

English 178A

California An Interdisciplinary Approach

Professor Blake Allmendinger

January 6

Introduction

This course identifies two opposing narratives about California that have evolved over time. According to some, California is a tropical paradise, the home of the Gold Rush, the site of Disneyland (“The Happiest Place on Earth”), and a land of celebrities. According to others, California is a dystopic region, associated with earthquakes, Santa Ana winds, El Niño, overpriced real estate, race riots, freeway chases, trendy liberals, and air-headed blonds. We will trace the controversy that has arisen about California over the years by studying a wide range of disciplines, including: history, politics, climate, geography, cartography, real estate, education, architecture, art, advertising, TV, and film.

January 8

History: Through a Glass Brightly

Kevin Starr, *Inventing the Dream* (excerpts)

January 13

History: Through a Glass Darkly

Mike Davis, *City of Quartz* (excerpts)

January 15

California Adventure Land: What Went Wrong and How to Fix It

Class presentations

January 20

Politics: Two Different Views

Starr and Davis (excerpts)

January 22

Politics: How to Balance the State Budget

In-class debate

January 27

Climate and Geography: California, Land of Sunshine or Noir?

Starr and Davis (excerpts)

January 29

Real Estate: The Cost of Living in California

Starr and Davis (excerpts)

February 3

Real Estate: A Look at the Market Today

Class presentations

February 5

Midterm

February 10

Architecture: Three Regional Styles

Slide-show

February 12

Field Research

February 17

Urban Planning: Los Angeles as a Liveable Space

First paper due

February 19

Art: An Exhibition Presented by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Slide Show

February 24

Education: The UC System

Class presentations

February 26

Class Bibliographies

March 3

Advertising: The Selling of California

Class presentations

March 5

Television

I Love Lucy (The Hollywood Episodes)

March 10

Film

In-class discussion

March 12

Final Class

Second paper due

Requirements: The midterm, the two papers, the in-class presentation, and attendance/participation each count for 20% of your grade. **Note:** The assigned films and episodes of *I Love Lucy* are on reserve at Powell Library. The pictures for the slide shows on art and architecture have been uploaded onto the course website. **Office Hours:** T/Th 3-4 in The Humanities Bldg, Rm 260. allmendi@humnet.ucla.edu.

