

History 410

U.S./Mexico, Film & History

Instructor: Feather Crawford

Summer Session I, June 22-July 19

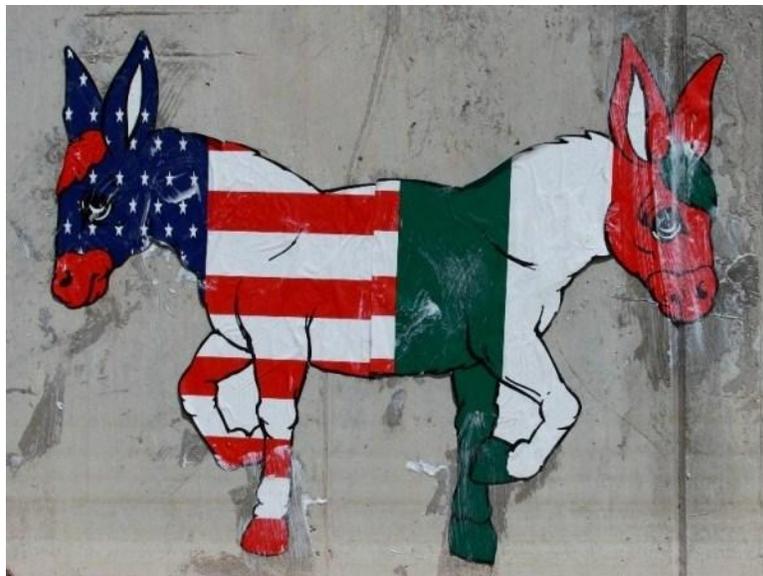
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Course Description

The relationship between the U.S and Mexico has been shaped by war, influenced by economic cooperation, understood through racialization, and reimagined in film, literature, and the lived experiences of immigrants. The two countries are bound together by a vast border and divided by differing interpretations of a shared history. How have this relationship and its interpretations and representations changed over time?

Preliminary syllabus for HIST 410 U.S./Mexico, Film & History

While the complex and transnational history of U.S.-Mexico relations will require a deliberate emphasis on the historical narratives from both sides of the border, this focus will be balanced by an examination of the ways this relationship and the understandings of it were culturally produced and reproduced over the course of two centuries. An approach that looks at both history and representation will grapple with questions of causation and meaning, allowing us to understand context and practice critical analysis and empathy.

Four over-arching themes will guide investigation into this history and its representation: conquest, race, capitalism and immigration. The first part of the class will focus on the 1820s through the 1930s. Intersections between conquest and literary narrative will be shown through travel accounts written by visitors to Mexico in the 1820s and 1830s. These literary accounts will enable us to understand the role of race and imperialism in American justifications for the invasion and annexation of the northern half of Mexico, while primary source documents will show Mexican responses to the territorial losses that remain a vivid part of Mexican identity to this day. We will then look at the ideas and tropes of the early twentieth century that helped Mexicans and Americans develop national identities that were based on racial ideologies and in tension with one another.

The second part of the class will investigate the increasingly close economic and political ties between the U.S. and Mexico that began in the wake of WWII: U.S.-Mexican collaboration in film, advertising and immigration policies; the historical backdrop of the Bracero Program, the Mexican Miracle, and the PRI; and the efforts by Nelson A. Rockefeller's Office of Inter-American Affairs and Mexican businessmen to construct a Mexican identity based in capitalism and consumerism, distinct from yet complementary to the U.S. Our focus will then turn to the border. We will learn about and discuss immigration and migrant and Latino/a experiences in the second half of the Twentieth Century, as well as contemporary issues such as deportation and the Drug War, all within the contexts of neoliberalism and global capitalism.

Learning Objectives

Learn the history of the U.S.-Mexico relationship from both sides of the border

Read, analyze, and synthesize primary and secondary sources to understand complex, transnational historical content and relate it to films and literature

Recognize and investigate the relationship between cultural production and history and the ways history, memory, and representation construct national narratives and identities

Critically examine connections between conquest and ideas of American Exceptionalism, as well as those between race, capitalism, and national identity

Contextualize contemporary debates over the U.S.-Mexico border, labor, the Drug War, and immigration

Preliminary syllabus for HIST 410 U.S./Mexico, Film & History

Frame history and representation within historiographical and cultural interpretations

Write clear and robust primary source analyses, film reviews, and/or essays

Required Text

The required text for the class, *Major Problems in the History of North American Borderlands: Documents and Essays* (MP-NAB), edited by Pekka Hämäläinen and Benjamin H. Johnson, will be available at the UO Duckstore and online. Additional assigned reading will be available on Blackboard (BB).

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