Legal history of El Paso and the Southwest is a virgin land; few historians have dealt with the subject. Through the extensive reading of secondary works, not only legal but non-legal, we will attempt to ascertain the nature and scope of the field. The course will concentrate on the crucial period, 1880-1920, when El Paso and the surrounding area as the borderlands had made a drastic transformation in population, economy, culture, politics, education, and society.

I. Required Readings


II. The Scope and Mechanics of the Course.

Since law has ingrained in every aspect of the human society and thus is an essential index to society, we have to examine the entire society to find what law is. Moreover, the field of law is wide and extensive, encompassing not only formal statutes, codes, rules and ordinances but also all kinds of norms like cultures, traditions, and customs.

The first book we read is Garcia’s Desert Immigrants, through which we analyze all aspects of the El Paso region thoroughly and find out what kinds of law were prevalent in the area. During our discussion in the first three weeks, it is hoped that
all the students are able to select some specific legal topics that could be kept and worked on throughout the semester. Eventually, students will select 8-10 books and articles on the topics of their choosing and will write their final papers (15-20 pages of historiographical essays) on their topics.

Students are required to attend all the sessions, not only concentrating on their own projects but also offering their fellow students useful suggestions, comments, and criticism.

III. Office and Office Hours

Liberal Arts Building, Room 131
M, 7:50-9:00 pm
TR, 7:30-9:00 am and 7:20-8:00 pm
and by appointment