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 Hääläinen, *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:


Monday, March 10: Migrations


Supplementary Readings:


**Monday, March 24: Ideas**


*Supplementary Readings:*


**Monday, March 31: Consumption**

Supplementary Readings:


Monday, April 7: Modernization and the Global Cold War


Supplementary Readings:

• John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (Oxford University Press, 1997).

**Monday, April 14: Economics**


**Supplementary Readings:**

• Mark Blyth, *Great Transformations: Economic Ideas and Institutional Change in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 2002).

**Monday, April 21: Rights**


**Supplementary Readings:**


**Monday, April 28: Globalization**


**Supplementary Readings:**