

## Schooling the Golden State: A History of Education in California



Quarter/Year: Summer 2025

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Meeting Times: 9:30am-11:30am

Location: CERAS 300

### Course Description:

This course examines key moments in the history of education in California. Troubling the popular notion that California was/is a “golden state,” that is, in the words of anthropologist Savannah Shange, “a land of liberal tolerance, progressive politics, and picturesque cosmopolitanism,” we pay particular attention to how race, religion, gender, language, citizenship, empire, and migration have shaped the educational experiences of Californians from past to present in ways that were/are often deeply unjust and unequal. At the same time, we make space to center the resistance of Californians of varying backgrounds, Indigenous, Asian, Black, and Brown, teachers and students, families and communities, who imagined otherwise and worked to make their dreams a reality. Throughout, we draw connections between California’s past and the here and now, in order to think together about how history can/should inform teachers’ current work in classrooms and communities.

### Essential Questions:

1. How has education been a site of struggle in the history of California? How have contests over education both shaped and responded to larger social movements and historical moments?
2. What does it mean to be **historically conscious**? How can/should history inform professional practice and personal identity for educators?

### Learning Goals:

Students will strengthen their capacity to engage in historical thinking through:

1. Analyzing primary sources for context and content.
2. Analyzing secondary sources for methodology, arguments, and evidence they bring to bear.

### Required Texts:

All texts will be provided by the instructional team through Canvas or available through Stanford Libraries as electronic copies.

**Assignments and Grading:**

Assignments will include:

\**Informal assessment in class through do-nows, exit tickets, etc.*

\**Short written reflections*

\**Reading discussions in small groups*

**Engagement:** Engagement comes in many forms, and goes far beyond attendance. Taken holistically engagement includes (but is not limited to) the following:

*Preparation: reviewing readings and materials before class*

*Presence: engaged and responsive during group activities*

*Posing Questions: in class, out of class, online and offline*

*Listening: hearing what others are saying and also what they aren't saying, asking for clarification when necessary*

*Specificity: referring to specific ideas from readings and discussions*

*Synthesis: making connections between/across readings and discussions and to your own experiences*

**A Note on Reading for History Courses:**

History courses like this one require careful and calibrated reading. To make the most out of your experience, we highly encourage you to read strategically. This means having a clear purpose in mind, taking notes and annotating the text as you go, and paying more attention to “big ideas” and “themes” than whether you memorize every fact, figure, or minute detail. To help, we’ve provided some Key Questions to frame each day and linked some resources below. Please give them a look. Happy Reading :) !!!

1. Reading Strategies: <https://studentlearning.stanford.edu/fundamentals-efficient-reading>
2. Speechify (text-to-voice reader): <https://speechify.com/>

**Course Schedule****Day #1:**

*Key Questions: What kinds of education thrived in California before colonization? What was the relationship between schools and settler colonialism? What avenues did indigenous peoples use to resist colonial education and how do these struggles continue?*

Readings:

1. Damon B. Akins and William J. Bauer Jr., *We Are the Land: A History of Native California*, (Oakland, University of California Press, 2021) Read Intro p.1-4; and Chapter 1 p.13-28.
2. Jean Pfazler, *California: A Slave State* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2023) Read Chapter 15, p. 338-359.
3. Sabine Nicole Talaguan, “History of Indian Education in California” and Tomio Endo, “MIROMAA: Awakening California Tribal Languages in Digital Spaces” in *On Indian Ground: California*, Joely Proudfit and Nicole Quinderro Myers-Lim (Charlotte, Information Age Publishing, 2017 ) p. 19-31 and p. 181-194.

**Day #2:**

*Key Questions: How did battles over slavery, abolition, and civil rights define school experiences in early California? How did Black Californians imagine different and better worlds for themselves and their children?*

Readings:

1. Michael D. Bottoms, *An Aristocracy of Color: Race and Reconstruction in California and the West* (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 2013). Read Chapter 3, p.95-135.

### Day #3

*Key Questions: How were ideas about intelligence and educability tied to ethnicity, language, and citizenship status for Mexican Americans in early 20th-century California? How did battles over Mexican American education lay the groundwork for broader civil rights struggles?*

1. Miroslava Chavez-Garcia, "Intelligence Testing at Whittier School, 1890-1920," *Pacific Historical Review*, 76, no.2 (2007), 193-228.
2. Jimmy Patiño, "You Don't Know Exactly Which Country You Have to Belong To: Rethinking Alvarez v. Lemon Grove through the Deportation Regime, 1924–1931," *Pacific Historical Review* 89, no. 3 (Summer 2020), 347-378.
3. Marisela Martinez-Cola, "The Mendezes-The Understated" *Bricks Before Brown: The Chinese American, Native American, and Mexican Americans' Struggle for Educational Equality* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2021), p. 98-120.

### Day #4

*Key Questions: How did schools define and police the boundaries of American national identity for Asian and Asian American Californians in the early and mid-twentieth century? How did teachers and schools of education contribute to these practices? How did communities push back and navigate these systems?*

Readings:

1. Marisela Martinez-Cola, "Tape v. Hurley—the Omitted" in *The Bricks Before Brown: The Chinese American, Native American, and Mexican Americans' Struggle for Educational Equity*, Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2022. P. 64-81.
2. Clif Stratton, "Visions of a White California" in *Education for Empire: American Schools, Race, and the Paths of Good Citizenship* (Oakland, University of California Press, 2016). P. 50-84.

### Day #5:

*Key Questions: What role did education play in the mass movements that swept California during the 1960s and 1970s? How did students, parents/communities, and teachers each articulate new and distinct demands for educational justice?*

Readings:

\*Jigsaw (class split into small groups and assigned 1 reading each):

1. Joy Ann Williamson, "Community Control with a Black Nationalist Twist: The Black Panther Party's Educational Programs" in *Black Protest Thought in Education*, William H. Watkins ed. (New York: Peter Lang, 2005).
2. Mario T. Garcia and Sal Castro *Blowout! Sal Castro and the Chicano Struggle for Educational Justice* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2011). Chapters 6-7.
3. Sara Smith-Silverman "'Gay Teachers Fight Back!': Rank-and-File Gay and Lesbian Teachers' Activism against the Briggs Initiative, 1977–1978." *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 29, no. 1 (2020).

4\*TBD.