Course Details

Title: California History
Section: 4303
Time: Online
Place: Online

Course Description

Survey of California history from the first peoples to inhabit this region through the present. Themes include California's relationship to the rest of the nation, agriculture, politics, gender, race and ethnicity, social movements, water and other resources. This course can be used to satisfy requirements for the Teacher Education degree. Not repeatable. (A-F or P/NP) Transfer: (CSU, UC) (CC: HIST 11) General Education: (MJC-GE: B) (CSU-GE: D6) (IGETC: 4F)

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon satisfactory completion of this course, the student should be prepared to:
1. Demonstrate factual knowledge of key political, economic, social and cultural events and issues in the history of California.
2. Apply critical thinking to historical concepts and developments in history.
3. Evaluate, analyze and interpret primary and secondary historical sources and make historical arguments based on these sources.

Instructor Information

Instructor: Mark Robertson
Email: robertsonm@yosemite.edu
Office: Zoom App
Office Hours: By Appointment
Contacting the Instructor

ALL course communication will be done through the Canvas email system.
This ensures a rapid response time without any confusion as to who each student is and what course they are in. Any student emails sent to my college email address are not guaranteed to be answered promptly.

Direct Email – If you choose to send an email directly through my college email address, your email MUST include in the SUBJECT LINE: Your Name, W#, Class, Class Time. If it does not include these items it will be lost in my email filtering system.

Comment Box – DO NOT ask questions through the "comment box" on assignments as I do not check these for questions. If you have a question about a grade or my evaluation of an assignment, email me through Canvas and specify the assignment in question.

Course Materials

Accessibility: if internet and computer access are barriers for your success in this course, let me know within the first week of the course so that we might identify strategies to limit or eliminate that barrier.

Readings

There will be a series of readings that are required in this course. All are free of charge or low cost in digital format.

Method of Instruction

Introduction

The course is organized by and thrives on student curiosity, student dialogue and consistent participation. Students will only rarely be lectured at, but will be active participants in the learning experience as a STUDENT OF HISTORY. This means that you will play the **role of historical investigator** of the past (as historians do) and create arguments to a series of historical questions.

To that end, the course will be organized around three Project Periods that represent three broad historical periods of inquiry. Each will revolve around a three historical questions, all of which you will receive at the beginning of the course. These questions will form the framework for our investigation into the historical period and guide our exploration into the themes, events, and topics of each period.

YOUR GOAL for each Project Period is to:

1. Analyze the Project Period Questions see [Guide to Question Analysis](#).
2. Develop your understanding of the historical period through engagement in class dialogue, your assigned readings, **and** periodic assignments see [Guide to Reading History](#) & [Guide to Historical Research](#)
3. Third, Construct a historical interpretation (argument) for each of the Project Period Questions in outline form [Guide to Argument Structures](#)
4. Finally, Complete a formal argumentative essay demonstrating your answer to ONE of the Project Period Questions. At the end of the Project Period I will choose ONE of the Project Period Questions as the subject of your formal essay. (See also "Achieving Choice" below) [Guide to Writing History](#)

Achieving Choice

If you wish to choose your Project Period Question at the end of the Project Period, you may do so by "Achieving Choice." To do this each student will need to submit their Project Period Outlines before the "Deadline for Choice" AND receive a "C" or better on each. If these two criteria are fulfilled, the student may CHOOSE which question to write their essay on. There is no point difference or other advantages outside of choice. Submission of outlines for choice can be sent via email or in person.

Participation

As in any college course, PARTICIPATION and/or ATTENDANCE is key in succeeding. Attendance and/or participation will be recorded throughout the semester.

Since this is a student led investigation into the past, our time in participating is incredibly valuable. We are traveling through each of these historical periods as a "[community of inquiry](#)" – a collective effort to understand the past and investigate the answers to the historical questions. This requires students to be engaged in this effort and be active investigators during our class meetings in-person or online. Our community spaces are the place where we as a group can dialogue about historical evidence, about historical interpretations, and evaluate our progress towards completing the Project Period Outlines. Importantly, these activities are designed for us to work together to solve the problems of interrogating, interpreting and constructing our histories.

In addition to the value of this community, you will be graded on your ability to incorporate community dialogue into your [Project Period Question Outlines](#) and

[Project Period Essays](#). So don't feel as though you cannot work collaboratively on an assignment or project.

Weekly Preparation

1. Consuming the textual and/or audio sources related to our current Project Period before completing your assignments or engaging in discussions.
2. Reflecting on prior notes, including recording questions that you have about notes, readings, and materials and seeking those answers out through collaborative discussion or asking the instructor.
3. Reflecting on your current progress in the Project Period Period, including what you need to move forward towards your completed outlines and seeking out solutions to those problems.

IMPORTANT: To be an active participant in this course, students need to be prepared to demonstrate "true student" behaviors. I DO NOT EXPECT students to come into this class with all the required attitudes, tools, and behaviors to succeed in this course, HOWEVER I DO EXPECT that all students develop these skills overtime. Several criteria illuminate "true student" behavior that will result in the likelihood of success in this course (not to mention minimize stress and inappropriate frustration

True Student Behavior Criteria

To significantly increase your chances of success in this course, students need to be prepared to demonstrate "true student" behaviors as defined in this syllabus. I DO NOT EXPECT students to come into this class with all the required attitudes, tools, and behaviors to succeed in this course, HOWEVER, I DO EXPECT that all students develop these skills over time. Several criteria illuminate "true student" behavior that will result in the likelihood of success in this course (not to mention minimize stress and inappropriate frustration).

- *True Students make frustration meaningful by working consistently throughout the course.*
- *True Students take active, organized, and efficient notes on class dialogue/video lectures and avoid "stenographic" notes.*
- *True Students read all assigned materials before the week that it is assigned and these materials should be brought to our class meetings for maximum opportunity to engage in class dialogue.*
- *True Students come to class prepared with questions about historical material, readings, and outlines.*

- *True Students engage thoughtfully and constructively with other students inside and outside class meeting times.*
- *True Students read their materials "with a purpose."*
- *True Students begin their Question Outlines early and work on them consistently throughout the Exam Period.*
- *True Students utilize instructor office hours early and consistently throughout the semester.*
- *True Students complete multiple drafts of Project Period Outlines and Project Period Essays.*

Student Guides

Your success in this course is my utmost priority. To help build those true student skills, there are several student guides available to you for this course. In addition, these guides will be helpful for any course currently or in the future. Visit these resources if you need assistance with:

Asking Questions — **Guide to Class Dialogue**

As mentioned above, the key to this course is asking questions. Students are responsible for driving the community dialogue towards understanding the history, the concepts, and the Project Period Questions. Asking questions is central to any community of inquiry. What questions to ask, how to ask them, and determining what follow-up questions are necessary are key to your success in this course. See the student Guide to Class Dialogue for guidance on how to ask questions that benefit your progress towards course goals.

Taking Notes — **Guide to Note-Taking**

Importantly, "Your mind is for **having ideas**, not holding them." And therefore, we must recognize as creatures of learning that note-taking is a requirement of learning in any course. See the Guide to Note-Taking for further clarification.

Reading Historical Sources — **Guide to Reading History**

Reading in any discipline, requires a set of understandings and concepts, in essence a language of its own. The historical discipline is no different. See the Guide to Historical Reading for further information.

Doing Research — [Guide to Historical Research](#)

Doing any kind of research requires good planning and organization. You must always begin with a question, then move on to capturing the appropriate information, organizing that information, and finally creating something with it. This process works best when a system is established to minimize any extraneous thinking. In other words, much of the research process itself should require very little active thought. Save that energy for the analytical thinking regarding the sources and arguments. See the Guide to Historical Research for more about this process.

Outlining an Argument — [Guide to Argument Outlines](#)

When writing in a non-fiction context, like the social sciences, your writing is always an argument. Building a coherent, evidence based, argument is not always easy, but is far more efficient when you outline your thesis, claims, and evidence in a structured way. See the [Guide to Argument Structures](#) for further clarification.

Writing Essays — [Guide to Writing History](#)

The highest order of learning is in creation. In this course you will be creating arguments about historical topics. This will require the production of analytical essays. Like any other academic endeavor of any complexity, the process become far more difficult without systems in place to plan, break up, and execute the necessary steps. See the Guide to Writing History if you feel your system needs some improvement.

Course Assignments

To encourage meaningful dialogue within our community and evaluate each students' learning, there will be periodic assignments. These assignments facilitate the exploration of the historical content and encourage the development of skills necessary as a student of history. Each assignment plays a *key* role in the Project Period. There is no "busy work" but stepping-stones towards the larger Project. Below you will find a generalized list of assignments, their purpose and requirements.

Critical Reflection Journal

Purpose:

The goal of the Critical Reflection Journal is a chance for you to purposely reflect on the connections, meanings, and significance of the historical stories, evidence, and meanings discussed each week. There will be a series of questions that you must respond to each week.

Requirements

Each student must respond to the provided questions each week. The questions will vary from week-to-week, but will always revolve around personal reflection on the past.

The Critical Reflection Journal will be submitted online through Canvas at the end of each week (Saturday night by 11:59pm). Your responses will be private, and only the instructor will be able to read what you have written.

Grading Criteria:

Critical Reflection Journals will be graded Credit/No Credit. Credit will be achieved by fulfilling the requirements above. Missing elements will result in *No Credit*.

Project Period Milestones

As described above, you will always be working on *some* part of the larger project. Below is the list of milestones that you will pass as we all progress to the end of the project. Each piece is a *critical* component of the larger project and should not be devalued.

I. Question Analysis

Purpose

In the first step for each Project Period, students will be asked to complete a Question Analysis for each of the Project Period Questions. This assignment is designed so that students understand the meaning, purpose, and components of the historical questions being asked, and also gain specific feedback towards their investigation of the Project Period Questions.

Requirements

For the Question Analysis you are required to submit a single document that presents your analysis of EACH exam question. The analysis MUST INCLUDE THREE ELEMENTS:

- **Subject/Focus:** What is the central subject or focus of the question as a whole? What idea, concept, or theme does the question revolve around? A single phrase or word will suffice
- **Activities/Parts:** What are all the activities that the question asks you to respond to, whether explicit or implicit? In other words, you will need to answer many smaller questions to address the larger question being asked, what are they – list them?
- **Essential Question:** Given all of the activities identified, some will be of less significance than others in exploring the subject/focus. In identifying the variety of activities, what is the overarching question being asked? What is the central question that you are answering? What central question are all the activities pointing to? This is interpretive and may or may not be written directly in the question.

Grading Criteria:

This assignment is evaluated with Credit/No Credit. Credit is given for fully complete assignments only. Any missing components result in No Credit. Resubmissions allowed for full credit.

II. Argument Structure

Purpose:

The goal of the Argument Structure assignment is to explore and establish an analytical structure to your historical argument for each of the exam questions. In other words, how will you organize your outline? What will be the main points? Where will the identified activities fit in your main points? How will they be presented?

IMPORTANT: I DO NOT want you to attempt to answer the question at all at this point. The point is for you to begin to hypothesize the logic of answering any given question. Begin with what the question is asking you to do, then explore how you would answer the question. For example, a cause and consequence question will be organized differently than a comparison and contrast question. This assignment can be completed with nothing more than the question itself and some thought. No reading is required.

Requirements:

In your submission you must include:
- Preliminary Argument Title
- Preliminary Essential Question
- Series of Conceptual Main Points of Argument in Outline Form
- Specific activities that will be Answered in each Main Point

Grading Criteria (weighted equally):

This assignment is evaluated with Credit/No Credit. Credit is given for fully complete assignments only. Any missing components result in No Credit. Resubmission will be required to receive credit.

III. Argument Outlines

Purpose:

The Question Outlines are a brief, structured presentation of your argument. This assignment is designed so that students can demonstrate their competency in the historical content, in their historical skills, and their analytical thinking. For each Exam Period, you are expected to outline your answer to EACH Project Question demonstrating your argument through a presentation of your evidence.

Students will use concepts, evidence and examples from class dialogue and source texts to support their argument. Remember you are telling a story and therefore your outline should present the story in a way that the reader can follow all of. Students must ensure that all evidence is clearly cited using parenthetical citations which include the source author's last name AND source page number(s) where the evidence can be found.

IMPORTANT: The use of sources/evidence outside of the course readings is strongly discouraged. If you decide to use outside resources, THEY MUST BE APPROVED by me in writing prior to submission. Use of all unapproved resources will be ignored in evaluating your work, and will result in an uncited evidence.

For the conclusion, students must also include narrative interpretation of potential implications of the question to the modern world. To do this, students must present a current news article related to some aspect of the question and demonstrate how it helps you better understand the news article.

You are free to format your Argument Outlines how you wish. However, the requirements below must be clear.

Requirements:
- Argument Title
- Thesis of Argument (Underlined)
- A Structured Argument using bullet points
- Evidence that demonstrate your main points, while using specific examples
- All Evidence Must be Cited
- Standard Conclusion with restated thesis, summary of argument and the implications of the argument in today's world through a current news article

Grading Criteria (weighted equally):
- **Content**: Did you answer the question, all of the question, and all that was implied by the question?
- **Argument**: Did you present a solid thesis and a reasonable progression of ideas?
- **Examples**: Did you include the best examples and illustrations to demonstrate the validity of you ideas and concepts (including relevant graphic presentations from the text, class dialogue and other sources)?
- **Citations**: Did you mention and cite specific evidence from the appropriate reading material, class dialogue, and provide your own original ideas (each should comprise approximately 1/3 of the essay's content)?
- **Conclusion**: Did you discuss the implications of the question and have an appropriate conclusion?

IV. Project Period Essay

Purpose:
For each Exam Period, you are expected to create a formal essay presenting your argument for ONE of the Exam Questions. The Essay Exams are designed for students to demonstrate their understanding of the course material utilizing the historians' toolkit and their own analytical thinking. The essay is similar to the outlines, but each student will instead present their argument in narrative form guiding the reader through their argument using evidence to demonstrate their points.

Requirements:
All Essay Exams will be a formal take-home assignment. It will be necessary for you to select, organize and evaluate historical evidence from the readings, class discussions, and your own ideas (not opinion) and construct a coherent argument that answers the historical question assigned or chosen. There is no minimum or maximum word-count

or length. Length of the essay is not as important as the quality. I will grade your essay according to the Grading Criteria below, not on its length.

IMPORTANT: All evidence and ideas that are not your own must be cited using footnotes in a citation style of your choosing. The use of sources/evidence outside of the course readings is strongly discouraged. If you decide to use outside resources, they must be approved by me in writing prior to submission. Use of all unapproved resources will be ignored in evaluating your work, and will result in an uncited piece of evidence.

All exams are due on the due date assigned on the Calendar.

Requirement Details:

• Typed
• Titled
• Double-Spaced
• Paginated
• 12pt Text Size
• Underlined Thesis Statement
• Evidence cited using Chicago Format & Footnotes

Grading Criteria (weighted equally):

• **Topic**: Did you answer the question, all of the question, and all that was implied by the question?
• **Argument**: Did you present a solid thesis, a reasonable progression of ideas?
• **Argument Balance**: Did you allocate your time and presentation appropriately, developing all parts of the question in balance?
• **Examples**: Did you include the best examples and illustrations to demonstrate the validity of your ideas?
• **Presentation**: Did you use the required formatting, employ good grammar and the most effective presentation techniques?
• **Citations-Readings**: Did you include and cite specific examples from the appropriate reading material, including primary sources? (1/3 of the essay's content)
• **Citations-Class Dialogue**: Did you include the most significant and appropriate ideas and graphics from class sessions? (should comprise approximately 1/3 of essay's content)
• **Original Ideas**: Did you include your own original ideas? (should comprise approximately 1/3 of the essay's content)
• **Accuracy**: Are there factual inaccuracies in your presentation?

- **Conclusion**: Did you include a conclusion and adequately address the implications of the question through a current news article.

Disqualifying Criteria:
If when completing your assignment any one of the following apply your submission will be automatically disqualified and receive no credit:
- Plagiarism
- Submission does not relate to the assignment/question
- No sources cited
- Submission includes blatant hate speech
- Missing a majority of assignment elements in grading criteria

Grading Policies & Breakdown

Grading in this course will be based on a [mastery grading](#) approach. Grading of most assignments will be evaluated by 4 criteria:
- **Strong** = Thoroughly meets requirements outlined in the grading rubric.
- **Satisfactory** = Mostly meets requirements outlined in the grading rubric.
- **Weak** = Serious gaps in meeting requirements outlined in the grading rubric.
- **No Credit** = Substantially misses the requirements outline in the grading rubric.

In this way, scores are readily translatable to performance outcomes – no more wondering what the difference between an 86% and an 87%. Assignments that are graded according to a grading rubric will be assigned a score between "No Credit" – "Weak" – "Satisfactory" – "Strong" for each of the grading criteria.

As an example:
A student who consistently receives "weak" marks on grading criteria will be in danger of getting a "D" for the assignment or course.

A student who consistently receives "Satisfactory" marks may receive a "C" or a low "B."

A student who consistently receives "Strong" marks on grading criteria will result in an "A" for the assignment or course.

Assignment Weighting

Each assignment and Project Period is weighted and therefore adding up 'point values' are not a clear way of understanding your overall course performance. Details of assignment and Project Period weighting is presented in the Canvas Grade Book. In general, the value of each Project Period increases significantly as the course progresses.

Therefore, when attempting to determine how much an assignment is worth, judging how well you are doing, or what you might need on a set of assignments to achieve a desired goal, you MUST recognize that the point value is not the appropriate unit of measure. See the Canvas Grade book to determine the assignment value breakdown. The values below give a rough estimate.

Feedback on Submitted Work

Grading of assignments under ideal circumstances will occur within a week of the submission date.
Feedback on your coursework may come in TWO forms:
- **First**, each assignment has an associated Grading Rubric that clearly displays the assignment's grading criteria and requirements. Each graded submission will have a filled out Grading Rubric where you can view how well you did on each criteria.
- **Second**, handwritten comments may be present on your submission if deemed necessary by the instructor.

Additional commentary or explanation on submitted assignments are available upon request.

Grade Breakdown

Grade Percentage

A = 100–87%
B = 86–76%
C = 75–64%
D = 63–53%
F = 52–0%

Project Period Breakdown of Total Grade

First = 32%

Second = 68%

Late Work

Late assignments will always be accepted for a penalty of 10% per day late, except the final (see below). It's important to submit work on time! After 7 days the student will receive a "0" on the assignment, and a one-on-one conversation is required between the instructor and student to submit work after that point.

Under no ordinary circumstances may final work at the end of the semester be late and receive credit. If a serious emergency or barrier arrises that prevents you from completing your work on time, let me know **immediately** so that we might mitigate the issue.

Improvement Bonus

It is a principle of mine that if you as a student persist through a course, and do significantly well at the end, you deserve a boost to your overall grade. In general I believe that you should be judged by your performance at the end of a course, and not in the beginning or middle. This offers an opportunity for persisting students to do very well in this course.

The "Improvement Bonus" is available to students who have met **two** criteria:
- Completed **all** coursework **AND**
   has received an **"A"** on the Third Project Period Essay.

The bonus is an additional **12% extra credit** very substantial.

Submitting Course Work

All coursework will be submitted for grading through Canvas. In addition, coursework may be submitted multiple times for "improvement of grade" prior to the due date by resubmitting in Canvas. However, no resubmissions are accepted after the due date.

All submissions must be made in accepted file formats (generally .PDF, .DOC, .DOCX) or acceptable cloud service through an official "Share Link" (Google Docs/Google Drive/Apple iCloud/Dropbox/Box/Microsoft OneDrive).

Student submissions will NOT be accepted by email unless arrangements are made otherwise. Students seeking commentary/feedback on work are free to email me a draft, but no grading will occur unless submitted through Canvas.

Contract Negotiation
Any late changes to course policies must be done through a one-on-one meeting between the student and instructor. Changes must be a "win-win" for both the course community and the student.