

Graduate Seminar in American Western History
Monday 4:30-7:00 pm
Old Main 323L

Instructor: Colleen O'Neill
Office: Old Main 321E (in the *WHQ* office)
Office Hours: Wed. 3:00 – 4:00 pm
and by appointment

Email: colleen.oneill@usu.edu
Phone: 797-1297

Course Description

This course will introduce you to a sampling of some of the newest trends in American western history and offer you the opportunity to develop your own research interests in this region. I encourage you to use this class to work on your MA thesis/plan B paper. If western history is not your field, then we can work on developing a research project that reflects your particular requirements.

The success of the seminar format rests largely in your hands. To create the best and most intellectually stimulating environment, you all need to come to class prepared and ready to critically discuss your assigned readings and/or share your own research. Your classmates will be counting on you to contribute your ideas, questions, confusions and insights. We will be learning from each other. While I may interject from time to time, I did not design the class with a lecture format in mind.

Required Reading

You will find the following books available at the bookstore. (You might be able to find cheaper used copies elsewhere). These books are also available on reserve in the library.

- Truett, Samuel. *Fugitive Landscapes: The Forgotten History of the US-Mexican Borderlands*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006.
- McManus, Sheila. *The Line Which Separates: Race, Gender, and the Making of the Alberta-Montana Borderlands*. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press; East Lansing : Michigan State University Press, 2005.
- Isenberg, Andrew. *Mining California, an Ecological History*. NY: Hill and Wang, 2006.
- Jacoby, Karl. *Crimes Against Nature: Squatters, Poachers, Thieves and the Hidden History of American Conservation*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.
- Warren, Louis. *Buffalo Bill's America, William Cody and the Wild West Show*. NY: Vintage, 2006.
- Deverell, William. *A Companion to the American West*. Blackwell Companions to American History. Somerset, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007. (also available on Net library – electronic resource)
- Raibmon, Paige. *Authentic Indians: Episodes of Encounter from the Late-Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2005.
- Deverell, William. *Whitewashed Adobe: The Rise of Los Angeles and the Remaking of its Mexican Past*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.

Assignments and Grading:

1. Leading Discussion. (15%) Each of you will be responsible for facilitating class discussion at least once during the course of the semester. That responsibility will involve:
 - Emailing the class a list of discussion questions (between 5-10) before the class meeting, but no later than Sunday night.
 - Placing the book/chapter in its historiographical context
 - Guiding your classmates through the reading, making sure we draw out the authors' major points
 - Assessing the book's contribution to the literature, as well as its limitations
 - Connecting the author's ideas to others works
 - Encouraging class participation
2. Critical book review. 5-7page review, due the week you lead class discussion. (20%)
3. Bibliography for research topic. This should include primary and secondary sources, including periodical literature and monographs. (15%)
4. Assessment of primary documents. 2-3 page preliminary analysis of the documents you plan to use in your paper. (15%)
5. Research paper. 15-17 pages on a topic of your choice – as related to one of the subjects covered during the course of the semester. (35%)

Reading and Discussion Schedule:

January 5: Introductions, class responsibilities

New Trends in US Western History

January 12: William Deverell, *A Companion to the American West*, Part 1: Thinking Through the American West, "Introduction."

Stephen Aron, "The Making of the First American West and the Unmaking of Other Realms." (Blackwell Companion)

Elliott West, "Thinking West." (Blackwell Companion)

Chris Friday, "Where to Draw the Line? The Pacific, Place, and the U.S. West." (Blackwell Companion)

January 19: No Class, Martin Luther King Day

Borderlands

January 26: Truett, Samuel. *Fugitive Landscapes: The Forgotten History of the US-Mexican Borderlands*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006.

Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron, “From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in North American History, *American Historical Review* 104(June 1999), 814-841.

February 2: McManus, Sheila. *The Line Which Separates: Race, Gender, and the Making of the Alberta-Montana Borderlands*. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press; East Lansing : Michigan State University Press, 2005.

Elizabeth Jameson, “Bringing It All Back Home: Rethinking the History of Women and the 19th Century West.” (Blackwell Companion)

Environmental History

February 9: Jacoby, Karl. *Crimes Against Nature: Squatters, Poachers, Thieves and the Hidden History of American Conservation*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.

February 17: (Following Monday Schedule) Isenberg, Andrew. *Mining California, an Ecological History*. NY: Hill and Wang, 2006.

Dan Flores, “Societies to Match the Scenery: Twentieth Century Environmental History.” (Blackwell Companion)

Topic statement due

Race and Ethnicity

February 23: Raibmon, Paige. *Authentic Indians: Episodes of Encounter from the Late-Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2005.

Douglas Flamming, “African Americans in the Twentieth-Century West.”

Bibliographies due

March 2: Deverell, William. *Whitewashed Adobe: The Rise of Los Angeles and the Remaking of its Mexican Past*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.

Ramón A. Gutiérrez, “Hispanics and Latinos.” (Blackwell Companion)

primary source assessments due

March 9: No class, Spring Break

Popular Culture

March 16: Warren, Louis. *Buffalo Bill's America, William Cody and the Wild West Show*. NY: Vintage, 2006.

Douglas R. Nickel, “Art, Ideology, and the West.”

Marguerite Shaffer, “The West Plays West: Western Tourism and the Landscape of Leisure.”

March 23: Writing and research – no class (meet with Dr. O’Neill, if needed)

March 30: Writing and research -- no class (meet with Dr. O’Neill, if needed)

- April 6: Rough Draft due -- no class (meet with Dr. O'Neill, if needed)
- April 13: Class presentations
- April 20: Class presentations
- April 27: Class presentations (depending on enrollment). Finals essays due.