Brief description:

For the past 15 or so years American Studies has been leaning towards a more Pan-American perspective which takes into account the United States’ imperial history. Recent attention in the world media towards policy making institutions such as the World Trade Organization and the International Monetary Fund have added an urgency and legitimacy to this approach and American Studies appears to be moving towards critical paradigms which place the US’s imperial history and its neo-imperial present at center stage. In addition to this emphasis on colonial and postcolonial conditions within the United States, a growing number of scholars have begun to question fundamental categories of analysis such as the nation-state. My third field investigates this critical shift while posing a crucial question to it: what are the implications for the study of Chicana/o literature in discussions of globalization and post-nationalism within American Studies? The concept of nation, both allegorical and material, has always been central to Chicana/o studies, and Chicano scholars and activists have tended to resist the gravitational pull towards Pan-Latino or Pan-Hispanic political movements. With my third field I explore the intersection of Chicana/o political history and current paradigms in American Studies in order to see what sorts of interventions and contributions Chicana/o literature makes in this Pan-American consideration of globalization.

Working List as of May 9, 2003:

Part I: American Literature and Post-Nationalist American Studies:

Section A: What has American Studies Been?
   1. Frederick Jackson Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History”
   2. VL Parrington, Intro, Main Currents in American Thought (1927)
   3. F.O. Matthiessen, Intro, American Renaissance (1941)
   4. Henry Nash Smith, Intro, Virgin Land (1950)
   6. Perry Miller, “Preface” Errand Into the Wilderness (1956)
   7. Leo Marx, Intro, The Machine in the Garden (1964)
   8. Richard Slotkin, Intro, Regeneration through Violence
   9. Annette Kolodny, Intro, The Lay of the Land

Section B: What is American Studies Becoming?
12. Revisions of Turner’s Frontier Thesis
   b. Gloria Anzaldúa, Borderlands/La Frontera (1987)
13. Américo Paredes, With His Pistol in His Hand (1958)
14. José Saldívar, Dialectics of Our America
e. Richard Slotkin, “Buffalo Bill’s ‘Wild West’ and the Mythologization of the American Empire”

f. Kaplan, “Black and Blue on San Juan Hill”

g. José Saldívar, “Américo Paredes and Decolonization”

h. Christopher Wilson, “Plotting the Border: John Reed, Pancho Villa, and Insurgent Mexico”

i. Walter Benn Michaels, “Anti-Imperial Americanism”

j. Deborah Gewertz and Frederick Errington, “We Think, Therefore They Are? On Occidentalizing the World”

Part II: Chicano Literature’s Acts of Historical Reference:

This second section traces the relationship between philosophies of history, philosophies of nationalism, and philosophies of reference seeking to understand how historical narrative contributes to nationalist mythology at the level of linguistic reference. I want to consider how shifts to global considerations in American studies might challenge conventional assumptions about how this relationship works. I am curious about the particular intervention Chicana/o literature and history make in considerations of the historicity of nationalism, discussions of American empire, and considerations of globalization in American Studies.

Section A: Theories of Historiography, Reference, and Globalization

1. Kant, “Idea of a Universal History”


3. Hegel, from, Philosophy of History

4. Marx and Engels, Communist Manifesto

5. Marx, The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte

6. Étienne Balibar

   k. “Racism and Nationalism”

   l. “The Nation Form”

   m. “Vacillation of Ideology,” parts I and II

   n. from Politics and the Other Scene


8. Nationalism: Gellner, Anderson


10. Robert Blauner, Still the Good News


Section B: Chicano Literature and Scholarship

1. Eusebio Chacon: El hijo de la tempestad; Tras la tormenta la calma: Dos novelitas originales (1829).


3. Maria Amparo Ruiz de Burton: The Squatter and the Don (1885)


5. Jovita Gonzalez: Caballero (1937)

6. Fray Angelico Chavez: Clothed with the Sun (1939)

7. Paredes: George Washington Gomez

8. Cleofas Jaramillo: Shadows of the Past (1941)

9. Fabiola Cabeza de Vaca: We Fed them Cactus (1953)

10. Reyes Cardenas: Chicano Territory (1957); Survivors of the Chicano Titanic (1981)

11. José Antonio Villareal: Pocho (1959)


16. Tomas Rivera: . . . y no se lo trago la tierra (1971)
17. Ernesto Galarza: Barrio Boy (1971)
20. José Montoya: El sol y los de abajo and other R.C.A.F. poems (1972)
22. Rudolfo Anaya: Bless Me, Ultima (1972)
23. Oscar Zeta Acosta: Revolt of the Cockroach People (1973)
24. Ron Arias: The Road to Tamazunchale (1975)
25. Estela Portillo-Trambley: Rain of Scorpions (1975)
27. José Antonio Burciaga: Drink Cultura Refrescante (1978)
28. Jimmy Santiago Baca: Immigrants in Our Own Land (1979)
29. Nash Candelaria: Memories of the Alhambra (1979)
32. Cherríe Moraga: Loving in the War Years (1983), The Last Generation (1993)
34. Cecile Pineda: Face (1985)
35. Gloria Anzaldúa: Borderlands/La Frontera (1987)
40. Sandra Cisneros: Caramelo (2002)
42.Americo Paredes: With his Pistol in His Hand. (1958)
44. Genarro Padilla: My History, Not Yours (1989)
47. José Saldivar: The Dialectics of Our America (1991)
55. Louis Mendoza: Historia (2001)