

Christopher Smith

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Personal Statement

I am an American History student, pursuing a M.A. degree in American West and Native American history. I am interested in nineteenth century inter-ethnic relations and cultural borderlands issues as general topics. My research interests include exploring the cultural interactions between differing ethnicities and / or Native Nations in the American West, the ways in which Native Americans were involved in various infrastructure building or for-profit industries in the West, examining how differing groups (cultural, ethnic, gendered) perceived one another during the nineteenth century, and what can be learned of these perceptions through their twentieth century representations in popular culture.

Education

University of Oregon, Eugene - Current B.A. - PhD. track in History

University of California, Los Angeles - Bachelor of Arts (History), 2011

History Courses Attended: Senior Honors Research and Thesis (Spring and Fall of 2010, Winter of 2011) (H), Modern Italy, Gender and Science, U.S. Civil War & Reconstruction, American West, What's Wrong With Kansas (Seminar), U.S. 1900-1928, North American Indian History 1830 - Present, Indians of Colonial Mexico, Alternative History of the American West (Seminar), European Cultural and Intellectual History, U.S. Popular Culture, North American Indian History to 1830.

American Indian Studies Courses Attended: Working With Tribal Communities (Fall of 2009, Winter and Spring 2010), California Indian History, Intro to American Indian Studies, Native American Language and Culture, Arts of Native North America

Other Relevant Courses Attended: Jared Diamond's Past Societies & The Future Lecture and Seminar (H)

Awards and Accomplishments:

- 3.919 GPA
- Degree awarded with Departmental and College Honors
- Summa Cum Laude
- Dean's Honor List
- Senior Honors Thesis: "Los Angeles: A Tradition of Violence"

Long Beach City College - Associate of Arts, 2009

History Courses Attended: Early America (Colonial), History of California (H), Modern America (H), The Modern World, World Civilizations, History of the Americas (A & B)

Other Relevant Courses: Elementary Spanish (1A & 1B), Elementary Spanish 2 (**Taken abroad in Madrid, Summer 2008**), American Pluralism & Identity, Honors Tribal Art (H)

Awards and Accomplishments

- 4.0 GPA
- Degree Awarded with College Honors

- Dean's List with Great Distinction & President's Scholar
- Member of AGS (Alpha Gamma Sigma) Academic Honors Society
- Won the Long Beach City College Foundation Scholarship trip to Washington D.C. and Philadelphia (Summer, 2009)

Fullerton College

Relevant Courses: Natural History of California, General Ecology, Physical Anthropology, Cultural Anthropology

Accomplishments:

- 4.0 GPA

Relevant Work Experience

PARK NATURALIST, CITY OF SANTA ANA - SANTA ANA, CA. 2006-2009

As a Park Naturalist I led interpretive tours for the public in Santiago Wilderness Park that incorporated a variety of themes of natural and human history. The size of groups ranged from half a dozen up to seventy-five children and adults. I was a public relations figure who represented the educational goals of the Park Naturalist program, which focused on educating the public about the interactions of and the ways in which wilderness environments were affected by human beings. I designed programs for school groups that included classroom talks on native flora and fauna of the Santiago Creek and Santa Ana Mountain regions. I led public groups on weekend and day hikes and backpacking trips into local Southern California wilderness areas. One of my main duties was to lead the "Third Saturday Restoration Days" within the Wilderness Park where up to 200 volunteers helped to restore the riparian habitat alongside Santiago Creek to a native state. Other projects included trail maintenance and native plant propagation. During these Restoration Day events, I was normally the only city employee responsible for educating, supervising and leading volunteers in the proper, and safe, practices of utilizing tools and planting techniques or invasive plant removal. I gave public talks on a variety of wildlife and plant habitat issues at the Santiago Park Interpretive Center. I designed and implemented a program called "Wilderness Without Borders" that consisted of a series of public lectures and park tours, supplemented with international excursions to Mexico, as well as a history and entertainment themed Halloween event that catered to over 300 guests and oversaw over fifty volunteers.

Accomplishments

- Designed a six-part lecture series for Santiago Wilderness Park entitled "Wilderness Without Borders" that focused on the natural environments of Northern Mexico and Southern California coastal regions. I presented two of the lectures, and arranged specialized guest lecturers for the remaining four lectures on subjects such as migratory birds, and political borders. This series was attended by up to two dozen guests per session.
- Designed a Halloween program for guests of Santiago Wilderness Park that was based on the historic exploits of 19th century horse thief Juan Flores and his gang, who ambushed and killed the Sheriff of Los Angeles in the Santa Ana Mountains. This program utilized a script that I developed with a team of co-workers at the park, and the involvement of up to fifty volunteers who had to act out parts of the script while dressed in costume. I personally led up to three hundred guests through the program tour in one night, while dressed in costume and narrating the story. I also led the planning and production for the event, including organizing all volunteers and decorating our park for the holiday.
- Designed a partnership weekend with the Carmelitos Center (a housing development for Inner-City families), The City of Santa Ana, and Long Beach City College, where I, along with a fellow Long Beach City College student took ten disadvantaged children and a representative of Carmelitos Center on a camping trip along the Ortega Highway near Lake Elsinore. The trip lasted two days, and was fully outfitted by Santa Ana Park Naturalist Program. I led two interpretive hikes where the children learned about wilderness ethnics and the interactions of plant and animal communities in natural environments, as well as campfire programs that focused on local history. For each and every one of these children, this trip, which was free to them, was the first time they had ever been in a wilderness environment. For all but one of these children, it was the first time that they had been outside of Long Beach.

Publications

- Mary Marki and Christopher Smith, "Vigilantism during the Gold Rush" in *Invitation to an Execution: A History of the Death Penalty in the United States*, ed. Gordon Morris Bakken (Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 2010)