

FALL 2017 HIST 201: Seminar: Approaches to History

(A new course that satisfies AUCC3D: Historical Perspectives)

HIST 201.001 CRN 78822 Monday & Wednesday, 3:00 to 4:15 pm: Eddy 5

Professor Adam Thomas

Mad Men Modern: Exploring Postwar America through Modern Design

The tide of the civil rights movement began to turn at counters of sparkling stainless steel and glittering pastel Formica. In rambling ranch houses with the latest appliances housewives silently suffered the “problem that has no name.” Tiki torches and Hawaiian shirts hinted at expanding American imperialism, while the space-age architecture of the Watergate Hotel ultimately came to stand for the failure of the American political system. The struggles of the United States during the twentieth century took place in extraordinary settings—gleaming spaces of austere modernity that had no precedent in human history. Yet the rise and fall of modern design says much about the successes and failures of the United States during “America’s century.” Students will explore the history of the United States in the latter two-thirds of the twentieth century through material culture (fashion, furniture, architecture, etc.) and popular culture, with primary evidence pulled from a variety of media, including film, television, and popular music. The course will train students in the historical methodology of the recent past. For the final project, students will combine secondary and primary evidence with an original reading of material culture and oral history.

HIST 201.002 CRN 78823 Tuesday & Thursday, 11:00 am to 12:15 pm; Eddy 9

Professor Jared Orsi

National Border, National Park: A History of Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument

In this course we will build ArcGIS story maps about Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument. Organ Pipe, in southern Arizona on the Mexican border, is home to many rare plant and animal species and some of the nation’s most spectacular deserts. When you are there, it is easy to see why writer Wallace Stegner called the national parks “America’s best idea.” But journalist Tom Clynes recently called Organ Pipe “America’s most dangerous park” because of the 300,000 annual visitors who enter as drug smugglers or undocumented immigrants, turning rangers into law enforcement officers. This course will explore the history of this complicated and fascinating place through the methodologies of borderlands and environmental history. Along the way, students will learn the foundations of historical methodology—primary-source research, historiography, narrative writing, peer-review, citation, and digital skills—but the end product will not be an individual term paper. Instead, students will work together to research and write content for ArcGIS story maps that take visitors on a virtual tour of the park’s history, looking at it from both sides of the border. Students need NO technical web or GIS skills to take this course, just a curiosity about stunning scenery and desperate people.