ABOUT THE COURSE:

This course offers an exploration of the themes in films about the American West. We will consider how the films draw upon, shape, and produce images of and ideas about the American West and how the films reflect cultural and political issues at the time of their production.


ASSIGNMENTS AND COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. A midterm and final exam (in class) consisting of short answers to specific questions about the films and readings. Worth 25% each.
2. A “reaction” paper (2 pages) to *The Searchers* in light of reading Hacker’s book on Cynthia Ann Parker. Due in class on July 7. Worth 15%
3. A paper (3 pages) reviewing a film viewed outside of class from a list of films to be provided. Due in class on July 14. Worth 25%
4. A final paper (4-6 pages) comparing how two of the required films deal with a theme of your choice. Due on July 18. Worth 35%.

SCHEDULE:

Week 1

6/23 Introduction
   Begin *Stagecoach*

6/24 Finish *Stagecoach*
   Discussion
   Readings:
   Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History” (CP)
   Coyne, “Mirror for Prewar America” (CP)
   Kitses, “Authorship and Genre: Notes on the Western” (HO)

6/25 Continue discussion
   Begin *High Noon*
6/26 Finish *High Noon*
Discussion
Readings:
Durgnat and Simon, “Six Creeds that Won the Western” (HO)
Slotkin, “High Noon (1952): The Hero in Spite of Democracy” (CP)
Prince, “Historical Perspective and the Realist Aesthetic in High Noon” (CP)
Foster, “The Women in High Noon” (CP)
Tompkins, “Women and the Language of Men” (CP)

Week 2
6/30 Discussion
Begin The Searchers
7/1 Finish The Searchers
Discussion
Readings:
   Pye, “Double Vision” (CP)
   Eckstein, “Darkening Ethan” (CP)
   Budd, “A Home in the Wilderness” (HO)
   Colonnese, “Native American Reactions to the Searchers” (CP)
Hacker, Cynthia Ann Parker
7/2 Discussion
Start Man Who Shot Liberty Valance
Readings:
   Kitses, “Man Who Shot Liberty Valance” (HO)
   Pye, “Genre and History” (CP)
7/3 Finish Man Who Shot Liberty Valance
Discussion

Week 3
7/7 MIDTERM EXAM
   “REACTION” PAPER DUE
Start Once Upon a Time in the West
7/8 Finish Once Upon a Time
Readings:
   Kitses, “Sergio Leone” (HO)
   McGee, “Get Out of the Way” (CP)
   Frayling, “Once Upon a Time in the West” (CP)

7/9 Discussion
7/10 Discussion of paper topics
   Discussion of outside films
Week 4
7/14  *Unforgiven*
      FILM REVIEW PAPER DUE

7/15  Discussion
      Readings:
          Thumin, “‘Maybe He’s Tough...’” (CP)
          Kelley, “Giggles and Guns” (CP)
          Grist, “Unforgiven” (CP)

7/16  Review
7/17  FINAL EXAM
7/18  FINAL PAPER DUE