

**Course Syllabus for Pacific History 452**

**History 452**  
**Pacific Island History, Politics, Culture**

**Days/Time:** M-W-F 1:00-1:50  
**Place:** Henry Hall, Room #221  
**Instructor:** Frank Bailey

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**Course Description:**

Welcome to the study of Pacific Island history! This course will examine the Pacific Islands' and it's peoples' pasts from human beings' first entry to the Pacific through the ongoing turmoil of post-colonial reintegration. This course will focus on the themes of cultural contact and cross-cultural history. The first part of this course is designed to discuss life in the Pacific prior to western contact. In the second half of this course, as the west moved into the Pacific, we will discuss a culture familiar to us yet foreign and devastating to those we have been studying. Through island navigators, sacred queens, European explorers, Polynesian Monarchs, Micronesian chiefs, Melanesian big men, whalers, traders, missionaries, planters, beachcombers, some of the major actors of the Pacific's history of cross-cultural contact, we will examine this dynamic, exciting, and greatly ignored or misunderstood drama of clashing worlds.

The intellectual and political concerns surrounding the doing of history in the Pacific are challenging yet fascinating. One of the problems confronting the student of Pacific Islands history is that most of the available written record has been created by outsiders, by non-Pacific Islanders. As such these accounts tell us more of the culture that formed the author rather than the object of his (for there were few women writers) fascination and observation. The accuracy and reliability of outside scholars, then, is a topic that will concern us throughout this course. We will also take into consideration the strong link that exists between the past and the present in any historical consciousness, and to the different definitions, purposes, presentations, and methods of inquiry that history has in different cultural settings. As such we will come to understand what history in the Pacific is, how it differs from the history practiced in the West and how that history has served to shape opinion and define the reality of most pacific Islanders. Above all else this is a course designed to look at history through a cultural perspective. As such it is our goal to learn more about the cultures, indigenous and not, that have, and still, define the Pacific.

**Books:** Greg Dening, *Islands and Beaches*  
Marshall Sahlins, *How Natives Think*

**Course Objectives:**

- Develop a better understanding of how different cultures throughout the Pacific have approached the universal challenges of survival and prosperity
- Develop and comprehend how history is not simply things that happened in the past, but the study of a knowable past and there for greatly impacted by the perspectives and ideologies of the present
- Comprehend how history contributes to and defines the present

- Develop a better understanding of the histories of various regions from across the Pacific
- Develop a better understanding of the forces that contributed to the birth of Imperialism and Colonialism in the Pacific
- Better develop your writing, reading and research skills as a college level student

### **Course Requirements:**

This course is structured to allow for lectures and group discussion. The course is designed around the assigned readings and our reactions to those readings. As such it is imperative you keep up with the assigned readings for they compose the majority of this courses material. During the course you shall be responsible for 4 reaction papers to the handouts you shall be reading, 2 reaction papers to works you shall be reading, a mid-term examination, and a final. My expectations for these assignments shall be covered in class.

### **Grading:**

There are no curves in this course. Grades shall be assessed through the points you earn. Each reaction paper is worth 25 points. Each of the exams is worth 200 points. Each of the reaction papers for two of the assigned books is worth 50 points making 600 points the total possible for the course. The grading goes as follows:

A = 600-550

B = 549-500

C = 499-450

D = 449-400

F = anything below 400 point will receive and F for the course

### **Attendance:**

I expect all students to be on time and in attendance at all class sessions. Though class participation is not afforded a point total it does factor greatly into your grade and your ability to do well on the EXAMS.

### **Course Outline:**

#### **Week 1 - Aug 28-Sept 1**

- Course introduction.
- What is History?
- **Handout 1**

#### **Week 2 – Sept 5-8**

- Islands of History? Islands without history?
- Orality and Pacific pasts
- Sorcery in Pacific Histories
- **Discuss handout 1**

Week 3 – Sept 11- 15

- The Pacific Setting
- The peopling of the Pacific

Week 4 – Sept 18-22

- Voyaging Histories
- Early European exploration of the Pacific
- **Handout 2**

Week 5 – Sept 25-29

- Film - Rapa Nui
- The impact of Tahiti – discuss film
- **Discuss handout 2**

Week 6 – Oct 2-6

- Death and Dispossession
- Depopulation among the Pacific Islanders

Week 7 - Oct 9-13

- The Death of Captain Cook in Hawai'i
- **MIDTERM**

Week 8 – Oct 16-20

- The Mutiny on the HMS Bounty
- Beachcombers and Beach Comb Communities

Week 9 – Oct 23-27

- Christianity in the Pacific
- Pacific Islander Missionaries
- **Reaction to How Natives Think**

Week 10 – Oct 30-Nov 3

- Church and State in Tonga Trade in the Pacific
- **Handout 3**

Week 11 – Nov 6-10

- Samoa
- Fiji
- **discuss handout 3**

Week 12 – Nov13-17

- Film – *Utu*
- **Discuss Film**
- **Handout 4**

Week 13 – Nov 20-24

- Aotearoa
- **Discuss Handout 4**

Week 14 – Nov 27-Dec 1

- Gender and Pacific Island Histories
- History through poetry
- **Reaction to Island and Beaches Due**

Week 15 – Dec 4-8

- Pacific labor trade

Week 16

- **Final Exam to be announced**