Gateway: Race and Gender in the California Gold Rush

University of Rochester

HIST 200-04

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:25pm-4:40pm

RRL 456

**Instructor:** Dr. Jed Kuhn

**Email:** jkuhn9@ur.rochester.edu

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11am-12pm, and by appointment

**Course Description:** Eureka! This gateway course introduces students to historical practice—what professional historians actually do—through a focus on matters of race, gender, and indigeneity during the California gold rush. Stretching before and after the gold rush years of 1848-1855, this course presents California as a site of overlapping colonial histories (Spanish, Mexican, and U.S.) and an immense diversity of Indigenous cultures and languages. It is also a site of racial struggle, as Mexican landowners, Chinese laborers, Indigenous peoples, White settlers, and free Black men and women vied for land, resources, and power, a struggle in which gender and sexuality played a key role. As a historical methods course, this class will introduce students to the diverse array of evidence available to historians, from legal documents and newspapers to travelogues, novels, historical interviews, maps, and artwork. This class is required for history majors.

**Course Objectives:**

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

• Distinguish between primary and secondary sources in historical research

• Analyze primary sources in history

• Articulate and analyze the arguments made by secondary authors

• Assess the effectiveness with which historians marshal primary sources as evidence

• Correctly cite primary and secondary sources in Chicago notes-bibliography format

• Identify and ask historical questions

• Locate and discuss the key historiography on a topic

• Express historical concepts clearly orally and in writing

• Locate and discuss the key historiography on a topic

• Write a paper that asks a significant historical question, situates it within a body of scholarship, answers it with a clear thesis and a logical argument, supports it with both primary and secondary sources documented according to the standards of the Chicago Manual of Style, and articulates its points in clear and artful prose with the grammar and spelling associated with formal composition

**Required Texts:**

The following texts are **required for purchase** and available at the bookstore. Additional texts will be available through the library or on Blackboard:

* Susan Lee Johnson, *Roaring Camp: The Social World of the California Gold Rush* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2000)
* Andrew C. Isenberg, *The California Gold Rush: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2018)
* John Rollin Ridge, *The Life and Adventures of Joaquín Murietta, the Celebrated California Bandit* (New York: Penguin Random House 2018 [1854])
* Martin Rizzo-Martinez, *We are not Animals: Indigenous Politics of Survival, Rebellion, and Reconstitution in Nineteenth-Century California* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2022)

Kelly Book Fund: If you are an undergraduate student facing financial hardship in acquiring the books listed above, you may apply to the Kelly Book Fund. These funds are for undergraduate students in need to purchase books for their history courses; preference will be given to those majoring in history. Students may apply for these funds using this link: <https://forms.gle/c2WArDa5g696oKeU6>

**Requirements:**

Expectations: The success of this class depends on the quality of our classroom discussions. To ensure a rigorous intellectual environment, students must attend every class session prepared to participate. I expect students to:

• Read all assigned texts in preparation for every class session.

• Bring assigned texts with you to class for reference.

• Take notes.

• Attend regularly, missing no more than two class period for any reason other than illness or

calamity.

• Arrive on time and stay for the duration of the class session (If you must leave early, please let me know in advance).

• Refrain from distracting themselves and others (please no headphones, social media use, internet browsing, texting, etc.).

• Make thoughtful contributions to classroom discussions.

• Demonstrate **generosity** and **respect** in how you treat yourself, the professor, and especially

others in the classroom. One way to do this is to listen to and carefully consider the perspectives

of others.

I do not post PowerPoint slideshows or lectures online. Students are responsible for coming to class and taking notes. If a student misses a class, they are responsible for obtaining notes from that class period from a classmate.

Classmate names and emails:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Communication: Please communicate with the professor via your official University of Rochester email account ONLY. Note that I will not discuss grades over email. I generally read and respond to emails during regular work hours (8am-5pm, Monday-Friday) and strive to respond by the next work day.

Attendance**:**This is a discussion-intensive course. Attendance at and active participation in all classes are both mandatory. Students are responsible for all material covered in and announcements made in class. If it appears that students are not doing the readings, I will give reading quizzes without prior notice. I also reserve the right to impose a failing grade for the course after a student’s absence from seven or more class periods

Accommodating Students with Disabilities: The University of Rochester respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds and abilities. In the event you encounter any barrier(s) to full participation in this course due to the impact of a disability, please contact the Office of Disability Resources. The access coordinators in the Office of Disability Resources can meet with you to discuss the barriers you are experiencing and explain the eligibility process for establishing academic accommodations. You can reach the Office of Disability Resources at: [**disability@rochester.edu;**](mailto:disability@rochester.edu;) (585) 276-5075; Taylor Hall; [**www.rochester.edu/college/disability**](https://www.rochester.edu/college/disability/index.html).

Classroom Environment: I am committed to providing a learning atmosphere that fosters a variety of respectful perspectives to enhance an inclusive academic experience for all students. Some of the class discussions, reading materials, and films might be difficult and sensitive in nature. I expect students to be respectful to one another and to the diversity of thoughts and opinions. You should be aware that we might discuss and view materials that deal with race, religion, gender expression, and sexuality in explicit ways throughout the semester. You will be expected to react as mature audience members in an academic setting. I strive to ensure that the classroom is an arena for the free exchange of ideas; behaviors and language that threaten to create a hostile or intimidating environment for any group of students will not be tolerated.

Strategies for Academic Success: Students can find a wealth of strategic academic success tools at the [Learning Center.](https://www.rochester.edu/college/learningcenter/index.html). All students are also highly encouraged to utilize the [Writing, Speaking and Argument Program](https://writing.rochester.edu/index.html) to help with all stages of the writing process.

Academic Integrity:

**Plagiarism, cheating, and all other forms of academic misconduct are unacceptable**. All assignments and activities associated with this course must be performed in accordance with the University of Rochester's [**Academic Honesty Policy**](https://www.rochester.edu/college/honesty/policy/index.html). It is your responsibility to read and understand the university’s policies regarding academic misconduct. If you have any questions about academic integrity, I encourage you to come and talk with me.

On the use of Artificial Intelligence: Learning to write well is a primary goal in this course. As such, the use of generative artificial intelligence or large language models such as ChatGPT has no place in this class and is **PROHIBITED**. Students should also note that generative AI has a tendency to invent/”hallucinate” sources and quotes. The inclusion of “hallucinated” sources or quotes constitutes a breach of academic integrity and will be dealt with accordingly. Remember that help is readily available for the work required for this class—you can visit me during office hours, you can make an appointment with the writing and speaking center, and you can meet with our subject librarian, [Lara Nicosia.](https://www.library.rochester.edu/profile/lara_nicosia)

Statement regarding credit hours: The College’s credit hour policy on undergraduate courses is to award 4 credit hours for courses that meet for the equivalent of 3 periods of 50 minutes each week. Students enrolled in HIST 266/266W are expected to devote at least one hour each week outside of class to analyzing the course readings, working alone or in groups, and to researching in depth their topics for the final paper.

**Assignments and Grading:** Students will be evaluated on their completion of the following tasks:

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| Participation and Attendance  20%--Ongoing | Students will be graded on their participation in classroom discussions. This grade will reflect the quantity and quality of student contributions (with quality ranking higher than quantity). Additionally, I will assign short reading response homework assignments that will factor into this grade. |
| Essay 1—Documenting the Gold Rush, 20%, due Feb 28 | Students will write a 4-5 page essay drawing upon Johnson’s *Roaring Camp* and Isenberg’s *The California Gold Rush*. More details to follow. |
| Essay 2—*Joaquín Murieta* and Culture, 20%, due Mar 18 | Students will write a 4-5 page essay in which they critically engage Ridge’s *The Life and Adventures of Joaquín Murieta* as a cultural document. More details to follow. |
| Essay 3—Research Paper, 40%  -Proposal and Bibliography, 5%, due Mar 29  -Full Draft, due April 22  -Class Presentation, 5%, due April 29  -Revised Draft, 30%, due May 9 at 11:30am | Students will write a 10-12 page research paper exploring a topic of their choice related to 19th century California. This assignment has the following steps:  1) **Proposal and Annotated Bibliography** (5%, due Mar 29) In this 1-2 page assignment, students will identify their topic and research question and propose a study to help them answer that question. Students will also include an annotated bibliography of at least five sources that they will consult. I will provide full instructions later in class.  2) **Full Draft of Essay 3** (due April 22) and participation in peer review. You will also meet with me to discuss revisions to your essay.  5) **Class Presentation** of your work (5%, due April 29). This ten-minute presentation will allow you to show your classmates the fascinating things you’ve found.  6) **Final Draft** (30%, due May 9 at 11:30am) Re-submit your paper with revisions. Required for 266W; optional for 266. |

**Additional Details:**

All written assignments must be typed in 11 or 12-point Times New Roman or Calibri font, double spaced, with one-inch margins. The student’s name, the course call number, and date must be single-spaced and placed in the upper right-hand corner of the first page.

Citations must follow Chicago Manual of Style notes-bibliography format---available online through [Purdue OWL](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/chicago_manual_17th_edition/cmos_formatting_and_style_guide/chicago_manual_of_style_17th_edition.html).

Turning in Assignments and Late Work:

Students must submit **both a hard copy** of **written assignments** and **upload the assignment to Blackboard.** Both are due at 3:25pm, the beginning of class, unless otherwise noted. Assignments submitted after the beginning of class will be considered late and subject to a deduction of 5% off the total grade if submitted within the first 24 hours after the due date. An additional 5% will be deducted from the assignment’s final grade each day until it is submitted. Assignments more than 7 days late will not be accepted.

Extensions will only be granted in exceptional cases, such as catastrophic illness or event.

Second Chances

Everyone in class will get one second chance. You can use your second chance to:

**•** Get a one week, no-questions-asked extension on Essay 1, Essay 2, the proposal and annotated bibliography, or the full draft of Essay 3 (not the final).

**•** Revise Essays 1 or 2 for the chance to earn a higher grade. The revised version is due one week after I return the graded original.

To use the second chance for an extension, inform me by email before the paper is due. To use the second chance to revise an essay, inform me within one week of the day I hand back the assignment and bring a hard copy of both your revised and original, graded paper to class the day it is due. Note that you only get ONE (1) second chance and that your second chance takes the place of extensions for brief illness, computer problems, etc.

Grading Scale: A=93-100; A-=90-92.9; B+=87-89.9; B=83-86.9; B-= 80-82.9; C+=77-79.9; C=73-76.9; C-=70-72.9; D+=67-69.9; D=63-66.9; D-=60-62.9; F=below 60%

\*Assignments, readings, and due dates on this syllabus are subject to change.

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| **Course Schedule** | | |
| **Week 1** | Jan 21  Jan 23 | **Welcome to Class!**  What is the California Gold Rush? Who are the main actors involved?  **Approaching History**  What is history? How do we conduct historical research?  • Michel-Rolph Trouillot, preface and “The Power in the Story,” *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*,” pp. xxi-30. |
| **Week 2** | Jan 28  Jan 30 | **Reading Secondary Sources: *Roaring Camp***  What is a secondary source? How do we read them? What is a historical argument?  • Johnson, Preface and Prologue, pp. 11-53  What kind of evidence does Johnson use? What passages do you find strange, interesting, or revealing?  • Johnson, ch. 1, pp. 57-95 |
| **Week 3** | Feb 4  Feb 6 | ***Roaring Camp,* Part II**  **•** Johnson, ch. 2 and 3, pp. 99-183  • Johnson, ch. 4, pp. 185-234 |
| **Week 4** | Feb 11    Feb 13 | ***Roaring Camp*, Part III**  **•** Johson, ch. 5-end, pp. 237-344  **Primary Source Documents**  What are primary sources? What do we do with them?  • Isenberg, *The California Gold Rush,* read all text and documents from the Introduction through the end of “Cities,” pp. 1-61. |
| **Week 5** | Feb 18  Feb 20 | **Primary Source Documents, continued**  • Isenberg, *The California Gold Rush,* sections 3-6, pp. 62-107  **Focus: Writing Political History with Dr. Camille Suarez, Cornell University**  What is political history? How do you come up with a historical project? Come ready with questions to ask Dr. Suarez!  • Camille Suarez, “A Legal Confiscation: The 1851 Land Act and the Transformation of Californios into Colonized Colonizers,” *The Journal of the Civil War Era* 13.1 (2023-03): 29-55. |
| **Week 6** | Feb 25  Feb 27 | **Writing Workshop: From Observation to Question to Argument**  • Finish Isenberg and bring your completed worksheet and notes to class  **Cultural Texts as Historical Documents**  What is a cultural text? What does it mean to use it has a historical document? Lecture and in-class exercise.  • No readings today; continue to work on your essay  • **DUE Friday Feb 28: Essay 1, on Blackboard; bring hard copy to next class** |
| **Week 7** | Mar 4  Mar 6 | **Introducing *Joaquín Murieta***  What do you find strange, interesting, or revealing about the novel? How does his fictionalized story here compare to Johnson’s historical account in *Roaring Camp*?  • Ridge, pp. 1-40 (stop at “After a day or two’s travel”)  **Cultural Texts, continued**  • Complete Ridge’s *Joaquín Murieta* and come to class with the book and your questions relating to Essay 2 |
| **Week 8** | Mar 11  Mar 13 | **Spring Break**  No class this week |
| **Week 9** | Mar 18  Mar 20 | **Case Study: Devising a Research Project**  • Jedediah Kuhn, “Dividing the Indian Race,” *Ethnic Studies Review* 47.1 (2024): 32-59.  • **DUE in class: Essay 2, on Blackboard and hard copy**  **Focus: Asian American and Transnational Histories**  • Mae Ngai, “Chinese Gold Miners and the ‘Chinese Question’ in Nineteenth-Century California and Victoria,” *Journal of American History* 101.4 (2015): 1082-1105. |
| **Week 10** | Mar 25  Mar 27 | **Focus: African Americans and the Question of Slavery in a Free State**  • Stacey L. Smith, “Planting Slavery on Free Soil” in *Freedom’s Frontier*, pp. 47-79  **Focus: Queer and Indigenous History**  • Deborah Miranda, “Extermination of the Joyas: Gendercide in Spanish California,” *GLQ* 16.1-2 (2010): 253-284  • **Due Friday, Mar 29: Proposal and Annotated Bibliography** |
| **Week 11** | Apr 1  Apr 3 | **We Are Not Animals**  How does Rizzo-Martinez conduct his research? What questions does he ask? What sources does he use?  • Rizzo-Martinez, Introduction and ch.1, pp. 1-68  • Rizzo-Martinez, ch. 2, 69-108  • Examine: Early California Population Project |
| **Week 12** | Apr 8  Apr 10 | **We Are Not Animals, continued**  • Rizzo-Martinez, ch. 3-4, pp. 109-174  • Examine: The John Peabody Harrington Papers  Dedicated Research Time |
| **Week 13** | Apr 15  Apr 17 | **We Are Not Animals, concluded**  • Rizzo-Martinez, ch. 5-conclusion, pp. 175-268  Dedicated Research Time |
| **Week 14** | Apr 22  Apr 24 | **Peer Review of Essay 3**  • **DUE: Full Draft of Essay 3 via Blackboard and hard copy in class**  Meetings with Professor about essay |
| **Week 15** | Apr 29  May 1 | **Student Research Presentations**  **Student Research Presentations and Final Class Discussion** |
| **Final Period** | May 9 Friday,  11:30 am | **DUE: Final Draft of Essay 3** via Blackboard |

*Have a safe, restful, and well-deserved summer break!*