TRANSNATIONAL APPROACHES TO U.S. HISTORY

Overview:

Building on generations of work in comparative, international, world, and global history, scholars in recent years have spoken increasingly of a “transnational turn” in American historiography. This graduate seminar will explore major works in the field, focusing on the circulation of ideas, institutions, technologies, goods, and people across national borders in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Assignments and Grading:

This is a readings seminar, and the primary expectation is that every student will arrive in class prepared to contribute to in-depth discussions of the assigned texts.

Students will be asked to write two 750-word review essays over the course of the semester on texts chosen from the supplementary readings. These should provide a concise summary of the contents of the book, situate its argument in the context of the existing scholarship, and offer a critical evaluation of its contribution. They should be posted (in .pdf format) on Blackboard by 8:00pm on the Sunday before the meeting for which the text was assigned. At least one should be completed by the beginning of the spring vacation.

At the conclusion of the semester, students will also be asked to submit a paper of 12-15 pages which examines a historiographic problem in greater depth. This paper should include substantial readings beyond those assigned on the syllabus, though they need not be defined around the general topics for the weekly reading assignments. It will be due on Tuesday, May 13.

This course will be graded on a pass/fail basis for graduate students.

Texts:

A number of the course readings (denoted with an * in the syllabus) will be available on electronic reserve. The other readings, listed below, should be acquired separately:

- Nick Cullather, The Hungry World: America’s Cold War Battle against Poverty in Asia (Harvard University Press, 2010).
- Pekka Hämäläinen, The Comanche Empire (Yale University Press, 2008).

**Monday, January 27: Introduction**

**Monday, February 3: The Transnational Turn**


**Supplementary Readings:***

• Thomas Bender, ed., *Rethinking American History in a Global Age* (University of California Press, 2002).

**Monday, February 10: Borderlands**

• Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (Yale University Press, 2008).

**Supplementary Readings:**

Monday, February 17: Cotton, Sugar, and Global Histories of the South


Supplementary Readings:


Monday, February 24: Race, Gender, and American Empire

Supplementary Readings:


**Monday, March 3: International Organizations**

Supplementary Readings:

- Akira Iriye, Global Community: The Role of International Organizations in the Making of the Contemporary World (University of California Press, 2002).

Monday, March 10: Migrations


Supplementary Readings:

- Donna Gabaccia, We Are What We Eat: Ethnic Food and the Making of Americans (Harvard University Press, 2000).
- Matthew Frye Jacobson, Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876-1917 (Hill and Wang, 2000).

Monday, March 24: Ideas


Supplementary Readings:


Monday, March 31: Consumption

Supplementary Readings:


**Monday, April 7: Modernization and the Global Cold War**


Supplementary Readings:


**Monday, April 14: Economics**


**Supplementary Readings:**

• Marion Fourcade, Economists and Societies: Discipline and Profession in the United States, Britain, & France, 1890s to 1990s (Princeton University Press, 2009).
• Timothy Mitchell, Carbon Democracy: Political Power in the Age of Oil (Verso, 2011).
• Juan Gabriel Valdés, Pinochet’s Economists: The Chicago School in Chile (Cambridge University Press, 1995).

Monday, April 21: Rights


Supplementary Readings:

• Kevin Gaines, African Americans in Ghana: Black Expatriates and the Civil Rights Era (University of North Carolina Press, 2006).
• Michael Cullen Green, Black Yanks in the Pacific: Race in the Making of American Military Empire after World War II (Cornell University Press, 2010).

Monday, April 28: Globalization

• David Harvey, The Condition of Postmodernity (Blackwell, 1989).
• *Arjun Appadurai, Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization (University of Minnesota Press, 1999), ch. 2.

Supplementary Readings:

• David Harvey, A Brief History of Neoliberalism (Oxford University Press, 2005).