

**RESEARCH SEMINAR: MEMORY, ETHNICITY, STATEHOOD, RACE,
AND NATIONALISM IN LATIN AMERICA
HISTORY 201LA, Spring 2010 ¹**

Instructor: Prof. Cecilia Méndez G.

Office: HSSB 4227

Voice Mail: 1-805-617-3939

Office Hours. Weds 11-12 & 4:00- 4:45 (weeks 1- 4), and Weds 4:00 – 6:00 pm (weeks 5 -10)

E-mail: mendez@history.ucsb.edu

Web Page: http://www.history.ucsb.edu/people/person.php?account_id=42

Course Description and Objectives

This one-quarter research seminar provides an opportunity to write an original research proposal on a topic concerning questions of ethnicity, nationalism, the state, memory or related subjects, in Latin American history.

During the course we will discuss common readings that will introduce you to some of the main literature on the topics and provide some theoretical framework for your projects. You shall also get started on your individual research projects. By the end of the quarter you will present a research prospectus, roughly 15-20 double-spaced pages long, apart from endnotes and bibliography. The prospectus should define the problem to investigate and its relevance (1-2 pages); it should lay out the your main research question and provide some tentative answers for it, that is, your main argument or working hypotheses (~ 2-3 pp). It should provide a critical assessment of the literature relevant to your project and *indicate how will your research complement, add to, and/or challenge, the works you are discussing* (7-8 pages); it should lay out you methodological and (ideally) your theoretical framework. Methodologies depend on the nature of your subject but in general they account for *how* will you carry out your research (kinds of sources, methods of collecting data, how will you access to your sources, etc (pp 1-2 pp). Finally your prospectus should present some preliminary findings based on your assessment of primary sources (~ 2-3 pp), and an outline of your research plan (~1-2 p) including a brief description of the chapters, and a timeline for research and writing.

A few words **on the theoretical framework** are pertinent. At the earliest stage of our research it is common for historians not to have much clarity about the theoretical underpinnings of our work. The point of the collective readings is precisely to acquire some theoretical and methodological tools for your research project. *As I see it, theory is about clarity of one's own conceptual choices, and is the part of our research that allows us to find interlocutors outside our specific field or discipline.* For example, a number of disciplines, and subfields within history use terms such as gender, ethnicity, state, nation, race, feminism, memory, but do not understand them the same way. Hence, you need to clarify your take on such broad theoretically (and politically) loaded concepts by indicating, for example, what authors inform your understanding of those terms, and what authors or interpretations you take distance from. Likewise, insofar as we constantly we adopt, or reject certain theoretical/political terms without necessarily realizing we do that, we also adopt or reject given theoretical/political perspectives without necessarily realizing that that's what we do. For example to say "postcolonial" instead of "national", or post-independence instead of neocolonial, or "villager" instead of "subaltern" is already a theoretically/political choice. By being aware and explicit about your linguistic choices, you are already engaging in theory. Hence, your contribution, beyond its intrinsic empirical value (since, of course, you are expected, disclose evidence nobody has exposed before) can be and to my view it should be, as well theoretically engaging.

Readings, and Requirements:

Every week you have to submit a written assignment *by email to the entire class the day before of*

¹ Originally scheduled as History 253A, this course was changed to History 201LA because part B cannot be offered by instructor due to a special leave. Although His 201LA is a nominally a reading course, its content, in this case, is that of a research seminar, part A.

our meeting by 5 pm, except weeks 9, and 10, when the assignments are due at noon. Each assignment should state your name, date, course, and title. You should send it in via attached file and label it according to the following pattern: “LAST NAME, His 201LA Week # 2010.” Final Research prospectuses are due by email on **Friday June 11th by midnight**. Please label your attached file as follows: “LAST NAME, His 201LA Spring 2010”

Your prospectus should follow the citation method described in Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History* (edition 2010) which is based on the Chicago Manual of Style, or you can consult the manual directly. You should use the guidelines given by Rampolla for specific points, particularly “the research question.” In addition, a number of readings will be available on PDF on the course web link, and some others will be on e-reserve in Pegasus. The e-reserve password for this course is: **implement**.

In addition to your weekly reports, class participation, and final prospectus, you are expected to comment continuously on the work of our peers both orally and in writing, as requested. Your final grade is largely based on the quality of your final research prospectus (approximately 70 % of your grade), but the weekly assignments, draft prospectuses, peer review, and class work in general, weights considerably as well (at least 30 % of your total grade).

The outline below provides the main structure for the seminar. However, because research can take us to unpredictable paths and each student comes with different degrees of skills and expertise, the instructor may ask some students, as need demands, to do specific work that differs slightly from the general outline describe below: this may entail extra tasks, or different tasks. The individual meetings on weeks 5, and 7 accomplish the purpose of redirecting each student’s research project in a way that serves their interests best. But of course you are always welcome to consult individually with me if any doubt arises during my office hours.

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1, (March 31st) Introduction

Presentation of topics, and areas of research interest. Presentation and discussion of sample research prospectus.

Week 2 (April 7th) Power and the Production of History: Silences and the Objectivity Paradigm

Readings

- Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Beacon Press, 1995). Chapters 2, and 3 required.

Written Assignment: Submit a list of 2 or three potential research topics with a paragraph describing each OR submit one-page abstract of chosen topic.

Week 3 (April 14th) Imagined Communities, and Invented Traditions

Readings

- Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, (Verso, 2nd ed. 1991, or 3rd ed. 2006): 1-36.

- Eric Hobsbawm “Introduction: Inventing Traditions”, in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.) *The Invention of Tradition*, (Cambridge U. Press, 1983): 1-14.

Written Assignment

Locate the bibliography and/or primary sources relevant to your topic. Write a one page, single spaced statement commenting on how have your findings will help you (or have helped you) you narrow down

your focus, and clarify your research question. Include any useful feedback you received in class. On a separate page, list the sources, and bibliography you have consulted.

Week 4 (April 21st)

Ethnicity, the State, and the Power of Naming

Readings:

- Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide for Writing in History*, chapter 5.
- Cecilia Méndez-Gastelumendi, “The Power of Naming, or the Construction of Ethnic and National Identities in Peru: Myth, History and the Iquichanos”, *Past and Present* May 2001
- C. Méndez’s prospectuses: “Rebels in the Name of the King”, and “The Wars Within”

Written assignment:

This week you need to formulate a “research question” (chapter 5 of Rampolla’s book explains this). If you already have one, you need to polish it. Now that you are familiar with some of the basic literature on you topic, explain what questions have not been posed by the literature, that you plan to address? Why are these questions relevant? How do you plan to respond to them? Write 1-2 single-spaced pages.

Week 5 (April 28th)

NO CLASS, individual meetings with instructor

Written Assignment: At this point, your main object of inquiry (research question) should be clearly defined and you should have identified, and familiarized yourself with your main primary sources. *Submit a revise, 3-4 page-double spaced abstract of your prospectus (apart from a one-page bibliography and list of primary sources) to the instructor the day before our meeting by 5pm.* This new abstract should integrate any useful feedback you received last week, and it should include the following points: What do you plan to accomplish with this project and why is your contribution relevant? (main research question or problem). What is your main argument, or your tentative answer for your research question?; how do you expect to prove it? What debates, or main body of literature will your research speak to? (example: labor history in 20th century Uruguay, history of feminism in Mexico, history of communism in Latin America; memory and citizenship in Guatemala). The body of literature your work will speak to can be diverse and have many (historiographical and theoretical) layers. You don’t need to figure out all the layers now, but you must identify the main debates, and literature your work will engage with. Try to picture what kinds of readers you want to reach. Knowing who you want to be read by will help you figure out what you want to contribute to.

Week 6 (May 5th)

“Ethnic Groups” and “Ethnicity”

Readings

- Max Weber, “Ethnic Groups,” in Max Weber, *Economy and Society* (U. of California Press, 1978), vol 1, pp. 385-398.
- Frank Salomon, “Unethnic Ethnohistory: On Peruvian Peasant Historiography and Ideas of Autochthony,” in *Ethnohistory* □□: □ (summer □□□□): 475-506.

Written Assignment:

Write a 4 to 5 page, double-spaced critical assessment of the main works that pertain to your research (apart from bibliography and references). Polish even further your main research question integrating any feedback you received last week. Who has written about the themes you plan to write about? From what angles has this topic been approached and what questions remained unaddressed? How will your research add, challenge and/or complement the body of literature under discussion? If pertinent, indicate what is the theoretical or conceptual framework that inspires your analysis.

Week 7 (May 12th)

NO CLASS, individual meetings with instructor

Written Assignment: Submit your *revised* critical assessment of the literature pertaining to your subject to instructor the day before our meeting at 5:00 pm by email. Same as week 6 but now you should write 6 to 7 double-spaced pages, apart from bibliography and references, and integrate any feedback received last week.

Week 8 (May 19th)

Ethnicity, Citizenship, and the State

Readings

- Sarah Chambers “Little Middle Ground: The Instability of Mestizo Identity in the Andes”, in Nancy P. Appellbaum (et. al), *Race and Nation in Modern Latin America* (U. of North Carolina Press, 2003): 32-55

Written Assignment:

Instructor will assign specific tasks to each student, based on week 7 individual meetings.

Week 9 (May 26th)

ORAL PRESENTATIONS (complete draft)

Written Assignment:

Half of the class will present *a complete draft* of their prospectuses in accordance with the guidelines provided at the beginning of this syllabus (“description and objectives”). Drafts are due by e-mail to the entire class **at noon the day before the class**. The remaining half of the class will write a 1 page peer-reviewed critical assessment of each proposal and bring it to class, with copies for everyone.

Week 10: (June 2nd)

ORAL PRESENTATIONS (complete draft)

Written Assignment

The remaining half of the class will present *a complete draft* of their prospectuses in accordance with the guidelines provided at the beginning of this syllabus (“description and objectives”). Drafts are due by e-mail to the entire class **at noon the day before the class**. The remaining half of the class will write a 1 page peer-reviewed critical assessment of each proposal and bring it to class, with copies for everyone.

Final prospectuses are due to instructor by email on **Friday June 11th** until midnight. Please follow the instructions provided on p. 2 above to make sure you label your attached file properly.

NOTE. This syllabus is subject to modifications. If you miss any class you are responsible for catching up with any information that may have been provided in your absence.