

# HIST 488: California History

Spring 2012

Mon, Wed TIME pm

ROOM

Professor Jason LaBau

EMAIL

Office: TBD

Office Hours:

Wed, TIME pm,

or by appointment

In this course we will explore the history of California from the distant past to the contemporary era. We will see how successive waves of settlement stitched a diverse geography into a single state, how the process of boundary-making preceded and continued after the establishment of fixed political borders, and how migration continues to both disrupt and define the state. We will draw on primary and secondary sources to guide us through this complicated terrain, noting especially the significance of race, class, and gender. Through this process we will develop a deeper understanding and richer appreciation for the developments that have shaped modern California.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Course Books – Available at the university bookstore and Book Mart

Sucheng Chan and Spencer Olin, ed. *Major Problems in California History*

Helen Hunt Jackson, *Ramona*

D. J. Waldie, *Holy Land: A Suburban Memoir*

Héctor Tobar, *The Barbarian Nurseries*

Course Articles – Available through the library electronic reserve system

Zinn, Howard, "The Use and Abuse of History," from *Declarations of Independence:*

*Cross-Examining American Ideology.*

Nagel, Joane, "Sex Matters: Racing Sex and Sexing Race" and "Constructing Ethnicity and

Sexuality: Building Boundaries and Identities," from *Race, Ethnicity, and*

*Sexuality: Intimate Intersections, Forbidden Frontiers.*

Nicolaides, Becky, "The Texture of Social Life" from *My Blue Heaven: Life and Politics in*

*the Working-Class Suburbs of Los Angeles, 1920-1965.*

Avila, Eric, "The Nation's 'White Spot': Racializing Postwar Los Angeles" from *Popular*

*Culture in the Age of White Flight: Fear and Fantasy in Suburban Los Angeles.*

McGirr, Lisa, "The Setting" from *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American*

*Right.*

Reading – Come to class prepared to discuss the readings listed for that day. Begin reading *Ramona*, *Holy Land*, and *Barbarian Nurseries* in advance so you will be prepared to turn in your book reviews at the beginning of class on the day we discuss those readings.

Participation – Attend class each day and participate in class discussions. Bring a copy of the assigned reading to class and be prepared to discuss the text in detail. Participation will also depend in part on occasional in-class writing assignments. Class participation will account for 15% of your overall grade.

Book Reviews – You will write short book review essays for *Ramona*, *Holy Land*, and *The Barbarian Nurseries*. These assignments will provide an opportunity for you to evaluate the work in historical context. They will be evaluated on the basis of the force of your argument, use of detail, clarity of expression, conceptual understanding, grammar, and style. Book reviews should be 300-350 words, with a word count printed at the bottom of the page. A printed copy of each review is due at the beginning of class on the day we are discussing that book. You must also have submitted your review through Turnitin by 4 pm on the day of class (see below). Each review is worth 5% of your total grade.

Midterm Exam – On 2 May we will have an in-class, midterm exam covering all course material to that point. The midterm exam will account for 20% of your overall grade.

Final Paper – For the final paper you will be writing a 2000 word autobiographical essay on your experience in California, drawing on the historical details and themes we have discussed in class. As with the book reviews, your paper will be evaluated on: force of argument, use of detail, clarity of expression, conceptual understanding, grammar, and style. The final paper is due on 11 June and will account for 20% of your total grade.

Final Exam – The final exam will take place on 11 June from 4:30-7 pm. The exam will cover all course material. The final exam will account for 30% of your overall grade.

Further information on writing assignments and exams will be distributed in class.

## COURSE POLICIES

### Grading:

Grades are calculated using a standard scale: 93-100 is an A , 90-92 is an A-, 87-89 is a B+, 83-86 is a B, 80-82 is a B-, 77-79 is a C+, 73-76 is a C, 70-72 is a C-, 67-69 is a D+, 63-66 is a D, 60-62 is a D-, and anything below 60 is an F.

The final grade consists of:

Attendance/Participation:	15%
Book Reviews (5% each):	15%
Midterm Exam:	20%
Final Paper:	20%
Final Exam:	30%

The midterm exam will take place during regular class time on 2 May. The final exam will take place on 11 June from 4:30-7 pm.

All work must be submitted in hard copy. A late book review or final paper will be docked 10% (one letter grade) for each 24 hour period it is overdue.

### Cell Phone and Laptop Policies:

All cell phones must be out of sight and silenced during class. That means not being able to hear the buzzing of the vibration. Texting or other use of your phone in class will not be tolerated. Penalties may include the loss of credit for class participation.

Laptop use can be very distracting for other students if you are surfing the net, checking social networking sites, or sending email. If the professor or another student observes you using your laptop for purposes other than taking notes during class, you will be banned from using a laptop in class for the remainder of the semester.

### Cheating and Plagiarism:

It is assumed that you will do your own work. Plagiarism, the appropriation of the words of others without attribution, will not be tolerated. When you use the words of another author, you must use quotation marks as well as cite your source. The penalty for an act of “literary theft” will range from an F on the assignment in question to an F in the course. Similarly, passing off someone else’s work as your own, even with their permission, is a serious offense in an academic setting. All work you submit on exams and other assignments must be your own. See the University Academic Honesty Policy for more details at <http://www.calstatela.edu/academic/senate/handbook/ch5a.htm>.

Turnitin.com:

Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com) for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com) reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. You may submit your papers in such a way that no identifying information about you is included. Another option is that you may request, in writing, that your papers not be submitted to [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com). However, if you choose this option you will be required to provide documentation to substantiate that the papers are your original work and do not include any plagiarized material.

Students with Disabilities:

The university provides reasonable accommodations to students with documented physical and learning disabilities. If you have a disability or special need for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, please inform the instructor and contact the Office of Students with Disabilities (OSD). The OSD, located in Administration Building Room 127, coordinates all documentation of disabilities. The office can be reached at (323) 343-314 or <http://www.calstatela.edu/univ/osd/>.

Graduate Students:

Graduate students will write two scholarly book reviews instead of the midterm and final exams. These reviews will be on historical monographs related to California history, selected in consultation with the instructor. The book reviews should be 1250-1500 words and reflect the best practices of book reviews in major historical journals. These reviews are due on the days of the exams. In addition to the final paper, graduate students will compose a syllabus for a course on California history or related field.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

**Week 1**

2 Apr The Significance of California History

4 Apr Approaching the Past Historically

**Reading:** Chan and Orin, chapter 1,  
Nagel, “Sex Matters” and “Constructing Ethnicity and Sexuality,”  
Zinn, “The Use and Abuse of History”

**Week 2**

9 Apr California’s Native Peoples

**Reading:** Chan and Olin, 2

11 Apr Spanish Settlement

**Reading:** Chan and Olin, 3

**Week 3**

16 Apr Mexican California

**Reading:** Chan and Olin, 4

18 Apr The Americanization of California, Part I

**Reading:** Chan and Olin, 5 & 6

**Week 4**

23 Apr The Americanization of California, Part II

**Reading:** Helen Hunt Jackson, *Ramona*

**FIRST BOOK REVIEW DUE (*Ramona*)**

25 Apr Big Business and Urban Labor

**Reading:** Chan and Olin, 7

**Week 5**

30 Apr The Complexities of Reform

**Reading:** Chan and Olin, 8

2 May **MIDTERM EXAM**

**Week 6**

7 May The Great Depression

**Reading:** Chan and Olin, 10

9 May World War II  
**Reading:** Chan and Olin, 12

**Week 7**

14 May Postwar California  
**Reading:** Chan and Olin, 11  
Nicolaides, “The Texture of Social Life”

16 May Suburbanization and the California Dream  
**Reading:** D. J. Waldie, *Holy Land: A Suburban Memoir*  
**SECOND BOOK REVIEW DUE (*Holy Land*)**

**Week 8**

21 May The Other Side of Suburbia  
**Reading:** Avila, “The Nation’s ‘White Spot’”

23 May Protest and Counterculture  
**Reading:** Chan and Olin, 13

**Week 9**

28 May **Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday – No Class**

30 May The Rise of the New Right  
**Reading:** McGirr, “The Setting”

**Week 10**

4 Jun Immigration  
**Reading:** Héctor Tobar, *The Barbarian Nurseries*  
**THIRD BOOK REVIEW DUE (*The Barbarian Nurseries*)**

6 Jun Contemporary California  
**Reading:** Chan and Olin, 14, 15, or 16

**Final Exam Week**

11 Jun **FINAL EXAM: TIME pm**

Elements of this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor as announced in class.