

Graduate Seminar in Borderlands History
History 5374 Course Syllabus
Fall 2015

Professor: Dr. Selfa Chew
Office: Liberal Arts 401
Phone: 915-747-8650
Email: sachewsmithart@utep.edu
Office Hours: TBA

Course Description

This research seminar focuses on historical borderland narratives from the perspectives of sex, gender, and intersections (class, race, and religion among the factors to consider in the writing of history). We will study texts with an eye toward research design and methodology and consider some of the ways scholars have constructed modern borderlands projects and definitions of borderlands, borders, and frontiers.

Texts reviewed in this class are intended to be a model for your own research paper. Students will develop an original research project that falls within the thematic boundaries of the course.

Evaluation is based on attendance and class participation, written summaries and critiques of texts, peer review, a written original research paper (20-25 pages) and several shorter preparatory assignments, as well as brief oral presentations, the most important being the presentation of your own research. This course will promote the practice of critical reading, thinking, and writing skills while accomplishing the concrete objectives of the Ph.D. program in Borderlands history. If a doctoral student, your research paper may be considered for inclusion in your Ph.D. portfolio under borderlands, transnational, or global history. I hope we will develop publication-quality papers through our research, writing and editing in this class.

Required Books (available at the campus bookstore or Amazon.com)

1. *Queer Migrations: Sexuality, U.S. Citizenship, and Border Crossings* by Eithne Luibheid and Lionel Cantu, University of Minnesota Press, 2005.
2. *Three Decades of Engendering History: Selected Works of Antonia I. Castañeda*, University of North Texas Press, 2014.
3. *Unspeakable Violence: Remapping U.S. and Mexican National Imaginaries* by Nicole M. Guidotti-Hernández, 2011.

Optional.

4. *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide* by Andrea Smith, Duke University Press Books, 2015.

All texts are available at UTEP's bookstore or through Amazon, Barnes and Noble and other bookstores.

In addition, I strongly recommend the following book (available online):

William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White, *The Elements of Style* (any edition).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND POLICIES

Attendance and Participation: Students are expected to be on time and prepared to participate in every class meeting. Regular attendance is crucial in a discussion-centered course such as this. If absent, students will submit a report on a chapter of *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide* by Andrea Smith, or any other book I will assign, and will present to the class that section. Only one absence can be made up through such report and presentation. Subsequent absences will result in a 10% deduction from your final grade.

More than THREE absences will automatically result in a failing grade. Absence points will be discounted when failing to attend individual meetings with your instructor. Two times late will be equivalent to one absence. Texting in class or taking care of homework not related to our course will result in a penalty (5% deductions per occurrence and dropping the class if a chronic problem).

Discussion Guidelines:

1. Try not to speak again until everyone has spoken.
2. Stay on task and *focused* on readings. Avoid tangents. Textual analysis is primary and will assist the development of research and writing skills.
3. Establish what the author is *trying* to accomplish and what s/he *did* before discussing the work's shortcomings.
4. Explain what features of the research you are presenting on would be useful to conduct your own research (methods, sources, approach, organization, etc.)
4. Computers must be set aside during discussions and presentations.

Late Assignments: I will not accept assignments after the due dates.

Grades: The grading scale is as follows: 90-100=A, 80-89=B, 70-79=C, 60-69=D, and 59 and below=F. Class requirements and assignments will be weighted in the final grade as follows:

10%: Attendance, participation, as well as written and oral comments of papers and presentations.

15%: Reviews of books (5% each)

5% Reflection on articles

5% Presentation of two books included in your bibliography.

5%: Blind review of a paper. This must be a detailed review, identifying coherence, proper use of sources, grammar mistakes, and originality of paper. Superficial, rushed reviews will not earn points.

50%: Research project (Bibliography 5%; Prospectus: 5%; Drafts 5%, Final Paper: 30%; Presentation 5%). Our goal is to write a publishable text or a text that can be the foundation of a long MA paper, or dissertation chapter. Failure to submit your final paper or present it will result in an "F."

Academic Integrity/Ethics/Conduct: Academic honesty is a must. See The Handbook of Operating Procedures: http://hoop.utp.edu/Student_Affairs_Index_Page_HOP.htm.

It is important to write reviews that will help you reflect on your own research and writing. Although the description of chapters in the introduction of each book is provided, the goal is to read all the chapters to identify methodology and interpretation. Students are expected to write original graduate-quality reviews and research paper. Graduate students must be familiar with research methodologies, formats used in the field, and the writing of original texts, paying attention to signs of plagiarism. Students are expected to use academic sources, mainly published by higher education institutions, and primary sources. Long quotes from secondary sources without any analysis involved are equivalent to plagiarism. UTEP's experts in handling plagiarism will evaluate plagiarism taking in account that: "students must be able to identify common knowledge and jargon in the field; must be able to identify knowledge unique to the source; be able to use the citation system required by the field and know how to cite ever-changing internet sources."

Make sure you visit this site before beginning writing your paper.

<http://www.academics.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=65927>

If this is your first research course, or you are taking this course as an elective class, or you need to review archival research practices, I suggest that you read these very simple texts that deal with the art of writing papers based on primary sources. Here are two useful links:

http://dohistory.org/on_your_own/toolkit/research.html

<http://www.hamilton.edu/documents/writing-center/WritingGoodHistoryPaper.pdf>

ASSIGNMENTS

Writing Rules:

1. Heed the page limitations and spacing requirements for each assignment.
2. Always use Times or Times New Roman 12-point font (and normal margins).
3. Send your documents using Microsoft Word. I will not accept other format.
4. Submit your papers through Blackboard.

Presentations:

All students are responsible for the material presented and will set aside their computers and cell phones in class, unless special permission has been granted. We will choose randomly the chapters to be discussed so be ready to discuss any and all chapters and to receive a grade for participation in each session. Your final paper presentation will take place on the final exam date. No exceptions.

Book Reviews and Presentations

1-PAGE SINGLE-SPACED synopses of the assigned readings are due by 10:00 AM on the day the work is listed on the course calendar.

Synopses are to help you digest the readings, prepare to participate in discussions in meaningful ways, and understand how authors have theorized and constructed research

projects; they will also allow me to engage with you as a writer before you turn in the longer paper. These short papers should demonstrate that you *read carefully and thought about the material*. Summarize the book or article in one single-spaced page, using the following format:

Author. *Title*. City: Publisher, date.

OR

Author. "Chapter title." In editor/s, *book title*, pages. City: Publisher, date.

Theme: Write a paragraph explaining the main point (conclusion, or central argument). In other words, what is the author arguing?

Other themes: Write one or more paragraphs describing other subsidiary points.

Organization and Approach: In one or more paragraphs, explain why the author has chosen to research and write about this subject; the time period, country or countries, and topics the author covers; how the author organizes the material (chronologically, thematically, by region, etc.); sources; and, the author's theoretical approach.

Comments: Write a paragraph assessing the work's quality and its contribution to the scholarly literature. What is its contribution to borderlands history?

Since you have little space, choose only the most vital information and write concisely, avoiding passives and other wordy, awkward constructions. Think about each word you use. Pay close attention to the introduction and conclusion of the work. You will be graded on writing, analysis of the reading, and how well you follow the format.

Reviews are due at 10:00 AM of the day in which we discuss that particular reading.

Presentations will explain the same points you will include in your summary. Since we will not have time to present each and all texts, we will select randomly the chapters to discuss on the same date they are scheduled. If you are not called to present the chapter you are responsible for, we will consider it as presented. Remember, you must read all chapters and be prepared to comment on each of them during our discussions, according to our schedule.

Late papers will not be accepted.

RESEARCH PAPER

Start from day one thinking about your paper's subject. You must visit several archives in El Paso to explore available sources. Students will provide copies of at least 10 documents analyzed, along with the final paper.

Prospectus and Working Bibliography: 1-2 double-spaced pages of text and a working bibliography of primary and secondary sources (numbers of sources will vary). Create two sections—one for primary and one for secondary sources. The prospectus should describe

your proposed research project, your goals for the paper, and why you wish to conduct this research. After surveying the relevant secondary literature, you will argue that there is a need for your research project and why it is important. Discuss the purpose it will serve, the gaps in the literature it will help address, etc. See Kate Turabian for the proper way to cite sources in notes and a bibliography.

Brief First Draft: 3-4 double-spaced pages of text on what you are finding in your research. This should include a working thesis and examples from the primary source material, and, possibly, some engagement with the secondary literature in your area (a review of the most important research dealing with your topic). Include a new working bibliography.

Peer Review Session: Read carefully and offer thoughtful comments, suggestions, and critiques with an eye toward helping your classmates make their analyses sharper and their writing clearer. Pay attention to larger conceptual issues as well as editing concerns. Write directly on the hard copies of the papers, which you will turn in during the peer review session.

Brief Oral Presentation: Offer a 5-minute summary of your project. Reflect on the process of conducting research and writing. Discuss things you learned both about your topic and the experience in general. Tell us about surprises you encountered. I encourage you to use a visual aid (image, map, etc.) to enhance your presentation.

Final Paper: 25 double-spaced pages of text, in addition to footnotes or endnotes and a final bibliography. Take up the comments, suggestions, and critiques offered by the peer review session. Revise your paper carefully. It should be *coherent* and should have the following: *opening story/"hook"; introduction that frames the paper (perhaps some discussion of the secondary literature); thesis/argument; body with examples from the sources that support the argument (and some engagement with the secondary literature); an explanation of why this paper is different from other research dealing with the same topic; conclusion that restates thesis in different words and summarizes. Your paper must cite relevant literature (secondary sources), reflecting your research of your fields historiography.* Refer to Kate Turabian for the proper way to cite sources in notes and a bibliography.

Course Calendar (subject to change)

Week 1, August 24: Introduction.

- 1) Guided visit to the Library (UTEP). Special Collections and Microfilm.
- 2) Introduction to our course.

Week 2, August 31: Three articles.

"There Is Great Good in Returning": A Testimonio from the Borderlands, by Dr. Yolanda Chávez Leyva. *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 2/3, Gender on the Borderlands (2003), pp. 1-9.

“Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” by Joan W. Scott. *The American Historical Review*. Vol. 91, No. 5 (Dec., 1986), pp. 1053-1075.
“Queering the Borderlands: The Challenges of Excavating the Invisible and Unheard” by Emma Pérez. *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*. Vol. 24, No. 2/3, *Gender on the Borderlands* (2003), pp. 122-131.
No synopsis due. Only one page (minimum) with a reflection on these three texts and the topic you would like to research. Submit through Blackboard by 10 AM today.

Week 3, September 7:

Labor day.

Week 4, September 14:

Review the historiography of the topic you intend to research. Submit a list of at least five of the most important books in that field by 10 AM today *Three Decades of Engendering History*
Synopsis due by 10:00 AM
State your research topic and possible sources.
Queer Migrations. Due date: September 21.

Week 5, September 21: *Queer Migrations*.

Synopsis due by 10:00 AM

Week 6, September 28: No class. Research time.

Submit your prospectus, citing sources and bibliography.
Unspeakable Violence. Synopsis due date: October 5.

Week 7, October 5:

Unspeakable Violence.
Synopsis due by 10:00 AM

Week 8, October 12:

Submit your work in progress by 10: AM.
Individual meetings.
Register for bibliography presentation.

Week 9, October 19:

Be prepared to talk about two books or articles cited in your bibliography. They must be related to gender and sexuality in the borderlands.

Week 10, October 26:

No class — Submit the information you have gathered so far to write your paper, and your updated working bibliography.

Week 11, November 2: WRITE/REVISE. There will be no class. Submit a report on your work (it can be a draft of your paper), demonstrating your progress.

Week 12, November 9: WRITE/REVISE. There will be no class. Submit a report on your work (it can be a draft of your paper), demonstrating your progress.

Week 13, November 16: Submit your draft by 10:00AM. You will receive one paper for peer review via e-mail by 2:00 PM. Complete your blind review form and write comments on your peer's paper. Submit by midnight.

Week 14, November 23: Class conference. Brief oral presentations of research in class. Time allotment: 15 minutes. This is a practice session for a conference. I encourage you to use a visual aid (image, map, etc.) to enhance the presentation.

Week 15, November 30: Class conference II. Brief oral presentations of research in class. Time allotment: 15 minutes.

Final Week, December 7. Final Research Paper and Bibliography submitted through Blackboard. At this time, turn in all peer review papers (papers your peers wrote on) in a folder.