French Borderlands in North America

This course provides an introduction and critical overview of the history of Native American, European and West African encounters in French North America between the fifteenth and twentieth centuries. Particular attention will be paid to patterns of interaction, inter-dependency, domination and syncretism that emerged and evolved through the multi-cultural crucible of this encounter in New France, Acadia, Louisiana, and Haiti. This will be accomplished through lectures, readings and discussions that focus on the social, economic, cultural, gender, and political encounters, alliances, struggles, revolts, and transformations that characterize this history.

Course Requirements: regular attendance; close reading skills; write 5 two-page book reviews; hand in a one-page research paper prospectus with accompanying bibliography; and write a 10-12 research page paper on a theme or topic addressed in the course.

Required Texts:
W. J. Eccles, The Canadian Frontier (New Mexico, 1999).
Allan Greer, ed., The Jesuit Relations (Bedford, 2000).
Philip Whalen, “French Borderlands in North America Reader.”

Recommended:

Schedule of Lectures and Readings:

Week 1: France, Early Atlantic Voyages and Reconnaissance.
Thur. Explorations, and First Cultural Encounters.

Week 2: Northeastern American Societies and Canadian New France.
Lectures: Tues. Algonquian and Iroquoian Cultures.
Thur. Trapping, Trading and French Habitants.

Week 3: Algonkin-French Relations.
Lectures: Tues. From Alliance to Interdependence.
Thur. The Fate of the Wendats.

Reading: Greer, ed., The Jesuit Relations, ch. 2-3; Sioui, “Wendat Society;
Anderson, “Chain Her by One Foot;” Dickason, The Myth of the Savage  chs. 11-13;
Eccles, The Canadian Frontier, chs. 3, 7-8; Heidenreich, “The names ‘Huron,’
‘Huronia,’ and Wendat;” and consider Jaenen, “Amerindian Views of French
Culture….” Consider: Parkman, “Morals and Manners, 1640-1763.”

Week 4: Louisiana and the Mississippi Valley.
Thur. The Arrival of French Slavery.

Reading: Usner, Indians, Settlers and Slaves, chs. 1-4; Bossu, Travel to the Interior
(selections); Cohen, “The Establishment of Slave Societies;” and Hall, “French New
Orleans.”

Week 5: Louisiana and the Mississippi Valley.
Lectures: Tues. The Development of Creole Culture.
Mid-term essay questions given out.
Thur. Spanish Interlude.

Reading: Eccles, “The Slave Islands;” James, “French Capitalism and Caribbean
Slavery;” Milling, “The Acadian and San Domingue French;” and begin Thomas Ott,
The Haitian Revolution 1789-1804.

Week 6: Haiti and the Smaller Caribbean Islands.
Thur. Slavery, Industrialization and Liberty.

Reading: Eccles, “The Slave Islands;” James, “French Capitalism and Caribbean
Slavery;” Milling, “The Acadian and San Domingue French;” and begin Thomas Ott,
The Haitian Revolution 1789-1804.

Week 7: Haiti and the Smaller Caribbean Islands.
Lectures: Tues. Revolution.

Reading: Finish Thomas Ott, The Haitian Revolution 1789-1804; Beriss,
“Culture-as-Race or Culture-as-Culture;” and Christian Huetz de Lemps,
"Indentured Servants Bound for the French Antilles."

Week 8: From Barachois to Bayou.
Lectures: Tues. Acadia and Diaspora.
Thur. Louisiana Acadian, Creole or Cajun?

Reading: Brassieux, The Founding of New Acadia chs. 1-2, 4-7, 9-11; Brassieux,
Perceptions…” and “Acadian Folk Life.” See Charlevoix, “Description” and
Anthony, “Lost Boundaries.”

Week 9: French-America in the 19th and 20th Centuries.
Thur. Québécois Nationalism. Research Prospectus Due!


Week 10: Americans and African-Americans in France.

Lectures: Tues. Americans, Africans and African-Americans “Abroad.”
Thur. Eurodisneyland, Coca-Colanialization, and José Bové.


Research Papers Due as Determined