

HIST 5195, sec. 3. GRADUATE SEMINAR:
FRONTIERS, BORDERLANDS, COLONIES, AND EMPIRES
Fall, 2008, Tuesdays, 1:00 – 4:00

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COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course examines theories of the Cultural Encounter. The course objective is to give students a toolkit of intriguing ideas for explaining what happened in the past when two cultures met. Historians have studied cultural exchanges and conflicts in places called “frontiers,” “borderlands,” “colonies,” etc. In common seminar readings, we will see how scholars in history, anthropology, literature, and other disciplines have defined these spaces as a dynamic relationship between culturally distinct peoples living in a world of migration and conquest. Patently about culture, this course is also about power and the ways in which power relations informed cultural understanding, misunderstanding, dialogue, and transformation. The course will require a major research paper (20 double-spaced pages), in which students will apply the theories we’ve been reading, or invent a theory of their own, to a particular place and time when two (or more) cultures met. Readings cover the globe; student projects also will likely cover the globe, as students can choose any geography and time period for the research project.

Theory helps historians come up with questions to ask of their material and presents us with useful possibilities for explaining what we find in our primary sources. Theory also helps historians reach outside the narrowness of their particular research topics to consider larger patterns and processes. If all goes as planned, you should leave this course feeling overwhelmed by the possibilities, perhaps even confused and uncertain about how to unify all the different ideas you have encountered. But you will also leave this course with plenty of interpretive resources and a basic understanding of many concepts common to history discourse.

Throughout the course, persistent questions about culture, power, and space will come up, and we want to avoid becoming mired in semantics. We will not persistently ask “What is culture?” “What is power?” “What is a cultural encounter?” Let’s assume that culture means a people’s beliefs, attitudes, ideas, values, traditions, etc., and their related practices, institutions, and materials. Everything else about culture is a problem we will investigate:

Who has culture?

Where does one culture begin and another end?

How do cultures change over time?

What explains cultural differences?

What explains cultural similarities?

How does power shape culture?

How does culture affect relations between people?

When is a certain phenomenon about culture and when is it about power?

READINGS

So much excellent literature on frontiers, borderlands, colonies, and empires makes it impossible for this course to be comprehensive. In choosing our common readings, I have aimed for works that raise big questions and for breadth and variety. I have often chosen to use articles or book excerpts that provide overviews of particular approaches, with plentiful citations to guide you deeper into any approach of interest to you. I have also tried to mix classic and newer readings. Finally, I tried to limit myself to theorists whom I can understand—theorists whose writing is straightforward and transparent.

BOOKS TO PURCHASE

Lewis, Martin W. and Kären E. Wigen. *The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.

The following two books will be divvied up by members of the class on our first day of seminar—it is probably best not to buy either book before our first class meeting:

Sahlins, Marshall. *How “Natives” Think, About Captain Cook, For Example*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.

Obeyesekere, Gananath. *The Apotheosis of Captain Cook: European Mythmaking in the Pacific*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992.

Cooper, Frederick. *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.

Cooper, Frederick, and Ann Laura Stoler, eds. *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.

Kaplan, Amy. *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002.

Scott, James C. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990.

McCloskey, Deirdre. *Crossing: A Memoir*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999.

ASSIGNMENTS

Project Packet	20%
2 nd Thinkpiece	5%
Research Paper	35%
Class Participation	40%

Project Packet. Due the sixth week of class before individual meetings with me, the Project Packet gets you started on your research project and consists of

1) The Question. A paragraph or two describing the cultural encounter you will be focusing on, with a research question clearly stated. Also explain why you chose this cultural encounter and why the question you are proposing to address should prove an interesting one.

2) An Annotated Bibliography of primary sources. The annotation should describe the content, accessibility, and significance of each primary source in a few sentences. I recommend that you look for a particularly rich body of materials in one or two source

collections, so that you do not have to spend a lot of time locating disparate sources. I will not expect a wide variety of primary sources as I would in other big research projects, such as with the HIST 402/5102 paper. A focused, but rich, collection of documents (e.g., *The Jesuit Relations*, the journals of Captain Cook's voyages) would be a satisfactory body of primary sources for this project.

3) A 2-3 page Historiographic Essay. Compare the main arguments of the two to four most important secondary sources (books or articles) related to the cultural encounter you have chosen to research. Note that these secondary sources are probably not theoretical works but rather more narrowly conceptualized studies equivalent to your own paper. Do pay attention, however, to the conceptual/theoretical frameworks these scholars used to explain the significance and meaning of their research findings.

4) A 2-3 page Thinkpiece (reflective essay). Choose one common class reading (excluding my article "Categories") which seems relevant and useful to your research project at this point in the semester, and apply it to your proposed project. What particular questions/ideas does it present you with. You may draw specific examples from one of your primary sources to serve as illustration, but are not required to do so.

2nd Thinkpiece. Another 2-3 page thinkpiece as described above but which singles out a common class reading from the second half of the semester.

Research Paper. A 20-page paper (including citations in the form of endnotes or footnotes), based on original research in primary sources, which focuses on a single cultural encounter. These research papers must use a standard citation format, which I will give to you in a handout.

Class Participation.

- This grade is based on preparedness for seminar discussions and individual meetings; how often and how substantively you contribute to discussions; camaraderie, support, and interest in the other students' research projects; and particularly insightful comments or questions that get us all thinking about the material in new ways.
- Each student should expect to come to seminar prepared to initiate a round of discussion on the aspect of the readings that most interests you. You could, of course, come with several topics of interest, but just be sure that you come to class prepared to raise at least one issue for the class as a whole to consider.
- At the end of the course, each student will be assigned another's rough draft to read and will join me and the author of the paper in a meeting to discuss it.
- After each seminar meeting, I will record a check, check plus, or check minus for each student based on class that day, and during the individual meetings in week six, I will give you a midterm progress report on where your class participation grade stands at that moment.

CLASS SCHEDULE (Best to read the assigned readings in the order they are listed.)

WEEK 1 (8/26): INTRODUCTION
DIVVY UP WEEK 5 READINGS (M. Sahlins vs. Obeyesekere)

WEEK 2 (9/2): FRONTIERS

Read:

Turner, Frederick Jackson. *The Significance of the Frontier in American History* (1893).
Ed. Harold P. Simonson. NY: Frederick Ungar, 1963: 27-58.

Mood, Fulmer. "Notes on the History of the Word 'Frontier.'" *Agricultural History* 22, #2
(Apr. 1948), 78-83

Limerick, Patricia Nelson. "Introduction." *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past
of the American West*. NY: W.W. Norton, 1987: 17-32.

Adas, Michael. "From Settler Colony to Global Hegemon: Integrating the Exceptionalist
Narrative of the American Experience into World History." *The American
Historical Review* 106, #5 (Dec., 2001), 1692-1720.

Febvre, Lucien. "Frontière: The Word and the Concept" (1928). In *A New Kind of
History and Other Essays*. Ed. Peter Burke. NY: Harper & Row, 1973: 208-218.

Sahlins, Peter. "Natural Frontiers Revisited: France's Boundaries Since the Seventeenth
Century." *The American Historical Review* 95, #5 (Dec., 1990): 1423-1451.

WEEK 3 (9/9): BORDERLANDS, BEACHES, CONTACT ZONES, MIDDLE
GROUNDS

Read:

Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. 3rd. ed. San
Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2007: ch. 1 – 2 (pp. 23-45).

Dening, Greg. *Islands and Beaches: Discourse on a Silent Land, Marquesas, 1774
-1880*. Chicago: Dorsey Press, 1988: 1-44.

Pratt, Mary Louise. "Arts of the Contact Zone." *Profession* 91 (1991), 33-40.

White, Richard. *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great
Lakes Region, 1650-1815*. NY: Cambridge University Press, 1991: introduction,
ch. 1, ch. 2 (pp. ix-xvi, 1-93).

WEEK 4 (9/16): CATEGORIZING SPACE

Read:

Lewis & Wigen, *The Myth of Continents* (for purchase)

Shoemaker, Nancy. "Categories." In Nancy Shoemaker, ed., *Clearing a Path:
Theorizing the Past in Native American Studies*. NY: Routledge, 2002: 51-74.

WEEK 5 (9/23): CULTURAL ENCOUNTERS

*Read (Half the class will read Sahlins, half will read Obeyesekere, all will read the
Forum):*

M. Sahlins, *How "Natives" Think*, OR Obeyesekere, *The Apotheosis of Captain Cook*

Borofsky, Robert, et al. "CA Forum on Theory in Anthropology: Cook, Lono,
Obeyesekere, and Sahlins [and Comments and Reply]." *Current Anthropology* 38,

#2 (Apr., 1997), 255-282.

Bring to class: copies for those who do not have a copy of the book you read of a 1-2 page excerpt from Sahlins or Obeyesekere, which you believe represents that scholar's best evidence.

WEEK 6 (9/30): NO CLASS - INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS TO DISCUSS RESEARCH PROJECTS

Due: noon, Monday, 9/29, Project Packet (by email or in my mailbox; if by email, be sure that you receive a confirmation from me that I was able to print it out).

WEEK 7 (10/7): COLONIES & EMPIRES – MODERNIZATION, WORLD SYSTEMS THEORIES, etc.

Read:

Bentley, Jerry H. *Shapes of World History in Twentieth-Century Scholarship*. Washington, D.C.: American Historical Association, 1996.

Wolf, Eric R. "Introduction." *Europe and the People Without History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982: 3-23, 400-404.

Hall, Thomas D. "World-Systems Analysis: A Small Sample from a Large Universe." In Thomas D. Hall, ed., *A World-Systems Reader: New Perspectives on Gender, Urbanism, Cultures, Indigenous Peoples, and Ecology*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000: 3-27.

Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*, chs. 1-6.

WEEK 8 (10/14): COLONIES & EMPIRES – SUBALTERN & POSTCOLONIAL STUDIES

Read:

Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*. London: Routledge, 1989: Introduction, ch. 1 (pp. 1-37).

Chakrabarty, Dipesh. "A Small History of Subaltern Studies." In Henry Schwarz and Sangeeta Ray, eds., *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000: 467-485.

Cooper & Stoler, *Tensions of Empire* :

Cooper & Stoler, Preface, vii-x

Stoler & Cooper, "Between Metropole and Colony," 1-56

Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," 152-160

Comaroff, "Images of Empire, Contests of Conscience," 163-197

Wright, "Tradition in the Service of Modernity," 322-345

One other essay, your choice—not one of the essays assigned for Week 9

Appadurai, Arjun. "The Heart of Whiteness." *Callaloo* 16, #4 (Autumn, 1993): 796-807.

WEEK 9 (10/21): COLONIES & EMPIRES - GENDER

Read:

Cooper & Stoler, *Tensions of Empire*:

Davin, "Imperialism and Motherhood," 87-151

Stoler, "Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers," 198-237

Wildenthal, "Race, Gender, and Citizenship in the German Colonial Empire,"
263-283

Hunt, "'Le bébé en brousse,'" 287-321

Sinha, Mrinalini. *Gender and Nation*. Washington, D.C.: American Historical
Association, 2005.

WEEK 10 (10/28): WHERE IS EMPIRE?

Read:

Kaplan, *Anarchy of Empire*

WEEK 11 (11/4): CULTURE AND/OR POLITICS

Read:

Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*

Due: 2nd Thinkpiece

WEEK 12 (11/11): CROSSING BOUNDARIES

Read:

McCloskey, *Crossing: A Memoir*

Cohn, Bernard S. "An Anthropologist Among the Historians: A Field Study" and
"History and Anthropology: The State of Play," in Bernard S. Cohn, ed. *An
Anthropologist Among the Historians and Other Essays*. Delhi: Oxford
University Press, 1987: 1-49.

WEEK 13 (11/18): NO CLASS – INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS WITH ME & 2nd
READER

Due: noon, Friday, 11/14, first draft research paper, one copy to me and one to your
assigned reader

THANKSGIVING BREAK

WEEK 14 (12/2): PARTY

Due: Final Research Paper