

# *History of the American West*

## *Spring 2015*

Syllabus for HIS 220

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The first English to come to the American shores did not want to stay in this land. It was too wild and far different than what they had come from. This sentiment did not last long, however. Soon Americans were looking westward, always westward, and dreaming of a country that would stretch to the next horizon, always the next horizon. But because the land was not theirs, this is a story of conflict and conquest, both of people and nature. Americans were looking for a place to plant their dreams, and make them come true by removing precious resources: furs, gold, silver, oil, and especially water. The nature of this conquest changed the American West, and the West in turn changed the rest of the country.

As in all classes I teach, an important aspect of this course is that everyone involved has an enjoyable time. For this to happen it is necessary that everyone participate in the class. Please, ASK QUESTIONS. This is a way for all of us to learn.

The question is always asked: What can you do with history? An objective of this class is not only a knowledge of history, but to help the student develop a methodology of examining evidence and learning to report on it in a clear and concise manner. In the future you may have a boss who will ask you for a three-page report on a project you are in the middle of. You will have to examine the files, going through the data and finding the significance. This is what a historian does. So in a way, just about everyone can use historical methodologies on their job.

### Course Description

An examination of the region west of the Mississippi River, beginning with an overview of the Native Americans and continuing with each new culture that comes into the region. The major focus of the course will be an examination of the diverse cultures that have come together in the region and made the American West a unique place in American history. The course will also examine such themes as the role of the west in American history, the role of myth in Western history, women in the West, the “frontier,” and the environment vs. the economy.

### Required Texts

The following books will be used:

*Frontiers*

*The American West*

*River in Ruin*

## Reading assignments

### Method of Evaluation

- 1) Exams – There will be two exams: a midterm and a final. Material for the exam will come from a combination of lecture, videocassette, the Internet, and your readings. This will be forty percent of your grade.
- 2) Book review – for this assignment you need to review, using the attached guidelines, one of the academic texts you are using for your research project. Check the title with me before you begin. This will be twenty percent of your grade.
- 3) Research Project – Each student will research a specific topic of their choice, culminating in a formal paper. This will be thirty percent of your grade.
- 4) Good Citizenship – The social component of learning is an important part of the process. For that to happen, you must come to class and be ready to participate. Class participation is also an important component of this. It is important to be prepared to take part in discussion and then be an active member of your group and class when the time comes. To facilitate this, students will write reaction papers based on the readings. This will be ten percent of your grade.

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Equivalent</u>	<u>Quality Points</u>
A	94-100	4.0
A-	90-93	3.7
B+	87-89	3.3
B	83-86	3.0
B-	80-82	2.7
C+	77-79	2.3
C	73-76	2.0
C-	70-72	1.7
D+	67-69	1.3
D	63-66	1.0
F	0-62	0.0

### Civility in the Classroom

Ideally a classroom is a place of learning. In an ideal setting all opinions are heard and respected, although you may disagree. In this class we want to create as safe an environment to learn as possible. To achieve this everyone must be willing to follow guidelines established by the class. Anybody diverging from these guidelines, or disrespecting anyone in the class, will not be tolerated.

### College Withdrawal Policy

A student who finds it necessary to discontinue a course MUST complete a withdrawal form obtained from the registrar's Office. Students may withdraw from class anytime during the first ten weeks of the semester without being in good standing or obtaining prior permission of the instructor. After that period, a student wishing to withdraw must obtain written authorization of the instructor to receive a "W" grade for the course. Students, who fail to properly withdraw, and discontinue coming to class, will be assigned an "F" grade. Eligibility for refund of tuition is based upon date of withdrawal when received by the registrar. Verbal withdrawals will not be accepted.

### Learning Disabilities Statement

If you have a question regarding a disability that may affect your progress in this course please contact the college's Disability Service Providers as soon as possible. Chris Scarborough can be reached at 892-5751. Your cooperation is appreciated.

[Dr. Delaney's Webpage](#)