

## Latin American Studies 540 History, Society, and Ecology of the Baja California Peninsula

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Office hours: TBD, and by appointment

Day & Time: Wed., 4-6:40 pm  
Class Location: PSFA 413  
Fall Semester 2011  
Schedule # 21728

This course examines the human and natural systems of the peninsula of Baja California, their interactions over time, and challenges that this natural paradise now faces. First, an introduction to the natural history of the peninsula is provided and then the arrival and settlement of Europeans is examined in detail. After a summary of the historical evolution of the region in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, important contemporary themes are examined. These include economy and the tourism model, sustainable development, quality of life, governance, society, and the challenges of global climate change. The course concludes with an examination of key policy issues that Baja California peninsular residents now face.

Latin American Studies 540: History, Society, and Ecology of the Baja California Peninsula			
Session	Theme	Readings	Assignment
1. Aug 31	Introduction: Geology and the Gulf of California		
2. Sept 7	Hydrology, climate, and oceans	<i>Los Cabos</i> : Wurl & Valdez Aragón <i>Loreto</i> : Gaitán-Morán & Arizpe, 1-28	<i>Ocean Oasis</i> film
3. Sept 14	Terrestrial plants and animals and ecosystems	<i>Los Cabos</i> : Breceda, Galina & González; <i>Loreto</i> : Arizpe & Riosmena-Rodríguez, 29-45	
4. Sept 21	Marine flora and fauna: Extraordinary productivity. Sea turtles and whales	<i>Los Cabos</i> : Urban; López-Castro et al.: Tiburcio & Briceño <i>Loreto</i> : Comer & Nichols, 47-65	Student readings summary
5. Sept 28	Natural Protected Areas of the Peninsula	<i>Los Cabos</i> : Arizpe & Bermúdez <i>Loreto</i> : Bermúdez, 67-73	Student readings summary
6. Oct 5	Indigenous populations of the peninsula The great murals	<i>Los Cabos</i> : Fujita	Student readings summary
7. Oct 12	European expansion in the age of discovery and Mexico's west coast	Crosby, 3-26	Student readings summary
8. Oct 19	Colonial California's first half century	Crosby, 27-130	Student readings summary
9. Oct 26	The mission system and emergence of a new society in the peninsula	Crosby, 131-298	Student readings summary
10. Nov 2	The last years of the mission system and the peninsula in the 19 <sup>th</sup> century	Crosby 299-393 <i>Loreto</i> : Cariño & Leal Domínguez, 103-124	Student readings summary

11. Nov 9	Economy and society, 19 <sup>th</sup> and 20 <sup>th</sup> centuries	<i>Los Cabos</i> : Gámez <i>Loreto</i> : Castorena Davis, 125-146	Student readings summary
12. Nov 16	Contemporary themes: Economy Society Governance	<i>Los Cabos</i> : Gámez & Ganster; Arizpe, Gámez & Juárez; <i>Loreto</i> : Gámez, 201-220; Villegas, 221-233; Gerber, 235-246	<i>Policy research paper topic and bibliography due</i>
13. Nov 23	Contemporary themes: Sustainable development Climate change The tourism model	<i>Loreto</i> : Ganster, 303-320 <i>Los Cabos</i> : Bazzino-Ferrer & Lluch-Cota	
14. Nov 30	Student presentations		Student PowerPoints
15. Dec 7	Student presentations		Student PowerPoints
Dec 13	Written Policy Research Paper Due, printed and electronic copy		

### General Objectives:

LAS 540 will familiarize students with the natural history and human history of the peninsula of Baja California and the critical issues that the region now faces. By the end of the semester, it is expected that students will:

- Understand the general characteristics of the natural systems of the peninsula as well as the key features of the surrounding seas.
- Understand the historical development of the peninsula.
- Understand the concepts of development, sustainability, and quality of life and how they are manifested in the peninsula.
- Understand how environmental quality is affected by population growth, urbanization, economic growth and development, and other stressors.
- Understand the benefits and costs of the different models of tourism in Baja California.
- Understand the likely effects of global climate change on the natural systems and human population of the peninsula

### Skill Objectives:

In addition to facilitating students' acquisition of information about and understanding of a complex and dynamic region, this course seeks to improve students' skills in critical thinking, analytical writing, and multidisciplinary research. A number of the course activities will be helpful for building skills:

- Short writing assignments summarizing the assigned readings or reacting to the readings and addressing a questions posed by the instructor. Writing style and clarity of writing are important elements of these short papers.
- Class discussions based on the assigned readings and course content, including presentations by the instructor.
- Class presentations on readings on a summary of the policy paper will improve skills with developing and giving powerpoint presentations.
- The policy research paper will improve skills in library and internet research, evaluation of sources and data, and bringing research data to bear on practical issues that government agencies confront.

### **Required Readings**

The following is a required text for the course and is available at Aztec Shops or other book seller:

Harry W. Crosby, *Antigua California. Mission and Colony on the Peninsular Frontier, 1697-1768* (University of New Mexico Press, various printings). ISBN 978-0-8263-1495-6

The following books contain additional required readings for the course. This will be available in print and/or electronic form at no charge to students in LATAM 540.

Paul Ganster, Oscar Arizpe, and Antonina Ivanova, eds., *Loreto: The Future of the First Capital of the Californias* (San Diego: SDSU Press, 2007).

Paul Ganster, Oscar Arizpe, and Antonina Ivanova, eds., *Los Cabos: Prospects for a Natural and Tourism Paradise* (San Diego: SDSU Press, 2011 forthcoming).

### **Course Requirements**

Requirements for the course include completing assigned readings, three short papers on the readings, and a policy research paper as well as participating in classroom discussions. Oral presentations using PowerPoint are required for the short papers and for the policy paper. The assigned readings, lectures by the instructor, short writing assignments, and seminar participation by students are shared activities of the course and constitute the core of information covered over the course of the semester. The policy research paper provides the opportunity for students to explore in depth specific areas of interest related to the human and natural history of the peninsula of Baja California.

### **Research Paper**

The policy research paper is to be 5 to 10 pages in length and must include a detailed and complete list of sources as well as appropriate references. Clear and correct writing is an important component of the paper. The paper must include: 1) a summary of the issue or problem; 2) the context and background of the issue; 3) policy options for decision makers; 4) a discussion of the costs and benefits of the different options; and 5)

references and a complete list of sources on the issue. A written version, in hard copy and electronic format, must be submitted. A PowerPoint summary of the paper will also be presented in class. 5 to 10 minutes will be available for the class presentation.

When preparing the paper and the presentation, carefully consider who it is being prepared for. If the policy paper is written for Mexican federal environmental officials, the presentation of technical information should be more complete and specific than if the paper was produced for a fishing cooperative whose members have little formal education. Some possible topics for the policy papers include:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Water supply and sustainability in the peninsula</li><li>• Environmental justice</li><li>• Watershed management</li><li>• Desalination</li><li>• Environmental impacts of the cruise ship industry in Los Cabos</li><li>• Climate change</li><li>• Social impacts of luxury tourism</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sportfishing</li><li>• Conservation strategies for sea turtles</li><li>• Informal settlements in the peninsula</li><li>• Renewable and alternative energy for the peninsula</li><li>• Undocumented American and Canadian immigrants in Baja California</li><li>• Local cultures and rapid development</li><li>• Beachfront development of vacation homes</li></ul>
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These are only a few of the many possible topics for the research paper. Please discuss your ideas with the instructor; time will be devoted in class for brainstorming about possible topics.

Plagiarism is an ongoing problem at SDSU and elsewhere. Students in this course are responsible for understanding what plagiarism is, knowing what SDSU policies are for plagiarism, and avoiding plagiarism. A good place to start is an on-line tutorial:

<http://infotutor.sdsu.edu/plagiarism/index.cfm>

### **Short Written Assignments**

Over the course of the semester, each student will be assigned to prepare a 1-page written summary on two of the weekly readings and a PowerPoint presentation on one of the readings. These assignments should include a summary of key points and questions raised by the readings. After the class begins, assignments for specific readings and specific dates will be made.

### **Grading:**

Policy Research Paper	40%
Reading summaries and PowerPoint	40%
Class participation	20%