

History 105: Cultural Encounters in History
Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 8:00-8:50
Spring 2008

Edward Cohn
Mears 315 (X3107)

cohned@grinnell.edu
Office hours: MW 1:15-3:00,
TTh 10:00-11:00
(or by appointment)

Course description

History 105 covers a broad theme from world history: the interaction of different cultures through such means as war, trade, religious proselytizing, migration, immigration, and enslavement. In particular, the course will look at five different cultural encounters from around the globe, ranging from the Spanish conquest of the New World to the creation of South Africa's apartheid regime and covering moments from the early modern period to the present day. Along the way, we will look at themes like the origins of the concept of human rights while examining the ways that the creation of a world economy has transformed cultural interaction.

History 105 will have several objectives. First, and most obviously, it will help students to understand each of the cultural encounters it discusses—analyzing the factors that resulted in the rise of the Atlantic slave trade and in the varying experiences of Polish immigrants and African-American workers in Chicago, for example. Second, it will seek to cast light on a broad array of historical concepts, such as “culture” and “agency,” while examining how different historical forces—like race and economics—have shaped events at different moments in the past. Finally, the course will serve as an introduction to historical methodology, helping students to analyze primary documents and to construct an effective historical argument. We will pursue all of these objectives through the intensive reading of both primary sources and secondary texts.

Course materials

The following books are available for sale at the college bookstore and are on course reserve at Burling Library:

Stuart B. Schwartz, ed., *Victors and Vanquished: Spanish and Nahua Views of the Conquest of Mexico*

Bartolomé de las Casas, *A Brief Account of the Devastation of the Indies*

John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800*

Dominic Pacyga, *Polish Immigrants and Industrial Chicago: Workers on the South Side*

Mark Mathabane, *Kaffir Boy*

Rian Malan, *My Traitor's Heart*

In addition, a number of readings (both articles and primary sources) will be available on the course's Pioneerweb site. These readings are listed with the heading “[Blackboard]” on the syllabus.

Requirements and grading

The course will have three main written requirements, which will be weighted as follows in determining your grade:

Three papers of 3-5 pages each and one short writing assignment (1 page long) (40% total). Each of the three papers will be an analysis of some of the primary documents we have read in class; I will hand out an assignment sheet for each paper roughly 10 days before it is due. The first paper will be due on Thursday, February 14, at 5:00 PM (at my office); the second will be due on Thursday, April 10, at 5:00 PM (at my office); the third will be due on Friday, May 9 (in class). I will explain the short writing assignment on Monday, February 25, and it will be due on Friday, February 29, in class.

Mid-term exam (20%). There will be a 50-minute mid-term exam held in class on Friday, March 7. It will have two parts: in the first, you will need to identify a series of people, places, things, concepts, or quotations from the first half of the class, and in the second, you will answer a comparative essay question on the course's first two units.

Final exam (40%). The final exam for this course will take place on Thursday, May 15, at 9:00 AM; it will feature short identification questions on the last three units of the class, as well as two essay questions (one on the second half of the course and one on the class as a whole.)

The final requirement of the course is active **class participation**. Informed participation is a crucial part of the classroom experience: to earn a good grade, you'll need not only to complete the writing assignments described above, but to provide evidence in class that you've completed the course readings and that you've put some thought into the issues that they address. Class participation, of course, involves not only speaking in class, but listening respectfully to the opinions of your classmates; if you feel uncomfortable speaking in class, come talk with me in office hours and we'll figure out how best to proceed. Class participation also depends on regular attendance and if you miss class more than six times, I reserve the right to fail you.

Grading will be based on the following formula. I will first calculate a preliminary grade based on the written assignments, which will be weighted as I note above. Once I have determined this preliminary grade, however, I will consider raising or lowering your grade based on class participation. (That is, if the grades for your writing assignments and your exams average out to an A-, you could earn a B, a B+, an A-, or an A, depending on the extent and the insightfulness of your class participation.) In many cases, I will simply use your class participation to decide which of two grades to assign you (that is, if your work is on the line between an A- and a B+, your class participation will decide your grade); in others, I may raise or lower your mark by one notch (say, from an A- to an A) depending on your performance in class discussion. In rare instances, I will consider lowering your mark by two half-grades because of poor attendance or participation, but I will only do so in cases where I've spoken to you ahead of time about your participation in class (and given you the chance to get back on track.) Keep in mind that I am most concerned with the thoughtfulness of your participation, not with the frequency with which you speak in class.

Important notes

Grinnell College makes reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Students need to provide documentation identifying any special needs to the Dean for Student Academic Support and Advising, Joyce Stern, whose office is located on the third floor of the Rosenfield Center. Students should then notify me within the first few days of class.

Students should also be aware of Grinnell's policy on academic honesty. Plagiarism, it goes without saying, will not be tolerated in this course.

Course Schedule

Encounter 1: The Spanish Conquest of the Americas

Monday, January 21: Course introduction and goals

Reading: "Letter of Christopher Columbus" [Blackboard]

Wednesday, January 23: The objectives of the Spanish crown

Reading: "Instructions for the Government of the Indies" [Blackboard]
"Decree on Indian Labor" [Blackboard]

Friday, January 25: The church and the crown in the Spanish colonies

Reading: "The Advent Sermon of Fray Antonio Montesinos" [Blackboard]
"Royal Response to the Sermons" [Blackboard]

Monday, January 28: How did the crown adapt?

Reading: Palacios Rubios, "The Requirement" [Blackboard]
The Laws of Burgos [Blackboard]
The General Repartimiento of 1514 [Blackboard]

Wednesday, January 30: The players in the conquest of Mexico

Reading: Stuart B. Schwartz, ed., *Victors and Vanquished: Spanish and Nahua Views of the Conquest of Mexico*, pp. 1-99

Friday, February 1: Cortes's plan

Reading: *Victors and Vanquished*, pp. 100-181

Monday, February 4: The course of conquest

Reading: *Victors and Vanquished*, pp. 182-243

Wednesday, February 6: An overall pattern of conquest?

Reading: Bartolomé de las Casas, *A Brief Account of the Devastation of the Indies* (entire)

Friday, February 8: The crown's response to Las Casas

Reading: The New Laws of the Indies [Blackboard]

Monday, February 11: The winners and losers in the Spanish New World

Reading: Lopez de Gomora, "The Viceroy Announces the New Laws" [Blackboard]
Pizarro, "Letter to Pedro de Valdivia." [Blackboard]
Garcilaso de la Vega, "The Death of Pizarro" [Blackboard]

Encounter Two: The African Slave Trade and the Atlantic World

Wednesday, February 13: The origins of the Atlantic slave trade

Reading: Herbert Klein, "American Labor Demand" [Blackboard]

Thursday, February 14 at 5:00 PM: FIRST PAPER DUE

Friday, February 15: The operation of the slave trade

Reading: Documents on the slave trade [Blackboard]:
Job Ben Solomon, pp. 1-9
letters of Philip Quaque, pp. 10-12
John Barbot's description of Guinea, pp. 21-29
Royal Africa Company minutes, p. 30
the voyage of John Atkins, pp. 31-37
Francis Moore's travels in Africa, pp. 44-46
letter of Captain Phelps, p. 47

Monday, February 18: Slavers and the slave trade

Reading: Documents on the slave trade [Blackboard]:
William Snelgrave's Account of Guinea, pp. 38-43
letter on board *The Prince of Orange*, p. 47
letters of Henry Laurens, pp. 48-49
letter of Richard Brew, p. 50
voyage of Joseph Hawkins, pp. 51-52
news items, 1759, p. 54
letter of William Bull, p. 54
letter of William Claiborne, p. 55
tables on the slave trade, p. 56

Wednesday, February 20: Slave ships and slave captains: a modern view

Reading: Marcus Rediker, “The Evolution of the Slave Ship” and “The Captain’s Own Hell” [Blackboard]

Film screening: *Africans in America* (PBS), viewing time to be scheduled

Friday, February 22: Africans in the slave trade

Reading: John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World*, introduction and ch. 1-2

Monday, February 25: The internal slave trade within Africa

Reading: Thornton, *Africa and Africans*, ch. 3-4

Wednesday, February 27: African slaves respond to the trade

Reading: Thornton, *Africa and Africans*, ch. 5-7

Friday, February 29: The transformation of African culture

Reading: Thornton, *Africa and Africans*, ch. 8-9
SHORT WRITING ASSIGNMENT IS DUE IN CLASS

Monday, March 3: Resistance

Reading: Thornton, *Africa and Africans*, ch. 10

Wednesday, March 5: Africans and sailors in the Atlantic world

Reading: Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, “The Many-Headed Hydra” [Blackboard]

Friday, March 7: **MID-TERM EXAM**

Encounter Three: The Chinese Diaspora in America

Monday, March 10: Theorizing cultural encounters

Reading: Scott Cook. “Colonizing Technologies” and “Imperial Diasporas” [Blackboard]

Wednesday, March 12: Why did the Chinese leave China?

Reading: maps, pp. 1-4 [Blackboard]
Jonathan Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, pp. 210-215 [Blackboard]
Documents from *The Congressional Record* (4 pages total) [Blackboard]

articles from *Harper's Weekly* (6 pages total) [Blackboard]

Friday, March 14: Why did the Chinese come to America?

Reading: Ronald Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore*, pp. 21-42, 79-131 [Blackboard]
Judy Yung, *Unbound Feet*, pp. 1-4, 15-51 [Blackboard]

SPRING BREAK: MARCH 15-31

Monday, March 31: How did missionaries view Chinese prostitutes?

Reading: "Rescued Chinese Prostitutes Testify at the Industrial Commission," pp. 377-383 [Blackboard]
"Wong Ah So, Filial Daughter and Prostitute," pp. 1-8 [Blackboard]
Donaldina Cameron, "New Lives for Old in Chinatown," 327-331 [Blackboard]

Wednesday, April 2: How do historians view Chinese prostitutes?

Reading: Peggy Pascoe, "Gender Systems in Conflict: The Marriages of Mission-Educated Chinese American Women, 1874-1939" [Blackboard]

Encounter Four: Eastern Europeans and African-Americans in Chicago

Friday, April 4: Chicago and the new world economy

Reading: Dominic Pacyga, *Polish Immigrants and Industrial Chicago*, pp. 1-81

Monday, April 7: Polish culture and the immigrant experience

Reading: Pacyga, pp. 111-157

Wednesday, April 9: The immigrant experience in literature

Reading: Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle* (excerpts) [Blackboard]
James R. Barrett, "Life in 'The Jungle'" [Blackboard]
Antanas Kaztauskis, "From Lithuania to the Chicago Stockyards" [Blackboard]

Thursday, April 10: SECOND PAPER IS DUE

Friday, April 11: Immigrants and labor unrest

Reading: Pacyga, pp. 158-205.
Ernest Poole, "The Meat Strike" [Blackboard]
Mary McDowell, "The Struggle for an American Standard of Living," pp. 62-66 [Blackboard]
Ethelbert Stewart, "The Influence of Trade Unions on Immigrants" [Blackboard]

Monday, April 14: Race and the immigrant experience

Reading: Pacyga, pp. 206-227, 238-257
Allan H. Spear, *Black Chicago*, ch. 8 [Blackboard]

Wednesday, April 16: Immigrants, migrants, and race

Reading: James R. Grossman, *Land of Hope*, ch. 8 [Blackboard]
Crisis documents [Blackboard]
Mary McDowell, "Prejudice," pp. 24-38 [Blackboard]

Encounter Five: South Africa

Friday, April 18: The origins of apartheid

Reading: Allister Sparks, *The Mind of South Africa*, pp. 147-182, 195-202, 208-213, 217-229 [Blackboard]

Monday, April 21: Growing up white in South Africa

Reading: Bryce Courtenay, *The Power of One*, pp. 19-51 [Blackboard]

Wednesday, April 23: Growing up black in South Africa

Reading: Mark Mathabane, *Kaffir Boy*, introduction through p. 62.

Friday, April 25: Black South Africans and regime values

Reading: Mathabane, *Kaffir Boy*, pp. 86-141

Monday, April 28: Did the system work?

Reading: Mathabane, *Kaffir Boy*, pp. 170-204, 216-223, 249-271, 328-335

Wednesday, April 30: One family's place in South African history

Reading: Rian Malan, *My Traitor's Heart*, pp. 5-81

Friday, May 2: The crimes of the past

Reading: Malan, *My Traitor's Heart*, pp. 148-191

Monday, May 5: Could the wounds of apartheid be healed?

Reading: Malan, *My Traitor's Heart*, pp. 283-349

Wednesday, May 7: Individual justice versus collective reconciliation

Screening: “Facing the Truth” (viewing time to be determined)

Friday, May 9: A new beginning?

Reading: Preamble and Bill of Rights to the South African Constitution
THIRD PAPER IS DUE IN CLASS

Thursday, May 15: **FINAL EXAM**