



**History 470: The American West (7608)**

3 credit hours, minimester, Summer, 2008

Professor Jeff Crane

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

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 Captured, Desert Solitaire, Bless Me, Ultima, Angle of Repose* and *Blood Meridian*. There will be a folder of additional selected readings available. \*I reserve the right to pass out additional writings 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 of history, meeting in the minimester of May, 2008.

**Evaluation:**

Book Discussion: 10%

Participation: 50%

Travel Journal: 20%

West Essay: 20%

**Book Discussion:** The class will be broken up into five groups responsible for leading the discussion of one of the five assigned books. You will be graded on the quality of your preparation, knowledge of the book and your leadership of the reading discussion.

**Participation:** Because this is a traveling western history class, you will do a great deal of your reading on-site, in parks, at historical sites, in museums, and in lectures. You are expected to conduct yourself with the same decorum as you would in the classroom. Furthermore, you will sign a social contract governing behavior on the trip. Failure to follow that contract will result in a 0 for the participation grade.

**Travel Journal:** Each student will maintain a travel journal on this trip that will be read and graded by the professor. In this journal you will record your experiences, lessons, and reflections of the west, its history, and culture. This is a great resource for you in the future and also for your West essay.

**West Essay:** You will be required to write and submit an essay of ten to twelve pages within one month of our return from the West trip. This essay will focus on some of several questions posed by the professor during the trip and will incorporate material from the lectures, readings, historical sites, museums, and parks as well as your journal in addressing these questions.

**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

May 16-Mason, Texas-Camping-S. Llano River State Park

Discussion of *The Captured*

May 17-Big Bend National Park, Texas-Camping

May 18-Balmorhea State Park, Texas-Camping

Discussion of *Blood Meridian*

May 19, 20-Santa Fe, New Mexico-Motel

Discussion of *Bless Me, Ultima*

May 21-Chaco Canyon National Monument, New Mexico-Camping

May 22, May 23-Mesa Verde National Park, Colorado-Camping

May 24, 25-Arches National Park, Utah-Camping

Discussion of *Desert Solitaire*

May 26-Gunnison, Colorado-Motel

May 27, May 28-Leadville, Colorado-Super Eight Motel

Discussion of *Angle of Repose*

May 29- La Junta, Colorado-Motel

May 30-Palo Duro Canyon State Park, Texas-Camping

June 1-Huntsville, Texas-Done