

History 3840: History of the Twentieth-Century American West Spring 2007

M/W/F 1:30-2:20 Old Main 119

Professor Lawrence Culver

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Office Hours: M/W/F 10:30-11:20, or by appointment.

Books Available at U.S.U. Bookstore:

John Findlay, *Magic Lands: Western Cityscapes and American Culture After 1940*

Karl Jacoby, *Crimes against Nature: Squatters, Poachers, Thieves, and the Hidden History of American Conservation*

Eric Schlosser, *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal*

Richard White, *The Organic Machine: The Remaking of the Columbia River*

This reading- and writing-intensive class examines the history of the American West in the Twentieth Century. It will consider the histories of the states west of the Mississippi River, primarily those comprising the Great Plains, Rocky Mountains, Southwest, and Pacific Coast. This course will examine major themes including urbanization, economic growth, the environment, migration and immigration, the West's diverse population, and the place of the West in national and global history.

There are nine graded components in this class. You will write five papers. Four will be based on the books *Magic Lands*, *Crimes against Nature*, *Fast Food Nation*, and *The Organic Machine*. Your fifth paper (which you will also present to the class) will examine the historical context of an issue in the contemporary West, and will utilize newspapers, periodicals, and other related sources. There will be a midterm and final based on class lectures. You will receive a participation grade based upon your attendance and participation in class discussion. You will also be responsible for turning in reading questions based on weekly reading assignments, and your questions will serve as part of class discussion.

<i>Magic Lands</i> Paper	10%
<i>Crimes against Nature</i> Paper	10%
<i>Fast Food Nation</i> Paper	10%
<i>The Organic Machine</i> Paper	10%
Contemporary Issues Paper and Presentation	10%
Midterm Exam	10%
Final Exam	10%
Reading Questions - Due Friday each week a common reading is assigned.	15%
Class Participation	15%

Class Participation:

This course is not solely a lecture class, and will include in-class discussions. Your participation in discussion is essential, and will determine 15% of your final grade. Simply showing up to class does not constitute active participation. Your participation grade will depend upon your contributions to our discussions. Joining in these conversations demonstrates your understanding of the readings, and allows you to share your views of the topics we discuss.

Attendance:

Attendance is mandatory. Unexcused absences will lower your participation grade. You should make every effort to be present when we meet. The second absence will result in the lowering of your participation grade by a full letter grade. The third absence will result in a zero for your participation grade. To avoid these penalties, you must speak with me prior to any absence except in the case of an emergency. If an emergency occurs, contact me as soon as possible to be excused from class.

Reading Assignments:

You are expected to complete each week's reading on schedule. These assigned readings provide the core materials for the course, and will enable you to participate in discussion. Failure to complete reading assignments will endanger your participation grade and make it impossible to successfully complete reading questions, essays, and exams.

Grading:

All work received on time will be graded and returned as promptly as possible. If your paper is turned in late, it will receive a reduced grade (1/3 of a letter grade a day) unless you make arrangements with me well in advance. You are expected to proofread and revise your written assignments before turning them in. Please feel free to meet with me to discuss a topic, thesis statement, introductory paragraph or preliminary outline for your papers before they are due.

Academic Dishonesty:

The USU Honor Code prohibits academic dishonesty. Plagiarism includes knowingly "representing, by paraphrase or direct quotation, the published or unpublished work of another person as one's own in any academic exercise or activity without full and clear acknowledgement. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials" (*Code of Policies and Procedures for Students*, Article V, Section 3A.1). The penalties for plagiarism are severe. Plagiarism or other academic dishonesty will result in an immediate F, and will be reported to the Dean of the College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences. Other penalties may also be imposed at the Dean's discretion. These include probation, suspension, expulsion, withholding of transcripts, denial or revocation of degrees, referral to psychological counseling, and other disciplinary actions.

This syllabus and class schedule may be revised if needed. An updated version will be available on my faculty website: <http://www.usu.edu/history/faculty/culver/classesculver.htm>

Course Schedule

Week 1

- January 8 Introduction to History 3840
- January 10 The American West in 1900
- January 12 The Native West: Reservations, Allotment, and Entering a New Economy

Week 2

- January 15 No Classes – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
 - January 17 The Progressive Era in the West
 - January 19 Conservation, the National Forests, and National Parks
- Reading: *Crimes against Nature*, xv-78

Week 3

- January 22 Regional Promotion and the New Tourist Frontier
 - January 24 Urban Growth and Urban Reform
 - January 26 Labor, Company Towns, and the Ludlow Massacre
- Reading: *Crimes against Nature*, 81-146

Week 4

- January 29 The Mexican Revolution and Mexican Immigration into the West
 - January 31 The Rural West after World War I: Agricultural Depression
 - February 2 Discussion of *Crimes against Nature* and Paper # 1
- Reading: *Crimes against Nature*, 149-202

Week 5

- February 5 The Urban West After World War I: The Roaring 1920s
- Crimes against Nature* Paper Due**
- February 7 African-American Migration into the West
 - February 9 Dust Bowl and Depression

Week 6

- February 12 The New Deal in the West
 - February 14 Video: Cadillac Desert
 - February 16 Cadillac Desert, Continued
- Reading: *The Organic Machine*, ix-58

Week 7

- February 19 No Classes – President's Day
 - February 20 (Tuesday Make-Up Day)
 - February 21 World War II and the Transformation of the West
 - February 23 Discussion of *The Organic Machine* and Paper #2
- Reading: *The Organic Machine*, 59-113

Week 8

February 26 Wartime Unrest in LA: The Zoot Suit Riots and the Sleepy Lagoon Case

The Organic Machine Paper Due

February 28 Video

March 2 Video

Week 9

March 5 Japanese American Internment/Video: Topaz

March 7 Midterm Review

March 9 **Midterm Exam**

Reading: *Magic Lands*, 1-116

No Classes – Spring Break

March 12

March 14

March 16

Week 10

March 19 The Atomic West

March 21 The Postwar Boom in California and the Sunbelt

March 23 The New Tourist (and Urban) West: Disneyland and Las Vegas

Reading: *Magic Lands*, 117-213

Week 11

March 26 Civil Rights in the West

March 28 The Immigration Act of 1965 and New Immigrant Populations

March 30 Discussion of *Magic Lands* and Paper # 3

Reading: *Magic Lands*, 214-303

Week 12

April 2 Goldwater, Reagan, and Republican Resurgence in the West

Magic Lands Paper Due

April 4 Range Wars: The Sagebrush Rebellion vs. the New Environmental Movement

April 6 Oil and the Rise of Texas

Reading: *Fast Food Nation*, 1-107

Week 13

April 9 Mexican and Latino Immigration and an Expanding Borderland

April 11 The Political and Demographic Transformation of California Since Proposition 13

April 13 Technology's Leading Edge: Silicon Valley and the Pacific Northwest

Reading: *Fast Food Nation*, 111-190

Week 14

April 16 Depopulating the Plains and the Decline of Traditional Industries

April 18 The Native West at the Turn of a New Century

April 20 Discussion of *Fast Food Nation* and Paper # 4

Reading: *Fast Food Nation*, 193-288

Week 15

April 23 Californication and Aspenization: New Urban and Rural Growth

***Fast Food Nation* Paper Due**

April 25 The Twentieth-Century West Enters the Twenty-First Century

April 27 Final Exam Review

(All Contemporary Issues Papers and Presentations Must Be Completed.)

Final Exam: Wednesday, May 2, 11:30-1:20 in Old Main 119