

**NB: This syllabus is from spring 2021, when courses were online.  
It is subject to change and will, of course, be offered in person in fall 2023.**

Spring 2021  
Thurs 1:30-4:30 p.m. EST  
To join the synchronous Zoom meeting,  
click [here](#) and enter password “history”

Professor A. C. Offner  
[offner@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:offner@sas.upenn.edu)  
Office hours: Tues 9:30-11:30 a.m. EST  
Sign up for office hours [here](#).

## **History 233.404**

### **¡Huelga! The Farmworker Movement in the United States**

This intensive research seminar invites students to explore the history of farmworkers on the west coast of the United States during the twentieth century—a region in which many archival sources have been digitized, allowing students to conduct original research from wherever they may live. While the geographic scope of students’ research is restricted to the west coast, students may explore a wide variety of topics, including but not limited to: farmworker unions; the relationship between farmworker mobilizations and other movements in the US and abroad; the experiences of workers from the Philippines and Latin America and the role of US imperial and immigration policies in the lives of farmworkers; the Great Depression in rural communities; the history of gender and family in farmworker communities; the history of environment and health; struggles over citizenship and social rights; counter-mobilizations of growers and the right; religion in farmworker communities; legislative and legal strategies to obtain rights denied agricultural workers in federal law; artistic, musical, and cultural production; or the relationship between consumers and the workers who produced their food.

This is a rigorous, demanding class. Students should plan to devote at least 5 hours per week to it consistently throughout the semester. Weekly readings, writing assignments, presentations, and workshops require every student to come prepared every week. At the end of the semester, each student will have written an original research paper of 12-15 pages offering a new analysis of a historical question based on deep immersion in primary sources and secondary literature. If you keep up with the work throughout the semester, you will come out with something to be proud of. If you are unable to make this class a top priority this semester—which would be understandable given the difficult circumstances of the pandemic—I recommend taking a research seminar in a future semester.

It is recommended that students in this class have prior coursework in US history beyond their high school education.

### ***Required Readings***

All readings on the syllabus are required. All are available electronically via Canvas.

The following book has been ordered at the Penn Bookstore, 3601 Walnut Street, or can be purchased online. Educational research shows that people learn more when they read books in hard copy, but you are not required to buy books for this class.

Lori A. Flores, *Grounds for Dreaming* (2016)

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You may also obtain hard copies of books from the library using EZBorrow or Borrow Direct, which are library services that deliver books within five days from nearby libraries and let you keep them for several weeks. Links to these services are at [library.upenn.edu](http://library.upenn.edu). Plan ahead and order early in the semester.

Please do not use Kindle editions, as they do not contain page numbers necessary for class discussion and citation in papers.

You may consult [Student Financial Services](#) to find out what support you are eligible to receive to cover course costs or other items that ensure your health, safety, and secure learning environment.

### *Required Work*

#### 1. Seven weekly writing assignments, some with presentations (30%)

These assignments range in length from one page to a few pages. In some cases, the writing assignment is coupled with a presentation or peer workshop in class. Most of these assignments will be evaluated according to satisfactory completion, but a few will receive letter grades.

Week 2 reading response: 4%

Week 3 reading response: 4%

Week 4 reading response: 4%

Bibliography exercise and presentation (letter grade): 5%

Primary source analysis and workshop (letter grade): 5%

Research proposal and presentation (letter grade): 5%

Structural analysis of Ontiveros chapter: 3%

#### 2. Informed, responsive class participation (20%)

Everyone must complete the readings before class and participate in discussion throughout the semester in an informed, responsive way. By “informed,” I mean informed by a close reading of our texts, and by “responsive,” I mean responsive to each other, listening and responding to each others’ thoughts. When students present their work, classmates must be ready with questions and constructive feedback. If speaking in class makes you nervous, consider your writing assignments opportunities to prepare ideas that you can share with the group.

#### 3. Full draft due April 7 and peer workshop April 8 (10%)

Each student must submit a full draft of their paper and come to class prepared to workshop the paper of a classmate.

#### 3. Final paper due April 29 (40%)

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### *Office Hours*

I will hold scheduled office hours by Zoom each week. Office hours are a chance to discuss course material, paper ideas, and simply to get to know each other. **I encourage every student to meet with me early in the semester, especially if you are a first-year student, if you are taking your first history class, or if you are a first-generation or low-income student.** For all students, think of an early visit to office hours simply as a way to say hello and tell me a little bit about yourself.

To make office hours work smoothly, please sign up for 15-minute slots in [this Google Sheets document](#). You can sign up individually or in small groups, and if you anticipate a longer discussion, you can sign up for more than one slot. To join office hours at the appointed time, click [here](#) and enter the password (“history”).

If you are not able to meet during my scheduled office hours, I am also happy to make appointments to meet by Zoom at other times. Please email me to schedule a meeting.

### *Disability*

If you have a documented disability that entitles you to accommodation, please have Student Disability Services notify me at the beginning of the semester.

### *Academic Integrity*

Plagiarism and other violations of academic honesty can result in suspension and expulsion from Penn. Please review the university’s guide on academic integrity ([www.upenn.edu/academicintegrity](http://www.upenn.edu/academicintegrity)). Come and talk with me if you have any questions about the definition of plagiarism and academic honesty.

### *Recommended Academic Resources*

The Marks Family Writing Center: <http://writing.upenn.edu/critical/wc/>  
Bring a draft or paper outline. Appointments and walk-in hours.

Weingarten Learning Resources Center: <http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/lrc/>  
Help with academic reading, writing, study strategies, and time management. Individual appointments, walk-in hours, and workshops.

Student Disabilities Services: <http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/lrc/sds/>  
If you have a disability or temporary injury, SDS will help you acquire documentation and secure accommodations.

Penn College Achievement Program: <http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/eap/penncap/>

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PENNCAP works with a diverse group of academically talented students, many from low-income and/or first-generation backgrounds, to support their academic success. Staff provide coaching, counseling, academic assistance, and cultural enrichment. Students must apply to participate.

### *Other Recommended Resources*

Hub @ Penn: <https://hub.provost.upenn.edu/>

A central website to find resources of many kinds

Counseling and Psychological Services: <http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/caps/>

Free, confidential services from mental health professionals.

RAP Line (Reach A Peer): 215.573.2RAP: <https://www.vpul.upenn.edu/rap-online/>

9 p.m.-1 a.m. EST. Peer support, information, and referrals.

DACA and Undocumented Student Resources: <https://www.vpul.upenn.edu/undocumented.php>

If you experience violence, stalking, sexual harassment, or sexual violence:

Penn Women's Center: 3643 Locust Walk, 215.898.8611, <https://www.vpul.upenn.edu/pwc/>

- Education, advocacy, crisis counseling, support group for survivors. Serving all students regardless of gender identity.

Student Health Service: 3535 Market St., Suite 100, 215.746.3535,

<https://shs.wellness.upenn.edu/>

- Medical examinations, testing and treatment of STIs, emergency contraception, and referrals. Office visits are covered in full by the Clinical Fee and the Penn Student Insurance Plan (PSIP). Charges for lab tests related to sexual assault are waived.

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### *Class Schedule*

Jan. 21 Introduction and Library Orientation  
Nick Okrent from the Penn Libraries will join us from 2:30-3:00 p.m.

### *Part I: Getting Oriented*

*This is a reading-intensive unit designed to give you foundational knowledge. We will read 100 pages of secondary literature every week, plus primary sources. During this unit, I also encourage you to start glancing through the primary source collections posted on Canvas just to familiarize yourself with them.*

Jan. 28 Lori A. Flores, *Grounds for Dreaming*, Introduction-chapter 3  
Anaís Acosta, "A Father-Son Bracero Experience," *Diálogo* vol. 19, no. 2 (Fall 2016), 107-111

Assignment due by the start of class

One-page reading response. What most interested you, and what is one new historical question that the reading raised for you?

Feb. 4 Lori A. Flores, *Grounds for Dreaming*, chapter 4-Conclusion  
Professor Flores will join us for Q&A from 2:45-3:45 p.m.

Assignment due by the start of class

One-page reading response. What most interested you, what is one new historical question that the reading raised for you, and what is one question you have for Professor Flores?

Feb. 11 A Taste of Themes, Periods, Places, and Methods

Readings

- Verónica Martínez-Matsuda, *Migrant Citizenship*, introduction and chapter 4
- Mario Sifuentez, *Of Forests and Fields*, introduction and chapter 4
- Stephen Pitti, "Chicano Cold Warriors," in Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniela Spenser, eds., *In From the Cold*
- Primary source: *El Malcriado*, April 1, 1968

Assignment due by the start of class (1-2 pages)

- Look through the entire issue of *El Malcriado*, including the articles, images, advertisements, and everything else on the page.
- In one paragraph, explain one new historical question that occurs to you. Note the part of the newspaper that prompted this question for you.
- Then write two paragraphs relating this issue of *El Malcriado* to two of our three readings by Martínez-Matsuda, Sifuentez, and Pitti. You can choose the two readings that most interest you and devote one paragraph to each. For

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each reading, identify something specific in the issue that would intrigue the author, explain how might they interpret it, and state one historical question that they might ask about it.

#### Preparation for class

Before class, please consult the list of topics that I have posted to Canvas. Each student should come to class having chosen 2-4 that interest them – topics they might want to explore in a final paper. At the end of class, each student will claim a topic for next week’s bibliography exercise. The goal is to have no overlap among students, so come with a few possibilities in mind. This is an exploratory exercise, not a commitment to write a paper on this subject.

#### Optional enrichment

Interview with Mario Sifuentez:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ntSyZQPoQ8I>

Talk by Verónica Martínez-Matsuda:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XUwySDdyK30>

### ***Part II: Developing a Topic and Building Skills***

*In this unit, you will compile a bibliography on a focused topic, identify and interpret primary sources on a topic of your choice, and write a research proposal.*

#### Feb. 18      Bibliography exercise

Compile a short annotated bibliography on the subject you chose last week. The bibliography should include approximately 5 books—those that you think are most important in the field, not the first five that appear in a library catalog search. You may also include a few articles if they seem especially important, bearing in mind that history is a “book field” – very few articles have major influence. (As you get deeper into your topic, you’ll find yourself reading more articles that answer very specific questions.) That said, if you choose a topic that has not been deeply studied, you might have fewer than 5 books and a larger number of articles and book chapters.

You don’t have to read the books cover to cover, but you should read the introductions and conclusions, footnotes/bibliography, and a chapter or two in order to understand the book’s approach and significance. In your bibliography, write a one-paragraph description of each book or article: what is its argument, primary source base (court cases, personal papers, oral history interviews, etc.), and methodological approach? Make clear why you chose these books/articles and what you think is distinctive about them. At the end of your bibliography, identify one new historical question that doesn't seem to have been studied.

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Bibliographies must be posted to Canvas by the start of class. The bibliographies will at that point be a shared resource available to all students. Each of you will have the benefit of each others' work as you strike out on your own research.

In class, each student will present their bibliography and answer questions from classmates. Please plan to present for about 5 minutes.

Feb. 25 Shared reading and primary source workshop

We'll spend the first part of class discussing our shared reading. The second part of class will be a primary source workshop.

#### Reading

- Dawn Bohulano Mabalon, *Little Manila is in the Heart*, pp. 1-6 and chapter 6. If you have time, I encourage you to skim the rest of the introduction, as well.
- "Taking Notes" handout. Start thinking about how to organize your growing body of material.

#### Primary source workshop

This week, you will begin exploring the digital collections you might use for your paper. Based on your exploration, choose one primary source and write a two-page analysis of it using the readings we've already done together, plus any of the secondary readings you did for your bibliography exercise. The paper should show your ability to historically contextualize and interpret the source, and identify one new historical question that the source raises.

Students must post their papers and primary sources by Wednesday at 12:00 p.m. I will put students in pairs, and each student must read their partner's primary source and paper before class. In class, the pairs will meet in breakout rooms for 30 minutes to provide each other with feedback:

- A primary source analysis must have a thesis; in other words, it must offer an original answer to the question: "What does this source reveal about the time period under study?" Does this paper have an interpretive thesis, or does it simply describe the content of the source? If so, what is the thesis? If not, re-read the source with the author to see if they can come up with an original insight.
- Does the paper provide enough textual evidence from the source to support its interpretation?
- Does the paper proceed logically with a clear introductory paragraph, clear topic sentences, and sentences and paragraphs that follow intuitively from each other? If not, how could it be reorganized?
- Does the paper make substantive use of secondary literature?
- Do you think the source could be interpreted differently?

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- Do you think there is something in the source that wasn't analyzed and might have been?
- Is the historical question at the end one that our secondary readings haven't already explored? Does it pertain to the time period under study, and does it show real knowledge of the period? (No "What happened next?" or "Are things different today?" – questions that could be asked without reading anything.)

Mar. 4      Presentation of research proposals

Each student must post a research proposal by the start of class. A proposal should contain the following: a historical question stated in 1-3 sentences (ending with a question mark!), followed by a paragraph of discussion. What do you know about the topic at this point, and what remains to be explored? Why is this topic significant?

This should be followed by an annotated list of primary source materials on the subject, and a preliminary annotated list of secondary readings. Each annotation should be at least 2 sentences and can be as long as a paragraph. In annotating your primary sources, focus on explaining the questions they raise for you and the reasons you find them interesting.

The big step you'll need to make here is to have really spent some time digging through primary source collections to be able to say which you intend to focus on. If they're large collections, you should have identified at least a handful of individual sources that you know are really promising.

Your research question must be sufficiently focused that you can realistically answer it in a 15-page paper. It's better to write a deeply researched, thoughtful paper on a limited topic than a superficial, unconvincing paper on a vast topic. That said, be sure to explain the broader significance you see in your topic. You might study a single person or a single event, but that small subject should illuminate something important about the past.

The proposal should be a minimum of 2 pages and it can be longer.

In class, each student will present their proposal for 5 minutes and answer questions from classmates. This is an opportunity to help one another. If you came across materials that might help your classmates, let them know. If you have thoughts on their research questions, weigh in.

In class, we'll also talk about note-taking strategies.

Mar. 11      Spring break

***Part III: Research and Writing a Full Draft***

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*In this unit, you will spend the majority of your time researching and drafting your paper. On March 18, March 25, and April 1, class will begin with 2-3 students presenting for 5 minutes each, discussing some aspect of their research and getting feedback. You may structure your presentation as you wish; here are some ideas:*

- *You could explain what you've learned so far and why you think it's significant*
- *You could discuss an intellectual problem you're trying to work through*
- *You could try out a thesis statement and get feedback*
- *If your research question has changed, you could explain why and present your revised research question*
- *You could tell us procedurally what you've accomplished and what remains to be done*

*To continue to develop your knowledge and skills, we will have short reading assignments and one brief writing assignment.*

Mar. 18      Student presentations and discussion of shared reading

Reading

Kathryn S. Olmsted, *Right Out of California*, introduction and chapter 7

Optional enrichment

Talk by Kathryn S. Olmsted:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sgg2kr7iFss>

Mar. 25      Student presentations and discussion of shared reading

Reading

Lauren Araiza, *To March for Others*, Introduction and chapter 3

Optional enrichment

Talk by Lauren Araiza:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l3onUL4KoIg>

Apr. 1      Student presentations and discussion of shared reading

Reading

Randy Ontiveros, *In the Spirit of a New People*, chapter 3

Assignment due by the start of class

Write a 1-2-page structural analysis of this chapter. Your analysis should include an abstract or summary of the chapter (no more than half a page) and a discussion of the way Ontiveros organized the argument, including a detailed outline.

Apr. 8      Full drafts due the day before class, Wednesday, April 7 at 1:30 p.m.

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Drafts should be 10-15 pages long, on the understanding that final papers will be 12-15 pages.

Students will be paired up and must read their partner's draft before class. We'll hold an in-class workshop where students talk in pairs about what they've accomplished and what more they want to do: what do you think your argument is at this point, what are you pleased with in your draft, what do you think is a weakness of your draft, and what could you do to revise it?

I'll return drafts within a week. Students will spend the rest of the semester focused solely on revisions.

#### ***Part IV: Revision and Completion***

*Each student will meet once with me during class time to discuss revisions. Please click [here](#) to sign up for a 20-minute appointment. You may meet twice but are not required to.*

Apr. 15      Group check-in at the beginning of class (30-60 minutes), followed by one-on-one revision meetings from 2:50-4:30

Apr. 22      Group check-in at the beginning of class (30-60 minutes), followed by one-on-one revision meetings from 2:50-4:30

Apr. 29      Final papers due by the start of class, 5-minute presentations by each student

Please come to class ready to share what you've learned, answer questions, and celebrate your classmates' accomplishments.