
“Deemphasize the frontier and its supposed end, conceive of the West as a place and not a process, and Western American history has a new look.” Patricia Limerick, The Legacy of Conquest, 1987.

“The boundaries of the American West are a series of doors pretending to be walls…Geography did not determine the boundaries of the West; rather, history created them. The West that Americans recognize in the twentieth century is their own work.” Richard White, It’s Your Misfortune and None of My Own, 1991

Course Objectives
The purpose of this class is to introduce students to the history of the American West, defined for our purposes as the area beyond the Mississippi River. It will cover the period from the arrival of people to the Americas through the contemporary issues that face the region today. We will look at how a variety of different groups have shaped the West into the region it is today.

The class will be primarily lecture, with some class discussions and films as well.

Student Learning Outcomes
- Students will be able to analyze cause and effect in the history of the settlement of the American West and the United States.
- Students will be able to analyze the relationship among American economics, politics, demography, and social structure in the American West.
• Students will be able to construct an essay which synthesizes assigned readings and lectures into a coherent, fact-based narrative that demonstrates critical thinking skills.

Required Texts


Assignments and Grades

Your final grade for this class will be based on two papers (200 points) and two tests (200 points each), and research paper/exhibit poster (200 points). The tests will be a mix of essay and multiple choice.

Grading Scale:

- 800-720 = A
- 719-640 = B
- 639-560 = C
- 559-480 = D
- 479 and below: F

Mid-Term Exam: March 9th in class.

Final Exam: Monday, May 7th from 3:30-5:30pm. The final will cover the entire course, and consist of essay and multiple choice questions. There will be no Makeup as it is the last day of class.

Papers

Papers one and two will be over the West and Stegner books and must be between 3 and 5 pages typed, double spaced, with a thesis and proper spelling and punctuation. Specific instructions for each paper will be given separately.

Paper One: Elliott West, *The Essential West* (Due Sunday, January 28th on Turn-It-In and bring a paper copy to class on the 29th)

Paper Two: Wallace Stegner, *Beyond the Hundredth Meridian*. (Due Sunday, February 25th and bring a paper copy to class on the 26th.)

Paper Three: Paper 3 has two options. Option 1 will be a research paper of between 15-20 pages on a topic of the student’s choosing in consultation with the professor. This will be a research paper designed to explore a topic in the history of the American West in great detail. It will require both primary and secondary research to complete and must be done in accordance with the standards of the *Chicago Manual of Style*, which is the
standard for historical research. Option 2: a shorter paper (still employing primary and secondary research and using the Chicago Manual of Style) used to create a poster exhibit in conjunction with students from the graphic design course. This will be akin to seeing a museum exhibit and thus must maintain high standards of integrity and research. It will also require employing visual, rather than only written, sources. Either option is due on Turn it In on Sunday, April 29\textsuperscript{th} (for papers) and in class on Monday, April 30\textsuperscript{th}.

**Plagiarism**
Cheating of any sort will not be tolerated, and cheaters will automatically fail this class and be reported to the administration.

**The Learning Environment**
Please be courteous to your classmates and refrain from talking during lectures. Also, turn cellphones off, and please don’t answer your phone in class. Please arrive on time, and if you are late, then quietly enter without causing a disturbance. Students who are disruptive will also not be allowed to go on the trip. Also no laptops in class pleas. I’ve found these to be too distracting to other students, and studies show that using pen and paper to take notes is more effective for retention of information.

**Questions?**
Please feel free to contact me at jason.pierce@angelo.edu or meet with me after class.

**Tentative Class Schedule.**

**Weeks 1:**
Understanding the West: Turner, Limerick, and White. Discussion.
Beginnings: Native Americans and the arrival of the Spanish.
Begin West’s *Essential West* book.

**Week 2:**
Thomas Jefferson goes shopping.
Lewis + Clark: A Bromance?
Begin: Stegner’s *Beyond the Hundredth Meridian*.

**Week 3-4: Oregon, Texas, and Gold!**

**Week 5-6:**
Indian Wars

**Weeks 7-8:**
Cattle Industry, Cowboys, and Outlaws.
Mid-term Exam: March 9\textsuperscript{th} in class.

**Weeks 9: Spring Break (March 12-16)**
Week 10:
The Mining Frontier and the Railroad

Week 11-12:
Conservation and the early 20th Century

Week 13-14: World War II and the Atomic West.

Week 15
The Contemporary West and the “Sagebrush Rebellion.”
Final Exam: May 7th at 3:30
Appendix A: Scoring Rubric for writing assignments (which we won’t use, but have to put it on here in case Klingemann makes me assess this class, which he won’t but what do you do?)

Rubric for Assessment of Core History Essays for Achieving Desired Student Learning Outcomes

**Component 1: Historical Thesis/Argumentation**
1 Point: There is no historical thesis, there are multiple theses, or what there is of an argument is not developed.
2 Points: There is the outline of a historical thesis or argument, but requires further elaboration.
3 Points: There is a clearly developed historical argument.

**Component 2: Supporting Historical Evidence**
1 Point: There are no specific historical textual evidence provided and no evidence of having done any reading and assimilating of secondary or primary sources, depending upon the nature of the written assignment.
2 Points: There are a few historical textual examples given, but more specific evidence and citation is needed to develop paper fully.
3 Points: There is ample historical textual evidence used where appropriate to bolster thesis.

**Component 3: Clarity/Quality of Composition**
1 Point: There is no indication that the student has command of the basic requirements of clear/quality composition. These basic requirements of clear composition include, for example, appropriate paragraph breaks, correct spelling, topic sentences, clear sentence transitions, and subject agreement.
2 Points: There are indications that the student has attempted, and partially succeeded, in following the basic requirements of clear/quality composition. However, there is room for improvement in, for example, spelling or sentence transitions.
3 Points: The written work follows the basic requirements of clear/quality composition.

**Component 4: Organization of Essay**
1 Point: The student hobbled together incoherent, rambling sentences and paragraphs with little consideration of organizing a clear, developed essay that could be easily followed by a reader.
2 Points: The student partially succeeded in composing an organized essay. More improvement in order and logic of flow is needed.
3 Points: The student has written a well organized, coherent, and logically flowing paper.
Component 5: Historical Sense

1 Point: The student exhibits little understanding of historical chronology, change over time, and the relationship among various actors and societal forces which shape the contours of History. The student is not able to analyze the relationship among politics, economics, and social change.

2 Points: The student demonstrates a general sense of the significance of chronology, change over time, and the relationship among various actors and societal forces which shape the contours of History. More development, especially of the interplay between actors and events (societal forces), is needed. The student is partially able to analyze the relationship among politics, economics, and social change.

3 Points: The student has firm command of chronology, understands that change occurs as a process over time, and fully develops the interplay between actors and events. The student is able to analyze the relationship among politics, economics, and social change.