Course Description:

A century ago, many Latin American intellectuals still referred to the full western hemisphere as “Our America.” But how did “America” become shorthand for the “United States of America” in the United States? The appropriation of a hemispheric geographical term to designate a single country, some historians suggest, was part of an evolving nineteenth-century vision of historical exceptionalism fed by a discourse of the progressive frontier and manifest destiny and became part of a unifying national discourse in the wake of the Civil War, evolving even further with the Spanish-American War.

In Chile, especially after 1884, a parallel discourse of exceptionalism and of Chilean superiority has also marked national historiography. In Argentina by the 1870s, discourses of “civilization and barbarism” pioneered by Domingo Faustino Sarmiento created a sense of uniqueness centered mainly in Buenos Aires and based on education and Europeanness. And in Mexico after the 1910 Revolution, the Mexican nation was seen as an exceptional case because its postrevolutionary state made equality and integration possible for indigenous people, peasants and workers. Placing historical events in 19th and 20th century Chile, the United States, Mexico, and Argentina into a common discussion of colonialism and decolonization that includes indigenous and Afro-Descendant peoples, we will trouble notions of historical exceptionalism throughout the hemisphere.

This kind of broad historical topic, in the context of hemispheric relations of power and changing political debates, is an ideal one through which to explore the multiple meanings of "historiography." Rather than limit our understanding of the term to the evolving nature of interpretations, from less current to more current, we will explore the interactions between historians’ approaches to their materials and the historical and political contexts in which they are writing. As part of this discussion, students will write papers exploring the development of a particular historiography concerning a topic or issue of special interest to them.

Class Requirements:

1) This class is essentially a reading and discussion class, and as such it is heavily weighted toward class participation. Participation will constitute 50% of the overall grade.
   a. Taking the time and energy to contribute to class discussion, whether with a comment, question, doubt, or criticism, is the crucial component of class participation.
b. Active participation does not always mean speaking a lot, but it does mean listening to and engaging other people's ideas and comments, and being willing to risk asking a "stupid" question in order to move the discussion forward. It also means regular attendance in class and making every effort to plan ahead so as to not miss our discussions.

c. In addition to weekly discussion, I will ask students to post a weekly reaction to the readings on our classlist by 2 p.m. the Monday before Tuesday's class.

d. A final part of discussion participation will involve taking an active part in organizing discussion for the week related to the chosen topic of the paper assignment (please see below for more details).

2) The other 50% of the grade in the seminar will be composed of a historiographical paper about 15-20 pp. long. In conversation with me, each of you can tailor the paper to fit your research and regional interests. The last two weeks of the class will be dedicated to the presentation and discussion of your paper drafts.
   a. As we look through the syllabus on the first day, you are encouraged to think about which topic most connects to your work.
   b. Please meet with me lastest by the end of the second week of the semester to begin discussing the process for the paper and to figure out the week for which you will help to organize discussion. Of course, if you wish to write a paper about the topic of the second or third week, perhaps we need to meet a bit earlier 😊!

Please Note: The books in the syllabus are available at the University Bookstore. They are also on three-hour reserve at the College Library in Helen C. White.

There is also a xerox packet available at the Humanities Copy Center, 1650 Humanities Bldg., 263-1803; Hours M-F, 7:45-11:45 A.M., 12:30-4:00 P.M. Its contents are listed, in order of assignment, at the end of the syllabus. There is also a copy on reserve at Helen C. White.

UNIT I- Setting the Scene, Defining the Problem

January 21- Introduction and Organizational Meeting

January 28- America: Definitions and Debates (I)

February 4- America: Definitions and Debates (II)

February 11- Discourses of Exceptionalism: The United States
   Reading:

February 18- Discourses of Exceptionalism: Mexico

February 25- Discourses of Exceptionalism: Chile

March 4- Discourses of Exceptionalism: Argentina

UNIT II- The United States as America: Historical Constructions

March 11- War as a Way of Life (I)?

****MARCH 15 -23--SPRING BREAK****

March 25- War as a Way of Life (II)?


UNIT III—War and the Construction of National Identity in Latin America

April 1- Cuba and Mexico


April 8- The War of the Triple Alliance (I): The Paraguayan Context


April 15- The War of the Triple Alliance (II): Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay


April 22- The War of the Pacific (Peru and Chile)


April 29- RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

May 6- RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

***PAPERS DUE LATEST BY WEDNESDAY, MAY 14TH AT 5 PM. IN MY MAILBOX, 5027***
LIST OF READINGS IN THE XEROX PACKET


- Heraclio Bonilla, 'The Indian Peasantry and 'Peru' during the War with Chile," in Steve J. Stern (ed.), *Resistance, Rebellion, and Consciousness in the Andean Peasant*