country,' between human and non-human environments, using the lenses of history, sustainability, landscape, economy, ideology, and policy. Topics include: capitalism and nature, pollution and public health, the rise of suburbia, nature and popular culture, movements for environmentalism and environmental justice, green politics, and sustainability in an age of climate change. HIST 581 is ideal for undergraduate and graduate students in History, Sustainability, Urban Studies, and related fields. Assessment through written and digital research projects.

History 586: History of Human Rights

Professor Grace Cheng

The modern idea of rights includes the concept of individual rights, with origins in Enlightenment thinking—the so-called “first generation” of rights, which was restricted in its scope and application—as well as “second generation” and “third generation” rights that gained recognition as a result of through the struggles and achievements of the working class and then of historically oppressed groups, which provided the basis for conceptions of collective rights.

The idea of human rights, as institutionalized with the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), encompasses all three “generations” of rights. However, the meaning of human rights continues to expand, with emerging concerns such as environmental issues and the displacement of communities.

This course covers the evolution of modern human rights, which was shaped by struggles in various regions of the world. The course also explores how the idea of human rights shaped the postwar international political landscape.

We will study how colonial and other great powers resisted the human rights claims of colonial subject peoples even after the adoption of the UDHR. Through this examination of how anti-colonial movements shaped the idea of human rights further in their struggles for independence, we will also understand the distinct perspectives on human rights offered by societies outside of the West.

History 620: Greek and Roman Witchcraft

Professor Elizabeth Pollard

Coming soon!

History 630: Modern American Popular Culture

Professor John Putman

This course will explore American Popular Culture in the twentieth century, with particular emphasis on post-WWII America. We will explore how forms of popular culture like television, comics, leisure, music, and film both shape American society and reflect it.

History 640: Topics in Latin American History

Professor Pablo Ben

This seminar provides a travel throughout space and time in Latin America focused on a variety of interconnected themes. Students will start by tracing the ideas of death and the devil from colonial times to the present in Mexico, Colombia, and Bolivia. After that, the course will shift to an analysis of the rise of sugar plantations and slavery in Brazil and the Caribbean, considering the formation of a world system and the legacy of colonial oppression today. The later part of the seminar will focus on political violence in the modern and recent history of Perú, México, Bolivia and Central America. Finally, students will learn about life in the streets and shantytowns of Brazil at the turn to the twenty first century. The readings, lectures and class activities will teach students to trace relations between apparently unrelated trends while at the same time providing an overall history of the region for the last five centuries.

Bibliography:

Colonialism, The Devil, and Death in Latin America

- Fernando Cervantes, *The Devil in the New World: The Impact of Diabolism in New Spain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).
- Michael Taussig. *The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980)

- Claudio Lomnitz, *Death and the Idea of Mexico* (New York: Zone Books, 2008).

Sweetness and Power

- Sidney Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York: Penguin, 1986).
- Stuart Schwartz, *Sugar Plantations in the Formation of Brazilian Society: Bahia, 1550-1835* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

Rebellion and Death in Modern History

- Florencia Mallon, *Peasant and Nation, The Making of Postcolonial Mexico and Peru* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).
- James Dunkley, *Rebellion in the Veins: Political Struggle in Bolivia, 1952-1982* (London: Verso, 1984).
- Mark Danner, *The Massacre at El Mozote* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993).

Inequality and Violence in Recent History

- Donna Goldstein, *Laughter out of Place: Race, Class, Violence, and Sexuality in a Rio Shantytown* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2003).
- Tobias Hetch, *At Home in the Street: Street Children of Northeast Brazil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).