

**General Studies 1181, F20: “The Western and Cultural American Values.”**

“A gun is a tool, Marian; no better or no worse than any other tool: an ax, a shovel or anything. A gun is as good or as bad as the man using it. Remember that.”

Shane (Alan Ladd), *Shane*, 1953

“It's a hell of a thing, killing a man. Take away all he's got and all he's ever gonna have.” William Munny (Clint Eastwood), *The Unforgiven*, 1991.

Classroom: Academic 221

Class time: 12:00-12:50, MW

Class dates: August 23<sup>rd</sup>-October 15th.

**Dr. Jason Pierce**

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Office Academic 210B

Office Hours: Office Hours: MTWThF: 10:00am-11:00am

Or by appointment

**1181 Freshman Seminar (1-0).** This course is designed to introduce incoming freshmen to the intellectual and cultural environment of the university and the effect it will have on their lives as students. Freshman Seminars incorporate various integral elements in order to facilitate first-year students' transition from high school to college-level learning. Emphasis will be on communication, critical thinking, and information literacy. Open to all majors; restricted to and required of first-time-in- college students.

**Course Objectives: GS 1181 “The Western and American Cultural Values.”**

No other popular cultural genre has been so identified with America as the Western. The settlement of the frontier has been called a uniquely American experience, and the one that most defined what it meant to be an American. By the end of the nineteenth century, the Western had become ingrained in the American imagination, and decades of children imagined themselves in the position of their pulp and celluloid heroes. The heroic cowboy/gunfighter came to embody masculinity, honor, freedom, and fair play. Always on the side of justice and ready to defend the weak, the gunfighter/cowboy embodied our best vision of ourselves.

Hollywood movies projected this image across the nation and around the world. Until the late 1960s and 70s, Americans had a voracious appetite for Westerns and the heroes they imagined themselves to be. But the swaggering certainty in America's unquestionable moral and cultural superiority began to collapse in the face of an unpopular war in Vietnam and the complaints of peoples who felt the conquest of the West had been disastrous for peoples of color, especially Native Americans. In the 1970s a series of revisionist Westerns questioned the celebratory narrative of traditional westerns and often recast the heroes as villains. By the 1990s, critics proclaimed the Western as dead, but has it really died or did it merely head out to new frontiers? This class will explore the enduring mythology of the Western and its influence on the American Cultural Experience.

### American Presidents are often portrayed as Cowboys.



### Core Objectives for GS 1181:

- Critical Thinking 1: Gather, analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information relevant to a question or issue.
- Communication Skills 1: Develop, interpret, and express ideas through effective written communication.
- Personal Responsibility 1: Demonstrate the ability to evaluate choices, actions and consequences as related to ethical decision-making.

### Core Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to

- Develop, interpret, and express ideas through effective written communication
- Locate campus resources to solve problems/answer questions
- Gather, analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information relevant to ---

### **Method of Assessing Learning Outcomes**

Core student learning outcomes will be assessed through course assignments

## **Format**

Fortunately, the class cap of 20 students will enable us to teach this class as a traditional face to face class. Yeah!

Students with pre-existing health conditions and an ADA accommodation (or who are isolated or quarantined due to possible exposure to COVID-19) may opt attend fully online. These students will be provided online opportunities to contribute to discussions and to take alternative assignments.

Above all else: **If you feel sick, stay home.** I'm happy to help you catch up if you miss a day for illness.

Seating Chart: A seating chart will be required. This is so ASU can conduct contact tracing of potentially infected students rather than as an attendance tracking tool.

## **Angelo State Covid-19 Guidelines**

<https://www.angelo.edu/covid-19/>

## **Wellness Check**

Students must fill out the wellness check daily. It is available on Ramport or the ASU App.

**Provision to move course online.** Depending on the situation, Angelo State may be required to move all courses online. The instructor may modify class requirements or format as necessary should this occur.

The course may also go online if the instructor is infected with COVID-19 and isolated or forced to quarantine from having been in proximity with a positive case.

## **Assignments and Grades**

Your final grade for this class will be based on five movie reviews, one on campus lecture paper, and a library research assignment. Paper topics will be provided, and papers are due one week after the book is assigned.

Movie Review 1 (*Great Train Robbery*): 100 points (Due Friday, September 3rd via TurnItIn on Blackboard)

Movie Review 2 (*Shane*): 100 points (Due Friday, September 10<sup>th</sup> on TurnItIn)

Library and Research Skills Assignment: 100 points (Due on TurnItIn on Friday, October 8<sup>th</sup>)

Movie Review 3 (*The Unforgiven*): 100 points (Due Friday, October 15<sup>th</sup> via Turn It In)

**Grading Scale:** 400-360: A  
359-320: B  
319-280: C  
279-240: D  
239 and below: F

### **A Note on Assignments**

All papers are due on Turn It In on Blackboard.

### **Required Readings**

Any readings will be provided by instructor on Blackboard or handed out in class.

### **Films:**

*The Great Train Robbery* (1903)

*Shane* (1953)

*The Unforgiven* (1991)

### **Academic Integrity**

Angelo State University expects its students to maintain complete honesty and integrity in their academic pursuits. Students are responsible for understanding the Academic Honor Code, which is contained in both print and web versions of the Student Handbook.

### **Americans Disability Act**

Persons with disabilities which may warrant academic accommodations must contact the Student Life Office, Room 112 University Center, in order to request and to implement academic accommodations.

### **Attendance**

Attendance and participation are expected every day. More than four (4) unexcused absences will result in an automatic F for the course. In addition, late papers will not be accepted.

## **Religious Holiday**

A student who intends to observe a religious holy day (holiday) should make that intention known in writing to the instructor prior to the absence. A student who is absent from classes for the observance of a religious holy day shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence.

## **Helpful Links**

**Advising:** <https://www.angelo.edu/dept/advising/> Be sure to set up an advising appointment when advising for Spring begins.

**Counseling Services:** <https://www.angelo.edu/services/counseling/index.php>  
**Confidential Counseling is provided to all students free of charge.**

**Student Handbook:** <https://www.angelo.edu/student-handbook/> Outlines the policies students need to know

**Title IX:** <https://www.angelo.edu/services/title-ix/> The University prohibits discrimination based on sex, which includes pregnancy, and other types of Sexual Misconduct. Sexual Misconduct is a broad term encompassing all forms of gender-based harassment or discrimination and unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature. The term includes sexual harassment, nonconsensual sexual contact, nonconsensual sexual intercourse, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, stalking, public indecency, interpersonal violence (domestic violence or dating violence), sexual violence, and any other misconduct based on sex.

You are encouraged to report any incidents involving sexual misconduct to the Office of Title IX Compliance and the Director of Title IX Compliance/Title IX Coordinator, Michelle Boone, J.D. You may submit reports in the following manner:

[www.angelo.edu/incident-form](http://www.angelo.edu/incident-form)

Mayer Administration Building, Room 210  
325-942-2022 michelle.boone@angelo.edu

*Note, as a faculty member at Angelo State, I am a mandatory reporter and must report incidents involving sexual misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator. Should you wish to speak to someone in confidence about an issue, you may contact the*

*University Counseling Center (325- 942-2371), the 24-Hour Crisis Helpline (325-486-6345), or the University Health Clinic (325-942- 2171).*

For more information about resources related to sexual misconduct, Title IX, or Angelo State's policy please visit: [www.angelo.edu/title-ix](http://www.angelo.edu/title-ix).

**Tutoring Center:** <https://www.angelo.edu/dept/freshman-college/academic-tutoring.php>

**Tentative Class Schedule. Week 1 (August 17th and 19<sup>th</sup>)**

Goals: Welcome to General Studies. Origins of the Western Hero

Film 1: *The Great Train Robbery*

**Week 2 (August 24th and 26<sup>th</sup>)**

Film 2 *Shane* **Week 3 (August 31 and Sept 2nd)**

Shane Continued and Discussion

**Week 4 (Sept 7 and 9)**

Film 3 *Unforgiven*

**Week 5 (Sept 14 and 16)**

*Blazing Saddles* discussion.

**Week 6 (Sept 21 and 23)**

**Week 7 (Sept 28 and 30)**

Last thoughts.

Paper due on Film 4.

**Last Day of Class: Sept 30.**



