

Hidden Histories: Untold Stories

UHON 302-002 | R | 2:00-4:30 | SHC 28 | 37698

Fulfills A&S Group V: Humanities

Margo Chávez-Charles

If the United States is “the most powerful nation in history” such dominance confers tremendous responsibility. Defining that responsibility and determining the use of that power is a task that the American people have delegated to policy makers and politicians, but as we enter into a time when our country is making crucial global decisions, should we as citizens slip into complacency? As members of a democracy, our responsibilities should include participation and awareness. We need to know who we are as a nation. And so we need to know who we have been. In this course we will look at some seminal events in modern American history that formed us as a nation, events such as our 20th century wars and social movements. We will review the “official story,” but also look at what has been left out of the story that we tell about ourselves. Since literature is a powerful tool that draws us into events and helps us to learn about history, we will use some fiction as an entrance into certain periods of history. We will use contemporary non-fiction as well, including excerpts from a classic of “alternative” history, Howard Zinn’s *A People’s History of the United States*. This is an interdisciplinary class using fiction, non-fiction, poetry, music and film to approach our history and its hidden stories. Students will investigate the events that have defined us and continue to define us, carrying on a debate that will help us to assume our responsibilities as informed citizens.

As with all University Honors classes, an important objective is to develop our skills within the seminar format: the skills of engaged discussion, attentive reading and listening, and clarity in written and oral expression.

Readings

Howard Zinn, *A People’s History of the United States*

Lillian Hellman, *Scoundrel Time*

Tim O’Brian, *The Things They Carried*

Stephen Kinzer, *Overthrow*

Aguilera and Fredes, *Chile: The Other September 11th*

Howard Zinn, *The People Speak: American Voices, Some Famous, Some Little Known*

Reading packet of selected articles and essays to be purchased in Honors Office as well as e-reserve readings that students will print and bring to class

Requirements

Regular attendance; participation in class discussions; weekly response papers or questions; participation in group led discussion; 1 paper of 5 pages; final research paper of 8-10 pages

About the Instructor

Margo Chávez-Charles holds a B.A. in English from NMSU, an M.A. in Teaching English as a Second Language and Teaching French from the School for International Training in Vermont, and an M.A. in Liberal Education from St. John’s College. Her special interests include literature, interdisciplinary education, intercultural communication, and the history of ideas. She also regularly works for the CONEXIONES programs in Mexico, Nicaragua, and Spain.

About the Student Teacher

Alberto Camacho was born in Guanajuato, Mexico but grew up in Vernon, Texas. As a National Hispanic Scholar, Alberto decided to attend The University of New Mexico to pursue a degree in Biochemistry. After graduation in May 2012, Alberto plans to attend the University of Houston’s College of Optometry.