

History 577: The American West (7087)

3 Credit Hours, Fall Semester, 2007

Professor Jeff Crane

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Office Hours: Monday: 10:30-11:30; 2-3Cour

Wednesday: 10:30-11:30, 2-3; Friday: 10:30-11:30

Note-these are only official office hours, I will frequently be in my office and you can arrange appointments. Students are welcome to drop by with questions or to visit

Readings:

The Contested Plains, Elliott West, 0700610924

The Conquest of Texas, Gary C. Anderson, 0806136987

No Separate Refuge, Sarah Deutsch, 0195060733

Rivers of Empire, Donald Worster, 0195078063

The Frontier in American History, Frederick Jackson Turner, 0486291677

Nature's Metropolis, William Cronon, 0393398731

Buffalo Bill's America, Louis S. Warren, 03757265826

Hard Times in Paradise, William Robbins, 0295985488

*I reserve the right to post additional readings such as essays, reviews, or original documents.

Course Description: The American West has fascinated Americans and the world as the subject of many novels and films and is also at the center of many debates about American history, regionalism and the role of westward expansion in our history. In this class we will examine the region known as the American West, focusing on the role of environment, migration, capitalism and expansion in the development of the region. We will seek to gain a clear understanding of how the region is defined, the critical events of western history, and the different communities that changed and created the American West.

Course Objectives: After completing this course you will understand not only the definition of the American West as region but also the processes that have contributed to the development and growth of the region, which makes it both unique and important. Students will gain strong factual knowledge of this era in American history. In addition to factual knowledge, students will further develop their skills in expressing themselves orally and in writing. Finally, students who take this course should leave with a stronger ability to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view.

Course Information: This is a 3 credit class online history, meeting in the fall semester of 2007.

Evaluation:

Essay: 10%

Reviews: 30%

Annotated Bibliography: 20%

Participation: 40%

Essay: You will write a comparative essay of approximately seven pages on your reading of *The Frontier in American History* and *Nature's Metropolis*. In this essay you will compare the ideas of Turner and Cronon on the development of the

West and the region's impact on America. Furthermore, you will create a synthesis between the two interpretations of the American West.

Reviews: You will review *The Conquest of Texas*, *No Separate Refuge*, *Buffalo Bill's America*, *Rivers of Empire* and *Hard Times in Paradise*. Your primary goal in the review is to provide basic description of the book, analysis of the book, and finally your opinion in regards to its usefulness and quality. Your review will be approximately five pages in length and needs to discuss the content of the book, particularly how the historical information and ideas contribute to our understanding of the West.

Annotated Bibliography: You will write an annotated bibliography of twelve journal articles on a topic of your choice in western history, approved by me. This assignment requires you to use J-STOR to find articles on a topic, read them completely and write up one-page summaries of the scope and goals of the article, the thesis of the article, the quality of the author's argument, and the author's use of sources. Furthermore, you will select three of the twelve as the best.

Participation: This is an online graduate seminar so participation is absolutely essential. I will evaluate your contributions based on amount, depth and detail, and how much of your participation is based on reading the material. You will need to participate in discussions in a timely and regular manner.

Academic Dishonesty: 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.

Classroom Rules of Conduct: Students will 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 in class, using tobacco products, making offensive remarks, reading newspapers, 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 referred to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action in accordance with university policy.

Disability Accommodation: It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Service for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If a student has a disability that may affect adversely his/her work in this class, then the student is encouraged

to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with the instructor about how best to deal with the situation. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: no accommodation can be made until the student registers with the Counseling Center.

Religious Holidays: Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

“Religious holy day” means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Tax Code.

Attendance Policy: Regular and punctual attendance is expected of each student at Sam Houston State University.

Instructor Evaluations: Students will evaluate the professor and course near the end of the semester.

Late Policy: You may not turn in anything late without prior permission or without a strong excuse such as illness or family emergencies. If you miss a test without prior permission and without a major crisis you will not be allowed to retake the test. If in doubt, contact me.

Schedule

August 22: Introduction of Course

August 29: “The Significance of the Frontier in American History”

September 5: *Nature’s Metropolis*

September 10: Turner/Cronon Essay is due

September 12: Chapters 1-4 of *The Contested Plains*

September 26: Review of *The Conquest of Texas* is due.

October 3: Chapters 5-8 of *The Contested Plains*

October 10: Review of *Buffalo Bill’s America* is due

October 24: Chapters 9-11 of *The Contested Plains*

October 31: Review of *No Separate Refuge* is due

November 14: Review of *Rivers of Empire* is due

November 28: Review of *Hard Times in Paradise* is due

December 5: General discussion and wrap up of the semester

December 10: Annotated Bibliography is due