“Recovering History, Constructing Race
The Indian, Black, and White Roots of Mexican Americans”
Study Questions

1. What is your understanding of the term “racial politics” and “racialization”?

2. What facts would you use to argue that both Mexican Americans and Native Americans living in the Southwest are connected by history, language, ethnicity and cultural traditions?

3. What did you find to be the major differences between Anglo European pioneers who made the Western Trek as opposed to those Mexican and Spanish pioneers that preceded them in the 18th and 19th centuries?

4. What was the importance of the Mission system in the American Southwest and what were their major successes and failures?

5. What do we know of the pobladores that settled Los Angeles and the San Fernando Valley? (Consider place of origin, race, gender, culture, ethnicity, trades, professions etc.)

6. What type of land grants were awarded in Southern California, how were they lost and which 21st Century towns and cities are now to be found on the sites of the former ranchos and missions?

7. What were the nature of the tensions that we find throughout the colonial period between the royal governments and the Catholic Church relative to the status of in Mexico and the other Spanish colonies?

8. What were major differences between the United States and Mexico in recognizing the legal status of the various castas (Indians, Mexicans, Spaniards, Africans).

9. Which Constitutional protections were afforded to Mexicans and the other castas under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and the United States Constitution during the 19th and 20th Centuries? (consider due process, citizenship, voting and property rights).

10. Consider the role that “castas” continue to play in American Society. Give some examples of what you have witnessed or experienced.