

History 462  
Chican@ and Latin@ Studies 462  
The U.S. West since 1850

Fall Semester 2005  
Lecture: MWF 1:20-2:10  
1651 Humanities

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This course explores the history of western North America, focusing on the period since 1850. It introduces students to the key themes and interpretive problems in the study of the history of the West. It uses lectures, discussions, and video screenings to survey the contours of the modern West, paying particular attention to the political, economic, social, and cultural developments that have shaped it. At the same time, it looks beyond the boundaries of the region to consider how events in the rest of the United States, as well as Mexico, Canada, and the Pacific Rim, have influenced its history. Throughout, we pay particular attention to the diverse peoples who have called this place home.

We begin in the middle of the nineteenth century, as the United States worked to consolidate its hold over the trans-Mississippi West and the peoples who inhabited it. The processes of consolidation and incorporation will serve as the focus for the first portion of the course. Thereafter, we consider the development of the West as a region and examine the trends and concerns that highlight its distinctiveness from other parts of the country. We conclude with an exploration of contemporary political, economic, and social events in the West and their deep historical roots.

## Course Requirements

### 1. Course Participation – 20%

Students are required to attend all lectures, movie screenings, and weekly discussion sections. In addition, three feature-length films will be screened on three separate evenings throughout the semester. If you cannot attend these screenings, please rent or borrow these films and watch them on your own. You'll be responsible for the film content in exams and in the web log assignment (see below).

### 2. Web Log & Film Journal – 15%

Over the course of the semester, we will view six documentary and feature films. You are required to post responses to *at least four (4)* of the films we watch during the semester to the on-line discussion forum on the History 462 homepage (see instructions below). These entries are meant to provide a forum for discussing your thoughts about the movies or for raising questions about what you've seen. You should reflect on the relationship between the films and the other materials you have encountered in course lectures, readings, and discussions. From time to time, you will also be asked to respond to more directed questions. Ideally, your postings will generate ongoing discussions about the films (and the course) as you post your comments and respond to those of your classmates. You should view the

four entries noted above as the minimum contribution and should certainly feel free to post your comments more frequently.

This assignment requires that you monitor the web forum on a regular basis. Your formal postings should be at least 100-200 words in length. These entries need not be polished, but they should pay attention to basic rules of grammar and style. Please avoid abbreviations, symbols, and other web chat conventions.

To access the web forum:

1. From your My UW portal, click on the Academic tab.
2. Under the History 462 course heading, click on the [Learn@UW](#) link. If you are unable to locate this link, go to <https://uwmadcourses.wisconsin.edu>.
3. Enter your net id and password.
4. Click on the link for History 462 and look for the link to the Film Discussion forum.

### **3. Book Review Assignment – 25% (6-8 pages, typed, double-spaced)**

For this paper, you will be asked to write a 6-8 page book review of one of the three single-author books assigned this semester. The goal: to analyze critically the arguments advanced in one of the assigned books and to examine how the historical events described therein continue to affect life in the contemporary U.S. West.

This assignment has three parts:

- a. Begin the paper with a 1-2 page summary of the book's main arguments. You must convey the major arguments of the book and the means by which the author makes them. Be as concise as possible!

In order to help you distill the author's arguments and to phrase them concisely, you must submit a **50-word summary** of the author's central thesis or argument at the beginning of class on **Wednesday, November 2**. This is also meant to provide you with an opportunity for feedback before you begin the larger assignment. You should take this assignment seriously for it will count toward the overall grade for the book review. Also, be mindful of the word limit – your précis should not exceed 50 words!

- b. In the second section, you must critically consider the book's arguments. Some questions you might consider include: Does the author convincingly argue his/her thesis? Why or why not? What evidence does the author use to support his/her claims? Does s/he provide adequate supporting evidence? Has the author omitted any important issues or counter-arguments? Why is this important? Which parts of the book do you find most and least persuasive?

- c. In the final section, you should consider these arguments in light of mass media reporting of similar or related events within the past decade. Using the on-line periodical indexes available through the E-Resource Gateway on the UW Libraries website (such as LexisNexis, the Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature, or *The New York Times*), locate an article (or articles) from newspapers or magazines that deal with issues similar to those raised in your monograph. For example, if you choose to review Donald Worster's *Rivers of Empire*, you might look for recent news reports that deal with conflicts over water rights in the West (especially those involving communities of color), the growth of agribusiness, or international disputes over access to water. If you are writing on David Montejano's *Anglos and Mexicans*, you might look for reports dealing with Mexican migration to the U.S., relations between Anglo-Texans and Mexican Americans, or the on-going struggle for Mexican American civil rights across the West more generally. Think broadly about the potential connections between the monographs and the news items you review. Once you've selected your article(s), consider both the continuities and the differences between the press items and the historical

monograph. How well does the newspaper article describe the historical context? How does the analysis presented in the monograph stand up in light of more recent events?

On Wednesday, October 12, we will be joined in class by a librarian from the Wisconsin Historical Society who will help you navigate the university's on-line resources. Attendance at this session is mandatory.

If you are at all unsure about your selection, please consult with your teaching assistant or the course lecturer as soon as possible. You should plan to meet with one (or both) of us before you begin the assignment. We are here to help you.

**Criteria for evaluation:**

**Structure:** Your paper should have a clear, original thesis statement. Each paragraph should advance your argument and the ideas in your paper should flow logically. Your paragraphs should have identifiable topic sentences and each sentence in the paragraph should relate to that topic sentence. You must also address each of the three parts of the assignment outlined above.

**Analysis:** You should support your thesis with evidence drawn from the monograph and press articles you are analyzing. Your analysis should be clear and logical and should offer insights into the arguments advanced in the monographs and their connections with contemporary events.

**Style:** Your sentence structure, grammar, spelling, and citations should be excellent. You should avoid the passive voice and any redundant phrases or wordiness. Your paper should also include complete citations for all works cited. For a guide to citations, please consult the course web site.

**Originality:** Your paper should offer original insights and arguments, especially with regard to the connections you make between the monographs and contemporary western issues. Try to push beyond the lessons you've learned from the course lectures, but remember to keep your insights rooted in the evidence you've uncovered.

The paper is due at the beginning of class on **Wednesday, November 23**. Late essays will be marked down by at least one-third of a grade, unless other arrangements are made prior to the due date.

**4. Exams**

**Mid-term Exam - 20%**

**Final Exam – 20%**

There will be two take-home essay exams in this course. The midterm questions will be handed out at the end of lecture on Wednesday, October 12. Your responses are due at **the beginning of lecture on Monday, October 17**. The final exam questions will be handed out Monday, December 12 and your responses are due at **4:00 p.m. on Saturday, December 17**. We will not accept late submissions.

Note also that plagiarism *will not be tolerated in this course*. Plagiarism involves presenting the words or ideas of another as if they are your own. It is a serious academic offence.

Participation	20%
Web Chat Participation	15%
Mid-Term Exam	20%
Book Review	25%
Final Exam	20%

## Readings

The following readings are required for all students. They are available for purchase at the University Book Store, and are on reserve at College Library:

Clyde A. Milner II, Anne M. Butler, and David Rich Lewis, eds., *Major Problems in the History of the American West*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997).

David Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987).

Donald Worster, *Rivers of Empire: Water, Aridity, and the Growth of the American West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

Judy Yung, *Unbound Feet: A Social History of Chinese Women in San Francisco* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

There is also a small required course packet available for purchase at Bob's Copy Shop at 37 University Square. Articles from the course packet are also available on electronic reserve.

Recommended text:

Howard Lamar, ed., *The New Encyclopedia of the American West* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1998).

This book is not required, but is an unparalleled resource for the study of the U.S. West. It contains a wealth of short essays on a multitude of western themes and issues.

## Calendar and Assignments

**IMPORTANT:** In the following outline, lecture topics are organized into thematic “weeks” that do **NOT** correspond with ordinary calendar weeks. Typically, these “weeks” begin with Wednesday’s lecture and end with Tuesday’s discussion sections. The parenthetical number refers to the approximate number of pages assigned that week.

### **Week 1 Course Introduction**

Fri. 09/02: The West on the Small Screen: An Introduction  
Mon. 09/05: *Labor Day – no class*

Readings: MPHAW, Chapter 1, “Defining the West and Its History,” pp. 1-14 (14).

### **Week 2 The West and Nation**

Wed. 09/07: Which Way West?: Making Sense of a Region’s Past  
Fri. 09/09: The Conquest and Colonization of the West to 1850  
Mon. 09/12: Manifest Destiny? Slavery, Sectionalism, and the West

Readings: MPHAW, Chapter 5, “The Legacy of Acquisition,” pp. 156-94;  
Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans*, pp. 1-99 (137).

### **Week 3 Contesting the Plains**

Wed. 09/14: From Civil War to Indian Wars  
Fri. 09/16: Westward Expansion, Federal Style  
Mon. 09/19: Settlement and Dispossession in the West

Readings: MPHAW, Chapter 5, “Federal Support of Explorers and Immigrants,” pp. 122-155 *only*;  
Worster, *Rivers of Empire*, pp. 1-15, 61-125 (112).

### **Week 4 The West Incorporated**

Wed. 09/21: Women, Men, and the Search for Community in the West  
Fri. 09/23: Transforming the Land: Ranching, Railroads, and the Rise of the Extractive Economy  
Mon. 09/26: Transforming the Land: Agriculture and Agribusiness

Readings: MPHAW, Chapter 10, “Living on the Land, Leaving the Land,” pp. 341-78; and Chapter 6, “Cowboys, Outlaws, and Violence,” pp. 195-237;  
Yung, *Unbound Feet*, pp. 1-51 (130).

### **Week 5 Politics and Protest in the West**

Wed. 09/28: Western Protests: Agrarian  
Fri. 09/30: Western Protests: Industrial  
Mon. 10/03: Western Reforms and the Politics of Inclusion and Exclusion

Readings: MPHAW, Chapter 9, “Railroad Mining and Labor,” pp. 303-40; and Chapter 8, “Contested Reforms,” pp. 270-84, 294-302 *only*;  
Yung, *Unbound Feet*, pp. 52-177 (184).

**Week 6            The Federal Landscape**

- Wed. 10/05:    The Federal Landscape: Water, Timber, and Land  
Fri. 10/07:    The Federal Landscape: National Parks and Preservation  
Mon. 10/10:    Evening screening: *Chinatown* (Roman Polanski, 1974) – *no lecture*

Readings: MPHAW, Chapter 11, “Dam Water, Damn Dust,” pp. 379-86 *only*;  
Worster, *Rivers of Empire*, pp. 127-86 (66).

**Week 7**

- Wed. 10/12:    Visit by Nancy Mulhern, Librarian, Wisconsin Historical Society - **Mid-term Exam Questions Handed Out**  
Fri. 10/14:    *no lecture* – work on mid-term exams  
Mon. 10/17:    The West in Art and Literature - **Mid-term Exams due at beginning of lecture**

Readings: -no readings – *sections cancelled this week*

**Week 8            On the Margins**

- Wed. 10/19:    Life on the Border  
Fri. 10/21:    The Trans-Pacific West: Asian American Communities in the West  
Mon. 10/24:    Film: *Goin' Back to T-Town*

Readings: Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans*, pp. 101-97 (96).

**Week 9            Pivotal Decades**

- Wed. 10/26:    Dust Bowl Decade: The West and the New Deal  
Fri. 10/28:    World War II and Its Aftermath  
Mon. 10/31:    Film: *A Family Gathering*

Readings: MPHAW, Chapter 11, “Dam Water, Damn Dust,” pp. 387-415 *only*; Chapter 12, “The Other Western Homefront,” 416-53;  
Yung, *Unbound Feet*, 178-292 (179).

**Week 10          Urban and Racial Faultlines**

- Wed. 11/02:    Metropolis and Suburb: The Urban West – **Précis due at beginning of lecture**  
Fri. 11/04:    Film: *Forbidden City, USA*  
Mon. 11/07:    California Dreams, California Nightmares

Readings: MPHAW, Chapter 13, “New Cities, New Lives,” pp. 454-84;  
Worster, *Rivers of Empire*, pp. 189-256 (97).

**Week 11          The Cold War West**

- Wed. 11/09:    The Atomic West  
Fri. 11/11:    Boom and Bust: The Postwar Economy  
Mon. 11/14:    Evening screening *High Noon* (Fred Zinnemann, 1953) – *no lecture*

Readings: Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans*, pp. 220-307 (87).

**Week 12 Real & Imagined Wests**

Wed. 11/16: Hollywood's Wild West  
Fri. 11/18: Selling the West: Tourism  
Mon. 11/21: The Myth of Santa Fe

Readings: MPHAW, Chapter 15, "Imagining the Wild West," pp. 527-29, 536-55;  
Limerick, "Seeing and Being Seen: Tourism in the American West." Available in course packet and on electronic reserve (38).

**Week 13 Power and Protest I: The Search for Civil Rights in the West**

Wed. 11/23: The Chicana/o Movement – **Paper due at beginning of lecture**  
Fri. 11/25: *Thanksgiving Recess – No class*  
Mon. 11/28: The American Indian Movement

Readings: Paul Chaat Smith and Robert Warrior, *Like a Hurricane: The Indian Movement from Alcatraz to Wounded Knee* (New York: The New Press, 1996) – **excerpts**. Available in course packet, on electronic reserve, and on reserve at College Library (108).

**Week 14 Power and Protest II: Protest and Backlash**

Wed. 11/30: The Bay Area: From Black Power to Gay Liberation  
Fri. 12/02: Environmentalists and Sagebrush Rebels  
Mon. 12/05: Sunbelt, USA

Readings: MPHAW, Chapter 14, "Owning the West," pp. 485-525; and Chapter 15, "Imagining the West," pp. 529-35;  
Worster, *Rivers of Empire*, pp. 257-335 (124).

**Week 15 New West, True West?**

Wed. 12/07: Evening screening of *Lone Star* (John Sayles, 1996) – *no lecture*  
Fri. 12/09: Re-Imagining the West: The North American West in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century  
Mon. 12/12: Course Wrap Up – **Take-home Final Exam questions handed out**

Readings: Miriam Davidson, *Lives on the Line: Dispatches from the U.S.-Mexico Border* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2000) - **excerpts**. Available in course packet, on electronic reserve, and on reserve at College Library.

**Week 16**

Wed. 12/14: No lecture – work on final exams.  
Fri. 12/16: No lecture – work on final exams.

**Take-home Final Exams due Saturday, December 17, at 4:00 p.m.**

Readings: -no readings; *sections cancelled this week.*