

History 4302 The American West

“The Existence of an area of free land, its continual recession, and the advance of American settlement westward, explain American development.” Frederick Jackson Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” 1893.

“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 American recognize in the twentieth century is their own work.” Richard White, *It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own*, 1991

Online
Dr. Jason Pierce
jason.pierce@angelo.edu
Office #: (325) 942-2114
Office: A210B
Office Hours: MTWThF: 10-11am
or by appointment

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 time dedicated for preparing to do the research paper.

Required Texts

Any outside readings will be provided online via Blackboard.

Assignments and Grades

Your final grade for this class will be based on two short papers (100 points each), a mid-term exam (100 points), and a final (200 points). The tests will be primarily essay with some short answer or multiple choice as well.

Grading Scale: 500-450: A
449-400: B

399-350: C
349-300: D
299 and below: F

Assignment Due Dates

Paper I: Due Sept. 19th at 11:59pm
Test I: Due Oct. 10th at 11:59pm
Paper II: Due Nov. 14th at 11:59pm
Final Exam: Due Dec. 5th at 11:59pm

The two short papers must be between 5-8 pages typed, double spaced, with a thesis and proper spelling and punctuation. Specific instructions for each paper will be given separately.

Exams will be essay, with information gleaned from class lectures.

All assignments will be uploaded through TurnItIn.

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.

Plagiarism

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

The Learning Environment

This is an online class: do it however you want. Hang out a Starbucks and do it; do it when the kids go to bed; do it with a cold beer in hand (maybe not that one, but, hey, it's up to you).

Attendance Policy. Students must complete all assignments on time. There are no other attendance requirements.

Religious Holidays: As an online class, it should not conflict with any religious holidays, but contact me if this is an issue.

ASU Student Handbook and Student Code of Conduct

http://www.angelo.edu/cstudent/documents/pdf/Student_Handbook.pdf

Students with Disabilities

Persons with disabilities that may warrant academic accommodations must contact the Student Life Office, Room 112 University Center, in order to request such accommodations prior to their implementation. You are encouraged to make this request early in the semester so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

Title IX at Angelo State University:

The University prohibits discrimination based on sex, which includes pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, and other types of Sexual Misconduct. Sexual Misconduct is a broad term encompassing all forms of gender-based harassment or discrimination including: sexual assault, sex-based discrimination, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, public indecency, interpersonal violence (domestic violence and/or dating violence), and stalking. As a faculty member, I am a Responsible Employee meaning that I am obligated by law and ASU policy to report any allegations I am notified of to the Office of Title IX Compliance.

Students are encouraged to report any incidents of sexual misconduct directly to ASU's Office of Title IX Compliance and the Director of Title IX Compliance/Title IX Coordinator at:

Michelle Miller, J.D.

Director of Title IX Compliance/Title IX Coordinator
Mayer Administration Building, Room 210
325-942-2022
michelle.miller@angelo.edu

You may also file a report online 24/7 at www.angelo.edu/incident-form.

If you are wishing to speak to someone about an incident in confidence you may contact the *University Health Clinic and Counseling Center at 325-942-2173* or the *ASU Crisis Helpline at 325-486-6345*.

For more information about Title IX in general you may visit www.angelo.edu/title-ix.

Questions?

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

Tentative Class Schedule.

Weeks 1-2:

Understanding the West: Turner, Limerick, etc.

Beginnings: Native Americans and the arrival of the Spanish.

Weeks 3-4:

Thomas Jefferson goes shopping.

Lewis + Clark: A Bromance?

Indian Removal

Weeks 5-10:

Texas and Mexico.

California and the Argonauts.

Settlement and the Indian Wars

Week 11-12:

The industrial West and the World Wars

Week 13-16:

The Contemporary West and the “Sagebrush Rebellion.”

Appendix A: Scoring Rubric for writing assignments

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.