Course Description
This course is an introductory survey of California’s history. Thus, the class will start by discussing some of the central themes that structure our study of the state’s past. Among the more important topics we will revisit throughout the semester are the following: historical perceptions of California as a land of opportunity and inclusion versus a place of exploitation and exclusion, radical political experimentation, intergenerational conflicts, human migrations and demographic transformations, diversity versus assimilation, and environmental adaptation and stewardship versus economic development and the conquest of environmental constraints. Chronologically, the course begins by examining how the environment shaped the emergence of distinct indigenous cultures in pre-contact California. Then, we will explore the founding of the missions, the Mexican-American War, and the Gold Rush. All of these events reveal the ways that religion, racism, and greed enabled the tragedies suffered by California’s diverse native cultures during continued European expansion. The Gold Rush simultaneously precipitated a more diverse society and more violent and racist reactions by whites to that diversity, as they viewed the Chinese, Mexicans, California Indians, and other groups as economic competition, alien cultures, racially inferior, and/or easily exploited. Tensions between distinct groups and communities help frame many of the case studies we will examine, especially immigrant and migrants such as the Chinese, the Japanese, “Okies,” African-Americans, and Mexicans. Each of these groups experienced these tensions in ways that not only shaped their lives but the larger society and politics of California during key periods in the state’s history.

As we proceed through the second half of the nineteenth century, changes wrought by railroads and the expansion of agriculture help illuminate the rapid development of California’s economy and the establishment and growth of many new communities. Next, the class examines the causes and consequences of urban growth in San Francisco and Los Angeles with special attention paid to corruption and reform, natural disasters, water politics, and the cultural significance of Hollywood. Then, we will explore the economic, sociological, and political aspects of the “Okie” migration during the Great Depression and its legacies for later generations. After examining the economic and demographic transformations of California driven by World War II and suburbanization, we turn our attention to intergenerational tensions arising from debates over civil rights, free speech, women’s liberation, identity politics, and anti-communism. Students will also read about the origins, growth, and increasing solidarity of the LGBT community in California.
The class will repeatedly analyze the changing roles played by women in California history. The instructor will also challenge students to understand a variety of conceptual approaches to California history. For example, we will discuss how gender has been socially situated and culturally constructed. Similarly, students will learn how members of the LGBT community have historically been forced to define their gender and sexuality in terms that emphasize their deviance from the hegemonic paradigm of heteronormativity rather than allowing individuals the freedom to enjoy autonomous lives and identities. Ultimately, no history of California would be complete without an emphasis on two major themes: the impacts of the initiative process and Mexican immigration. By highlighting where these two themes converge we will discuss the power of language to shape political campaigns and distort perceptions of less powerful groups. In particular, we will explore how supporters of Propositions 13, 187, and 8 all deployed language in culturally coded ways to evoke specific emotional reactions intended to legitimize the persecution and disenfranchisement of vulnerable minorities.

Course Requirements:
Midterm: 30% (Wednesday, July 24)
Essay: 30% (Due Tuesday, August 6)
Final Exam: 40% (Wednesday, August 14)

Required Texts
-Bspace
-Course Reader Available at Copy Central on Bancroft Way
Exams: The midterm exam will consist of a blue book analysis of course materials comprising four short-essay identifications and one longer essay based on a pre-circulated prompt. The Identification portion of the midterm will account for forty percent and the longer essay will account for the remaining sixty percent of the student’s exam grade. The final exam will also require a blue book. Students will answer two identifications and write two essays based on pre-circulated prompts. The Identification portion of the final exam will account for twenty percent and the essays will account for forty percent each.

Essay: Each student must write an essay between 1300 and 1800 words. All essays must be double-spaced and typed in 12-point Times New Roman font. All essays must also provide a minimum of twelve footnotes. DO NOT USE PARANTHEtical CITATIONS. DO NOT USE OR CITe OUTSIDE SOURCES UNLESS APPROVED BY THE INSTRUCTOR.

Cheating or Plagiarism: “Achievement and proficiency in subject matter include your realization that neither is to be achieved by cheating. An instructor has the right to give you an F on a single assignment produced by cheating without determining whether you have a passing knowledge of the relevant factual material. That is an appropriate academic evaluation for a failure to understand or abide by the basic rules of academic study and inquiry. An instructor has the right to assign a final grade of F for the course if you plagiarized a paper for a portion of the course, even if you have successfully and, presumably, honestly passed the remaining portion of the course. It must be understood that any student who knowingly aids in plagiarism or other cheating, e.g., allowing another student to copy a paper or examination question, is as guilty as the cheating student.” The above language comes from the University of California’s own policy description defining cheating and plagiarism (which can be found at http://catalog.berkeley.edu/policies/conduct.html). More specifically for this course, the following all qualify as cheating and/or plagiarism in my view: failure to cite sources, the repeated absence of quotation marks where warranted, presenting someone else’s ideas or work as your own, and using notes, books, or electronic devices during in-class exams.
Laptops and Other Electronic Equipment: If you wish to use a laptop to take notes during my lectures, feel free to do so. However, please sit in the very back of the lecture hall in order to avoid distracting other students. Please refrain from texting or manipulating your phone or other gadgets while in class. More generally, please act courteously out of respect for me and your fellow students during both lectures and discussions. Thank you.

bSpace: The instructor will use bSpace (https://bspace.berkeley.edu/) to provide students with a range of course materials. The instructor will post the following on bSpace: the syllabus, lecture outlines, discussion questions for assigned readings, writing assignments, and primary documents. The instructor will also use bSpace to make announcements, such as reminders about deadlines and extended office hours.

Course Calendar

(Assigned Reading:)
Monday, July 8: 1) Introductions 2) Settling & Adapting to the Mosaic
Tuesday, July 9: Maps, Missions & Mortality
Wednesday, July 10: 1) Discussion of Sandos, Converting California
2) Mexican California to the War with the United States

(Assigned Reading:)
Monday, July 15: The Gold Rush, Statehood & Genocide
Tuesday, July 16: Discussion of Clappe, The Shirley Letters
2) Railroads, Farmers & Agribusiness
Wednesday, July 17: 1) Chinese Immigration 2) Disaster & Reform

(Assigned Reading:)
Monday, July 22: 1) Conservation & Water
2) Progressivism, Suffrage & Other Movements
Tuesday, July 23: 1) Oil Fields & Dream Factories 2) Film: Mulholland’s Dream
Wednesday, July 24: Midterm Exam
(Assigned Reading:)
Monday, July 29: 1) The Great Depression & the “Okie” Migration
2) WWII as Second Gold Rush
Tuesday, July 30: 1) Japanese Immigration & Internment
2) Discussion of Steinbeck, Harvest Gypsies & Himes, If He Hollers Let Him Go
Wednesday, July 31: 1) Filipino Immigration & Communities
2) Infrastructure, Education & Suburbanization

(Assigned Reading:)
Monday, August 5: 1) Discussion of Waldie, Holy Land
2) Watts, the Black Panthers & Alcatraz
Tuesday, August 6: 1) Reagan & the Rise of the New Right
2) Prop 13 & the Initiative Business 3) Film: The Mercy of Nature
Wednesday, August 7: 1) Silicon Valley 2) Braceros, Chicanos & Prop 187

(Assigned Reading:)
Monday, August 12: 1) LGBT Since WWII 2) Film: The Times of Harvey Milk
Tuesday, August 13: 1) LAPD, Rodney King, Riots & OJ
2) Discussion of Self, American Babylon
Wednesday, August 14: Final Exam