HISTORY 467
TWENTIETH CENTURY AMERICAN WEST

Lecturer: Professor Marsha Weisiger
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email: weisiger@uoregon.edu
Office hours: Wednesdays, 2:30-5 p.m., or by appointment

Class Schedule:
Lectures: Mondays and Wednesdays, 12-1:30 p.m., 175 Lillis Hall
Film Series: Occasional Mondays, 4-6:30 p.m., 146 Hedco Education Building (See schedule below; ending time approximate, depending on length of film)

Introduction
We will approach our study of the Twentieth-Century American West by tracking five themes: (1) the legacy of conquest, (2) labor, (3) environmental change, (4) the federal and corporate role in western development, (5) and the mythic West. We will also pay particular attention to class, race, ethnicity, and gender issues. No single lecture will provide a complete understanding of any of these themes. Instead, I will trace each of these strands of history through several lectures extending throughout the semester, and the readings will provide further insight.

Course objectives:
- Trace the historical development of the major course themes
- Analyze and interpret “primary” sources of historical information
- Identify an author’s argument or thesis
- Write an analytical essay that develops your own argument

Readings
The readings for this course are extensive. Some weeks, the readings will be longer; others, much shorter. Anticipate reading 130 pages per week, or about 20 pages per day.

Thomas Andrews, Killing for Coal
Linda Gordon, The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction
David Guterson, Snow Falling on Cedars
Matt Klingle, Emerald City: An Environmental History of Seattle
Western History Reader, posted on Blackboard
Films
Because a major theme of the course is the mythic West, we will watch five movies (one optional) that examine the tension between western myth and history. These films will be screened outside of class, but attendance is required. (If you have a scheduling conflict that can’t be avoided, we can make alternative arrangements.) The movies we will see together as a class are:

- The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance
- Chinatown
- Smoke Signals
- Lone Star

In addition, A Family Gathering is optional and earns extra credit.

Grading
Grading will be based on four components:
- four three-page response papers (100 points)
- a short research paper (100 points)
- a final essay (100 points)
- participation in class discussions and attendance at the four films (100 points)

$ > 400 = A+ \quad 380-400 = A \quad 360-379 = A-$
$348-359 = B+ \quad 336-347 = B \quad 320-335 = B-$
$308-319 = C+ \quad 296-307 = C \quad 295-280 = C-$
$240-279 = D \quad <240 = F$

Failure to complete any component of the course may result in failure of the entire course.
Specific information on the grading of each component follows:

Final Essay (100 points)
I will give you a choice of questions to answer, and you will write a coherent 6-8-page typed essay, drawing on the lectures, films, and readings, including the primary sources. Each essay will be graded on the basis of the argument you make, the evidence you use to support your argument, your demonstrated understanding of the information and the historical interpretations provided both in class and in the readings, and the overall coherence of the essay. The final essay is due June 8.

Term Paper (100 points)
You will conduct an oral history interview with a long-time Oregon resident who is at least 60 years old and whose life experiences reflect one of the themes or subjects of this course. I will provide guidance on locating an appropriate “interview subject,” as well as guidance for conducting the interview. This paper involves four basic steps: (1) Identify your interview subject and familiarize yourself with the principles of oral history. (2) Conduct sufficient library research to place your subject’s life within his or her broader historical context, using books,
archival web sites, and primary sources. This will help you develop a set of interview questions. (3) Interview the person, using a tape recorder. A copy of your interview will be deposited in the UO Special Collections, so please make sure your recording can be downloaded to a computer. (Recorders can be borrowed from the library, if you don’t have one.) (4) Write a 7-8 page essay narrating and analyzing the history of your subject, within his or her historical context. You must attach to the paper a permission slip signed by the person you interviewed and a copy of the interview, burned onto a CD.

By the fourth week of class, you must identify and contact your subject, fill out a basic information form, and write a research proposal. The research proposal should also list the secondary and primary sources you intend to consult for the historical context. The proposal is due April 18. The paper is due May 25.

Short Analytical Papers (25 points each, for a total of 100 points)
For each of the four books we read, you will write a three-page analytical paper. Analyze a theme or issue you think is important, interesting, provocative, or surprising in the book. The point is to think deeply about one of the issues that the author raises, or perhaps the book’s argument or “big idea,” and analyze it. Tip: I am not looking for a “book report,” a synopsis of the book, or a discussion of whether or not you liked the book. I want analysis.

Class Participation (100 points)
The participation grade will be based on attendance at the films (50 points) and discussion in class (50 points). I strongly recommend that you complete the readings in the Western History Reader before the beginning of class each week (or the lecture to which the readings apply). I may ask you to contribute to a discussion of some of the issues raised in lecture, and the readings will help you participate in these impromptu discussions.

If you have a conflict with the film screenings, such as another class or work, please see me to make other arrangements for seeing the films.

Formatting Papers
All papers should be double-spaced with one-inch margins and a Times New Roman 12-point font, so that each page averages approximately 250 words. That is, a three-page paper should be approximately 750 words in length. Indent the beginning of each paragraph by 5 spaces. Do not add a space between paragraphs. (Microsoft’s default format is 1.5 spaces with an extra space between paragraphs, so you need to reset those defaults.)

Citations: If you’re identifying a quotation within an assigned book, you should simply cite the page number in parentheses at the end of the sentence. In all other instances, please use the Chicago Manual of Style citation method (see Blackboard).

Classroom Policies
Attendance is required. More than four absences will result in an F in the course. Exceptions will be made only in the event of a documented university-sponsored activity or a protracted illness, with a doctor’s note. I do not want documentation of your absences, except in the following instances: (1) you need to submit a late assignment or take a make-up exam; (2) you participated
in a university-sponsored activity; (3) you’ve had a prolonged absence due to a protracted illness or other calamity that you can document. Leaving early or arriving after the lecture has begun will count as an absence.

Please turn off cell phones and other electronic devices (except laptop computers). Please use computers only for taking notes. Please also avoid chatting with your neighbor in class; the students around you find this annoying, and so do I.

I do not accept graded course work after the class period for which the assignment is due, and a missed deadline will result in an F on the assignment. I do not accept emailed assignments; please plan ahead so that you successfully print your work before class. “Make up” exams and late essays will be accepted only for a documented excused absence due to illness, a documented severe illness or death in your family, or a documented school-sponsored activity in which you are officially representing UO. No other excuses will be accepted.

**I take plagiarism very seriously.** All work that you turn in must be your own. Any work submitted for credit that includes the words or ideas of anyone else must fully and accurately identify your source with a citation. If you are confused about this or do not understand the consequences of academic dishonesty at the UO—or the ethical issues behind these university policies—please read these guidelines: [http://libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/](http://libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/)

In the event of an act of plagiarism, I will impose sanctions, as provided in: [http://studentlife.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/StudentConductCode/tabid/69/Default.aspx#Academic_Misconduct](http://studentlife.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/StudentConductCode/tabid/69/Default.aspx#Academic_Misconduct). The minimum sanction will be an F on the assignment, but plagiarism can also merit an F in the course, even for a first offense.

**Accommodations:** If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please arrange to see me soon. Request a letter from Disability Services that verifies your disability.
WEEKLY LECTURES AND ASSIGNMENTS

Week 1: West of the Imagination
M♦ (March 28): Frederick Jackson Turner and the American West
W♦ (March 30): Buffalo Bill’s Wild West
Reading Assignment:
   Western History Reader:
   Cody, excerpts from Life of the Hon. William F. Cody

Week 2: Native Ground
M♦ (April 4): Native America
W♦ (April 6): El Norte
   Discussion: Gordon, The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction
Papers on The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction due at the beginning of class.
Reading Assignment:
   Gordon, The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction (entire)

Week 3: Mythic West
M♦ (April 11): Hollywood’s West
M♥ (April 11, time 4-6:15 p.m.) Screening of The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance
W♦ (April 13): NO CLASS (Work on your term paper proposal.)

Week 4: Staking Claims
M♦ (April 18): Mining the West
   Term paper proposal due at beginning of class
W♦ (April 20): Northwestern Labor Radicalism
   Discussion: Andrews, Killing for Coal (entire)
Papers on Killing for Coal due at the beginning of class.
Reading Assignment:
   Andrews, Killing for Coal

Week 5: Remaking the Western Landscape
M♦ (April 25): Felling Forests
M♥ (April 25, 4-6:30 p.m.) Screening of Chinatown
W♦ (April 27): Reclaiming the Desert
Reading Assignment:
   Western History Reader:
   Muir, “Hetch Hetchy Valley,” excerpt from The Yosemite
   Olney, “Water Supply for the Cities About the Bay of San Francisco,” Out West
Web Sites:
http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5721
http://www.sfmuseum.org/hetch/hetchy7.html
Week 6: Beyond Stereotypes
M♦ (May 2): Becoming Mexican American
W♦ (May 4): Urban West
   **Discussion:** Klingle, *Emerald City*
3-page response papers on *Emerald City* due at the beginning of class.

Reading Assignment:
   Klingle, *Emerald City* (entire)

Week 7: A New Deal for the West
M♦ (May 9): Indian New Deal
M ♥ (May 9, time 4-5:45 p.m.) Screening of *Smoke Signals*
W♦ (May 11): Dust Bowl

Reading Assignment:
   **Western History Reader**
   Navajo readings

Week 8: On the Western Homefront
M ♦ (May 16): The Atomic West
**EXTRA CREDIT** (Optional)
M ♥ (May 16, time 4-5 p.m.) Screening of *A Family Gathering*
W♦ (May 18): Internment
   **Discussion:** Guterson, *Snow Falling on Cedars*
3-page response paper on *Snow Falling on Cedars* due at the beginning of class

Reading Assignment:
   Guterson, *Snow Falling on Cedars* (entire)

Week 9: Idealized West
M♦ (May 23): See the West First: Tourism
M ♥ (May 23, Time 4-6:30) Screening of *Lone Star*
W♦ (May 25): Utopian West

Reading Assignment:
   **On Reserve, (Knight Library):**
   Mills, *Your National Parks* (browse)

*Term papers due at the beginning of class May 25.*

Week 10: The New West
M ♦ (May 30): MEMORIAL DAY ♦ NO CLASS
W♦ (June 1): Western Politics and the Legacy of Conquest/Review

**FINALS WEEK**
W ♦ (June 8): Final Essays Due by 12:00 noon.
### Dates to Remember

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