WCH 240
Topics In U.S. Social and Cultural History

Fall 2006 – U.C. Merced
Wednesday 5:00-7:50

Instructor: Professor Sean Malloy (smalloy@ucmerced.edu)
Office Hours: COB 311, Tuesday 12:30-2:00 and by appointment
Course Website: Available via UCMCROPS

Description

This is a graduate level course intended to introduce students to important topics and literature in the field of U.S. social and cultural history. This is obviously a broad subject area and I have selected the major themes of race and labor to help organize our readings for the semester. We will explore a number of approaches to these topics, reading a mix of classic works and newer studies that employ a variety of methodologies to cover an array of groups and chronological periods. The goal is give you a foundation in the literature covering these topics as well as to stimulate you to think comparatively about how historians approach U.S. social and cultural history. To that end, I have also included a brief unit on sexuality, primarily for the purpose of methodological comparison with our two main themes.

Course Materials

Race in the United States

Larry Levine, Black Culture, Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom
Robin Kelley, Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class
Thomas Sugrue, The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit
David Guiterrez, Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the Politics of Ethnicity.
George Sanchez, Becoming Mexican American
Gary Okihiro, Margins and Mainstreams: Asians in American History and Culture.
George Lipsitz, The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics

Labor

David Roediger, The Wages of Whiteness: Race and Making of the American Working Class
David Montgomery, The Fall of the House of Labor: The Workplace, the State, and American Labor Activism, 1865-1925
Liz Cohen, Making A New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939
Devra Weber, Dark Sweat, White Gold: California Farm Workers, Cotton, and the New Deal
George Lipsitz, Rainbow at Midnight: Labor and Culture in the 1940s
Sexuality

John D’Emilio and Estelle Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America*
George Chuncey, *Gay New York*

Online Readings: Please check under the “Resources” section of the CROPS site to find the readings listed by week in the syllabus below.

**Course Requirements**

Every student will sign up to lead one class discussion. On the week in which you lead class, you will also turn in a book review of 5-7 pages in which you discuss the assigned works for that week along with at least two books selected from that week’s suggested reading list. I will post a sample book review on our CROPS site as an example of the kind of work I am looking for.

The major written work for this course will be a 20-30 page paper (due December 11) in which you examine an historical question within the field of American social and cultural history. You have substantial leeway to choose a topic that fits your interests so long as it falls broadly within one of the course themes (race, labor, sexuality). In preparation for this final paper, you will turn in a prospectus on October 25 in which you briefly outline your suggested topic and provide a bibliography of sources (which may include, but should not be limited to, the assigned class materials).

**Course Schedule and Reading Assignments**

**August 30: Introduction**

Required Reading:

Introduction. No reading.

**September 6: Race and Labor**

Required Reading:

Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness.*


Suggested:

Matthew Pratt Guterl, *The Color of Race in America, 1900-1940.*


Noel Ignatiev, *How The Irish Became White.*

David Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness: How America’s Immigrants Became*
**September 13: The Culture of Slavery**

Required reading:

Levine, *Black Culture, Black Consciousness.*

Suggested:
Deborah Gray White, *Ar’Nt I A Woman?: Female Slaves in the Plantation South.*
Zora Neale Hurston, *Mules and Men.*

**September 20: Cultural Resistance: The African-American Case**

Required reading:

Kelley, *Race Rebels*

Suggested:
Kelley, *Yo’ Mama’s Disfunktional: Fighting the Culture Wars in Urban America.*
Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination.*

**September 27: The Urban Crucible in Black and White**

Required reading:

Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*

Suggested:
Reynolds Farley et. al., *Detroit Divided.*
Chris Rhomberg, *No There There: Race, Class, and Political Community in Oakland.*
Marilynn S. Johnson, *The Second Gold Rush: Oakland and the East Bay in World War II*
Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*
October 4: Becoming Mexican American

Required Reading:

Sanchez, Becoming Mexican American

Suggested:
Anzaldúa, Borderlands/La Frontera (entire)
Ana Castillo, Massacre of the Dreamers: Essays on Xicanisma (entire)
Ramon Gutierrez, When Jesus Came the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500-1846.
Ernesto Chávez, “¡Mi Raza Primero!”: Nationalism, Identity, and Insurgency in the Chicano Movement in Los Angeles.
Sarah Deutsch, No Separate Refuge: Culture, Class, and Gender on the Anglo-Hispanic Frontier in the American Southwest, 1880-1940.

October 11: Mexican Americans and the Politics of Ethnicity

Required Reading:

Gutierrez, Walls and Mirrors

Suggested:
Anzaldúa, Borderlands/La Frontera (entire)
Ana Castillo, Massacre of the Dreamers: Essays on Xicanisma (entire)
Ramon Gutierrez, When Jesus Came the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500-1846.
Ernesto Chávez, “¡Mi Raza Primero!”: Nationalism, Identity, and Insurgency in the Chicano Movement in Los Angeles.
Sarah Deutsch, No Separate Refuge: Culture, Class, and Gender on the Anglo-Hispanic Frontier in the American Southwest, 1880-1940.
October 18: Asians in America

Required Reading:

Okihiro, *Margins and Mainstreams*

Suggested:

Ronald Takaki, *Strangers From A Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans*
Frank H. Wu, *Yellow: Race in America Beyond Black and White*
Jean Yu-Wen Shen Wu, ed., *Asian-American Studies: A Reader*
Min Zhou, ed., *Contemporary Asian America: A Multidisciplinary Reader*

October 25: The Construction of Whiteness

NOTE: Prospectus and bibliography due in class.

Required Reading:

Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness*
Samuel Huntington, “The Hispanic Challenge,” *Foreign Policy,* March/April 2004. [CROPS]

Suggested:


November 1: Labor in the 19th Century

Required reading:

Montgomery, *The Fall of the House of Labor*

Suggested:

Gunther Peck, *Reinventing Free Labor: Padrones and Immigrant Workers in the North*
November 8: A New Deal for Chicago’s Workers

Required reading:

Cohen, *Making A New Deal*

Suggested:

Robin Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists During the Great Depression*


Staughton Lynd, ed., *We Are All Leaders: The Alternative Unionism of the Early 1930s.*


November 15: At Work in the Fields

Required Reading:

Weber, *Dark Sweat, White Gold*

Suggested:


Robin Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists During the Great Depression*


Emilio Zamora, *The World of the Mexican Worker in Texas.*

November 22: Labor in World War II and the Cold War

Required Reading:

Lipsitz, *Rainbow at Midnight*

Suggested:

Ronald A Filippelli and Mark D. McCullough, *Cold War in the Working Class: The Rise and Decline of the United Electrical Workers.*


**November 29: Bringing Sex Into History**

Required reading:

- D’Emilio and Estelle Freedman, *Intimate Matters*

Suggested:

- Richard Godbeer, *Sexual Revolution in Early America*
- Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*

**December 6: Queer Subjects**

Required Reading:

- Chuncey, *Gay New York*

Suggested:

- John D’Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities.*