

Course Syllabus
Geography 368-01 (1567)
HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE UNITED STATES
3 credit hours
Spring Semester—2008

Meeting Time: MWF 10:00-10:50
Class Meets: Lee Drain Building 321
Instructor: Dr. Velvet Nelson
Office: Lee Drain Building 334
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Office Hours: M 9:00-10:00
W 11:00-12:00
TTh 8:00-10:00
Other times—stop by or make an appointment

Course Description: This course is a survey of the changing geography of the United States including initial exploration, European perception of North America, geographical expansion of the United States to the Pacific, and geographical factors underlying the urbanization and industrialization of the nation. This is a writing enhanced course.

The historical geography of the United States could not possibly be covered in the course of one semester; therefore, we will narrow down the topic by focusing on particular geographic themes and topics such as land acquisitions, explorations, the construction of transportation networks, and migrations.

Course Objectives: The objectives of this course are to: a) introduce the relationship between geography and history, b) explore the geographic issues of the past that shaped the development of the United States (*i.e. gaining factual knowledge*), and c) articulate these issues (*i.e. develop skill in expressing oneself orally or in writing*).

Methods of Instruction: This course is structured as a combination of lectures, reading/writing assignments, discussions, and exercises in order to achieve the objectives outlined above.

Textbook: Issues of Westward Expansion, by Mitchel Roth, published by Greenwood Press, 2002

Attendance Policy: The University requires each instructor to keep a record of student attendance. Attendance will be taken in the form of participation in in-class activities. Failure to attend class will have a negative impact on your final grade. In addition, students are responsible for all lecture notes, assignments, schedule changes, and any other information covered in class.

Evaluation & Grading Criteria: Final grades are based on a total of 352 points. 150 points will come from 3 tests, 150 points from written assignments, and 52 points from

attendance/participation in in-class activities. Letter grades will be assigned on the following scale: A = 90%, B = 80%, C = 70%, D = 60%, F = less than 60%.

Academic Honesty: *All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials.*

Course Behavior: *Refrain from behavior in the classroom that intentionally or unintentionally disrupts the learning process and, thus, impedes the mission of the university. Cellular telephones and pagers must be turned off before class begins. Students are prohibited from eating or drinking in class, using tobacco products, making offensive remarks, reading newspapers, sleeping, talking at inappropriate times, wearing inappropriate clothing, or engaging in any other form of distraction. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom shall result in a directive to leave class. Students who are especially disruptive also may be reported to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action in accordance with university policy.*

Visitors in the Classroom: *Unannounced visitors to class must present a current, official SHSU identification card to be permitted in the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom.*

Americans with Disabilities Act: *SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. Note: no accommodation can be made until you register with the Counseling Center. Therefore, any student seeking accommodations should go to the Counseling Center and Services for Students with Disabilities in a timely manner and complete a form that will grant permission to receive special accommodations.*

Religious Holy Days: *If a student desires to be excused from class, assignments, or a test to participate in activities associated with a religious holy day, then the student must notify me of each scheduled class that s/he will miss for religious reasons. In such cases, the student will be required to take the test or submit the assignment early—unless there are good reasons for not being able to and I have agreed to those reasons.*

Special Circumstances: *If unusual circumstances arise during the semester, such as a medical problem, death in the family, etc., that adversely affects your attendance, please discuss this with me **immediately** and provide the appropriate documentation. Under these conditions, I will do my best to accommodate your situation. However, *there is nothing I can do if you wait until after the fact, at the end of the semester, to let me know that you were experiencing adverse circumstances.**

Tentative Test Dates (may be subject to change):

- Test 1—Feb. 20
- Test 2—Apr. 2
- Test 3—Final exam period

Schedule of Course Content:

- Chapter 2: Lewis and Clark and the Louisiana Purchase: Government-Sponsored Expeditions to Western Lands
- The Journals of Lewis and Clark (attachment via Blackboard)
- Chapter 3: Indian Removal, 1803-1839
- Chapter 4: Manifest Destiny, Texas Annexation, and the War with Mexico: Sowing the Seeds of Sectional Conflict
- Chapter 5: The Mormon Settlement of the West
- Riders of the Purple Sage (attachment via Blackboard)
- Chapter 6: The Homestead Act: The Dispersal of Western Lands
- Chapter 7: Building the Transcontinental Railroad
- Chapter 9: Battle of the Little Big Horn: The End of the Plains Indian Wars and a Way of Life
- Chapter 10: The Creation of Yellowstone National Park: Preserving the Natural West
- Chapter 11: Chinese Exclusion: Race Relations in California
- Chapter 13: The Dust Bowl: Transition on the Farming Frontier