

## HISTORY 450

### HISTORY OF CALIFORNIA

Dr. P. Dreyfus

#### DESCRIPTION:

Ever since the first Europeans set sight on California, the region has held an almost mythic attraction to generations of migrants from throughout the world. Choosing California has almost always represented a hope for more – more power, more land, more riches, more freedom, more comfort. As is the case everywhere else, however, generations of Californians have found themselves constructing real lives, not dreams, and therefore have always been forced to accommodate their expectations to the social and economic realities of the land.

Such adjustments have been fraught with excitement and frustration, creating, for better or worse, a dynamism for which California appears to be famous even today. With a history characterized by continual immigration, rapid economic growth, mindless environmental degradation, frequent bouts of social violence, and the extraordinary accumulation of wealth, California may be one of the most American of American places. Its history is unique while at the same time reflecting and condensing the larger national experience of the United States.

This course will survey the history of California from its pre-European roots to the present day. We will address the region's unique and general attributes by examining the relationship between economic change, inter-ethnic conflict and accommodation, and politics.

#### TEXTS:

Rice, et al, *The Elusive Eden*

Monroy, Douglas, *Thrown Among Strangers*

#### COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Students will be responsible for two midterm examinations and one 12-page, 2-question, word-processed take-home examination at the end of the semester. Grading will be calculated on the following basis: each midterm 25%; take-home exam, 50%.

A late take-home exam will automatically be discounted by one full grade level (10%). In addition, university policy requires students who wish to receive a grade of "incomplete" to file a formal petition with the instructor. These petitions are available in department offices. Any student who has not completed the course assignments for this class and has not filed a proper petition will be assumed to have withdrawn without authorization and will receive a grade of "WU." This is equivalent to an "F". Please be careful to follow proper administrative procedures so that you don't waste your efforts and ruin your grade.

#### CLASS SCHEDULE:

## Week of 1/30 INTRODUCTION &amp; INDIGENOUS CALIFORNIA

**Topics:** Regional ecology, Native American life, significance of animistic belief system.

**Readings:** Rice, ch. 2-3

**Film:** *Rock Paintings of the Chumash*. AV#80913

## Week of 2/6 INDIGENOUS &amp; SPANISH CALIFORNIA

**Topics:** European/Native contact, imperial politics, mechanisms of colonial control, the mission system, the creation of *gente de razon*

**Readings:** Rice, ch. 5-6

## Week of 2/13 MEXICAN CALIFORNIA &amp; U.S. CONQUEST

**Topics:** The rise of the Californios, the Mexican class system, the basis of American interest, Manifest Destiny, the Bear Flag Revolt.

**Readings:** Rice, ch.7-9

**Film:** *The Dream of Don Guadalupe* AV#88361

## Week of 2/20 GOLD RUSH

**Topics:** Gold fever, migration, ethnic conflict, environmental consequences of mining technology, statehood and early state politics.

**Readings:** Rice, ch.11-12

## Week of 2/27 GOLD RUSH, Cont'd; MIDTERM REVIEW

**Film:** *The Story of the Gold Rush* AV#86176

**FRIDAY, MARCH 3** [MIDTERM EXAMINATION](#)

## Week of 3/6 RAILROAD ERA

**Topics:** Post-gold economic development, The Big Four, transportation monopoly and state politics.

**Readings:** Rice, ch.13-14

## Week of 3/13 GILDED AGE

**Topics:** Urbanization and industrialization, San Francisco machine politics, Sinophobia and the Workingmen's Party.

**Readings:** Rice, ch.15-16

**Film:** *Carved in Silence* AV#82942

Week of 3/20 PROGRESSIVISM

**Topics:** The rise of the "progressive" middle class, the Union Labor Party struggle, anti-monopoly, female reformers, the life of Katherine Philips Edson.

**Readings:** Rice, ch.17-18

Week of 3/27 PROGRESSIVISM, Cont'd, WATER WARS

**Topics:** John Muir and the Hetch Hetchy controversy, Los Angeles takes the Owens Valley.

**Readings:** Rice pp.287-92, 370-1, 396-8.

**Film:** *Thirsty City*. AV#88362

Week of 4/10 MIDTERM REVIEW & 2nd MIDTERM EXAM

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 12** [MIDTERM EXAMINATION](#)

Week of 4/17 BOOM & BUST, 1920s-1930s

**Topics:** Roaring Twenties California-style, autos and oil, culture wars, the depression of 1929, Upton Sinclair's EPIC campaign.

**Readings:** Rice, ch.20-21

**Film:** *The Great Depression: We Have a Plan*. AV#85549

Week of 4/24 WWII & AFTERMATH

**Topics:** California and the Pacific War, African-American migration, Japanese-American internment, the onset of the Cold War, anti-Communism.

**Readings:** Rice, ch.22-24

**Film:** *From a Different Shore* AV#85739

Week of 5/1 THE SIXTIES

**Topics:** The resurgence of dissent, collapse of Cold War consensus, youth movements and the university.

**Readings:** Rice, ch.25-26

**Film:** *Berkeley in the Sixties*, part 1. AV#84817

## **DISTRIBUTION & DISCUSSION OF TAKE-HOME ESSAY QUESTIONS**

Week of 5/8 THE SIXTIES, Cont'd.

**Topics:** Reaganism, the anti-war movement, the Black Power movement, Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee.

**Readings:** Rice, Ch.27; Mario Savio, *An End to History*;  
*Black Panther Party Program*

**Film:** *The Fight in the Fields* AV#83440

Week of 5/15 CALIFORNIA SINCE THE 70s

**Topics:** The changing face of California, the meaning of diversity, coalition politics, environmentalism.

**Readings:** Rice, ch. 29-30

**Film:** *San Francisco in the Seventies*. AV#82795

**TAKE-HOME ESSAYS DUE Friday, May 19.**

**CLASS WILL NOT MEET Friday 3/31, Cesar Chavez Day.**