

HIST 466/566  
American West  
Fall 2009  
Instructor: Jeff Ostler  
Class Hours: 4:00-5:20 MW  
Office Hours: 2:00-3:00 T  
                  10:45-12:00 W  
                  or by appointment  
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### **Course Description:**

This course focuses on the American West during the period of U.S. continental expansion (from the late colonial period to the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> century). Our main concern will be to analyze the West in relationship to the United States as an imperial nation-state (paying attention, as well, to global relationships).

The course is divided into two parts: before and after the Civil War. This is no accident, since U.S. expansion was a primary cause of the Civil War and since the way the war ended (the victory of the North and the consolidation of industrial capitalism) had an important impact on the American West and on the role of the West in the creation of the modern United States. In the first part of the course, our emphasis will be on the West's impact on national development. In the second part of the course, we will shift our angle of vision to look at how the United States undertook a project of nation-building in the West.

Although much of the course will focus on ideologies, policies, institutions, politics, and war, we will also want to understand the positions and experiences of various groups, especially, though not exclusively, those defined in racial terms, affected by the building of America's continental empire.

### **Readings:**

The following required readings are available for purchase in the University bookstore (the published books are on reserve):

James Ronda, *Lewis and Clark among the Indians*  
James Welch, *Fools Crow* (a novel)  
Several readings available on Blackboard (list appended)

## Course Requirements:

1. A 4-page paper in which you compare the Lewis and Clark expedition's interaction with two of the Indian communities they encountered. Due October 21. Worth 20%.
2. A midterm exam. Part of the exam will be take-home (due Nov. 2), part will be given in class (also on Nov. 2). Worth 25%
3. A 4-page paper on an aspect of James Welch's novel *Fools Crow*. Due November 23. Worth 20%.
4. An open-book, open-notes final exam to be given on Wednesday, December 9, from 3:15 to 5:15. Worth 35%.

Note: Graduate Students in 566 have additional requirements and should see the instructor by the end of the first week of class.

## Schedule:

- 9/30 North America c. 1750 and the Seven Years' War
- 10/5 The West and the American Revolution
- 10/7 Problems and possibilities of the West  
Readings: Blackboard 1-4 (Jefferson to Madison; Jefferson to Breckinridge;  
Jefferson's 2d inaugural address; Federalist # 10)
- 10/12 U.S. Indian policy and Indian strategies
- 10/14 Lewis and Clark and Indians  
Reading: Ronda, *Lewis and Clark among the Indians* (entire)
- 10/19 Indian removal and slavery  
Reading: Blackboard 5-6 (Wallace, Green)
- 10/21 Hispanic North America and Texas independence  
Interactions Paper Due
- 10/26 Mexican War and Oregon  
Reading: Blackboard 7-8 (Benton, Nugent)
- 10/28 The West and the Civil War  
Reading: Blackboard 9-10 (Kelman, Utley)
- 11/2 Midterm exam  
Search for order in the post-Civil War West
- 11/4 Memories of the Gold Rush and racialization in California  
Reading: Blackboard 11-12 (Johnson, Almaguer)
- 11/9 Hispanics in the Southwest  
Reading: Blackboard 13-14 (Meier and Ribera; Deutsch)
- 11/11 Conquest of Plains Indians

- 11/16 Blackfoot history  
Reading: Welch, *Fools Crow* (entire)
- 11/18 Chinese and Mormons in the Rocky Mountains  
Reading: Blackboard 15-16 (Zhu; Van Wagoner)
- 11/23 Class conflict/Question of genocide  
Reading: Blackboard 17-18 (White; Kiernan)
- 11/25 No class
- 11/30 Closing of the frontier  
Reading: Blackboard 19 (Turner)
- 12/2 Creation of western mythology  
Reading: Blackboard 20 (Butler)
- 12/9 (3:15): Final exam

List of Readings  
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1. Letter of Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, 28 October 1785, in Julian B. Boyd, ed., *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson* vol. 8 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951), pp. 681-83.
2. Letter of Thomas Jefferson to John Breckinridge, 12 August 1803, in Andrew A. Lipscomb, ed., *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson* vol. 10 (Washington, D.C.: Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1903), pp. 407-11.
3. Excerpt from Thomas Jefferson's second inaugural address, 4 March 1805, in Andrew A. Lipscomb, ed., *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson* vol. 3 (Washington, D.C.: Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1903), pp. 377-80.
4. James Madison, Federalist # 10 (1787), in Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay, *The Federalist*, ed. William R. Brock (London: Phoenix Press, 2000), pp. 41-48.
5. Anthony F. C. Wallace, "President Jefferson's Indian Policy," in *Jefferson and the Indians: The Tragic Fate of the First Americans* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 206-240.
6. Michael D. Green, excerpt from "The Expansion of European Colonization to the Mississippi Valley, 1780-1880," in *The Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas*, vol. 1, *North America*, pt. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 510-531.
7. Excerpt of speech by Thomas Hart Benton, 28 May 1846, in *The Congressional Globe*, 6 June 1846, pp. 917-18.
8. Walter Nugent, "California and New Mexico, 1846-1848: Southward Aggression II," in *Habits of Empire: A History of American Expansion* (New York: Knopf, 2008), pp. 187-220.
9. Ari Kelman, "Deadly Currents: John Ross's Decision of 1861," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 73 (Spring 1995), pp. 80-103.
10. Robert M. Utley, excerpt from *The Indian Frontier of the American West, 1846-1890* (Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 1984), pp. 76-98.
11. Susan Lee Johnson, excerpt from *Roaring Camp: The Social World of the California Gold Rush* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2000), pp. 24-53.
12. Thomás Almaguer, excerpt from *Racial Fault Lines: The Historical Origins of White Supremacy in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), pp. 153-182.

13. Matt S. Meier and Feliciano Ribera, excerpt from *Mexican Americans/American Mexicans: From Conquistadors to Chicanos* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993), pp. 80-102.
14. Sarah Deutsch, excerpt from *No Separate Refuge: Culture, Class, and Gender on an Anglo-Hispanic Frontier in the American Southwest, 1880-1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 13-40.
15. Liping Zhu, "'A Chinaman's Chance' on the Rocky Mountain Mining Frontier: Achieving the American Dream in the Boise Basin," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 45 (Autumn/Winter 1995), pp. 36-51.
16. Richard S. Van Wagoner, excerpt from *Mormon Polygamy: A History* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992), pp. 158-187.
17. Richard White, excerpt from *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own: A New History of the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), pp. 270-297.
18. Ben Kiernan, excerpt from *Blood and Soil: A World History of Genocide and Extermination from Sparta to Darfur* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), pp. 310-363.
19. Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," in *The Frontier in American History* (orig. published 1893; New York: Henry Holt, 1920), pp. 1-38.
20. Anne M. Butler, "Selling the Popular Myth," in *The Oxford History of the American West*, edited by Clyde A. Milner II, Carol A. O'Connor, and Martha A. Sandweiss (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 770-801.