**Course Description**

This course provides a broad introduction to histories of places that have been called the American West, focusing on the period before 1865. For decades, history textbooks often treated the early West as a mere hinterland of European empires. But we cannot begin to understand North America’s past or present without attention to histories of the diverse Native nations whose homelands span the continent; Spanish, French, British, Russian, and United States aspirations to become Pacific as well as Atlantic imperial powers; the political communities forged across borders by fugitives from slavery; and the saltwater realms of coastal societies sharing ocean currents and exchanges with East Asia. Together we will investigate complex and changing worlds shaped by Mexica nobles, French Jesuits, Anishinaabe diplomats, Black Seminole soldiers, and United States land pirates, to name only a few examples. Students will learn to think like historians by analyzing primary sources, evaluating competing narratives, and formulating arguments about the past. We will ask how systems of knowledge, governance, and ecological management, forms of diplomacy and political belonging, modes of labor exploitation, varieties of unfreedom, ideas about race, gender, and sexuality, epidemics and environmental catastrophes transformed a continent repeatedly redrawn and unsettled. Along the way we will consider the ongoing legacies of the past—and the stories we tell about it—in the American West today.
FORMAT
The format for this course is in person, with three meetings per week. Two meetings with me (Professor Powers) will involve interactive lectures and research workshops. An additional discussion section led by Nicolás Rueda Rey, our graduate student instructor (Teaching Assistant) for the course, will allow you to meet in smaller groups to talk about the readings in depth and to hone the skills of critical thinking, research, and writing necessary to do the work of historical analysis.

OBJECTIVES
- Challenge common myths that distort our understanding of the early North American West
- Understand how historians make history and why our understandings of the past change over time
- Use primary sources to ask and answer questions about the early North American West
- Evaluate arguments about history and weigh in on existing historical debates
- Identify how legacies of the past continue into the present

SECTION INFORMATION

TA: Nicolás Rueda Rey
email:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section Number</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DIS 301</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>3:30-4:20pm</td>
<td>2131 Mosse Humanities Building</td>
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<tr>
<td>DIS 302</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>4:35-5:25pm</td>
<td>2631 Mosse Humanities Building</td>
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<td>DIS 303</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>8:50-9:40am</td>
<td>2125 Mosse Humanities Building</td>
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<tr>
<td>DIS 304</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>9:55-10:45am</td>
<td>2625 Mosse Humanities Building</td>
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CREDITS
This course counts for four credits. The course meets as a group for 4 hours per week and carries the expectation that you will spend an average of 2 hours outside of class for every hour in the classroom. In other words, in addition to class time, plan to allot an average of 8 hours per week for reading, writing, preparing for discussions, and or studying for this class.

REGULAR AND SUBSTANTIVE STUDENT–INSTRUCTOR INTERACTION
Lectures will provide me with my main opportunity to engage in regular and substantive interaction with you. During our lecture meetings on Tuesdays and Thursdays I will provide direct instruction, clarify information about course content, facilitate discussion of the course materials, and lead research and writing workshops. I will additionally be available during my office hours each week for one-on-one meetings. If you cannot make my office hours but would like to meet, please email me and we can find an alternative time. I try to respond to all emails within 24 hours. If you have an urgent or time-sensitive matter to discuss with me, please include “URGENT” in the subject line of your email and I will reply as soon as possible.
 COURSE WEBSITE, LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM & DIGITAL INSTRUCTIONAL TOOLS
All course materials are available on our Canvas site.
If you would prefer to meet with me remotely (during office hours or otherwise) via Zoom, all meetings can be accessed here: https://uwmadison.zoom.us/j/8395182126

READINGS
All required readings will be posted to our course Canvas site. You can find the links arranged by week. Your weekly reading assignment will consist of 1 book chapter or scholarly article written by a historian about the past—what we call secondary sources—in addition to 2-4 shorter primary sources produced during the time period that we are studying. We will talk in class about how to approach the readings, but plan to read the secondary sources more quickly by focusing on each author’s argument and use of evidence. You will want to read the primary sources more closely. These documents are shorter but often take longer to interpret. A few questions to consider as you complete the readings each week include: how do the primary sources support, challenge, or expand on the historical narratives offered by the secondary sources? What can we learn from analyzing these documents together that we might not necessarily get from reading one source on its own? What do these sources leave out or obscure? If you are ever feeling overwhelmed by the readings or find that they are taking you too long to get through, please do not hesitate to come by my office hours so we can discuss strategies for completing each week’s assignment within a few hours.

GRADING SCALE
A (92.50+); AB (87.50-92.49); B (82.50-87.49); BC (77.50-82.49); C (69.50-77.49); D (60-69.49); F (Below 60)

ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENT
Lecture Attendance and Participation: 10%
Participation is critical to your success in this course and is required. I will never talk at you for 72 minutes! Our Tuesday and Thursday meetings combine interactive lectures with research workshops designed to help you develop the skills of historical analysis that you will need to do well on the course assessments. You can miss three lectures no questions asked before your participation grade begins to be affected. If you end up needing to miss more than three meetings due to health issues (including mental health), quarantine, family commitments, or any other extenuating circumstances, let us know and we will create alternative assignments so that your participation grade will not be affected. No medical documentation of the illness will be required. Please take care of yourselves and let Nicolás and I know how we can support you.

Discussion Section Attendance and Participation: 25%
Weekly discussion sections will provide an opportunity for you to clarify and consolidate your understanding of the course material, flex critical thinking skills, and learn from the viewpoints of your fellow students. Attendance and participation are required. Please come to section ready to engage with the week’s assigned readings, your peers, and your TA. Each week you will upload a one paragraph (200-300 word) response post to your section’s Canvas discussion board by Tuesday evening at midnight. This is a brief and informal first reaction to the week’s readings that you can then build on in your discussions, your quizzes, and your papers. Many students suggest building on your discussion posts for quizzes and papers—this will allow you to deepen your understanding of the materials over the course of the semester and develop your own sense of what kinds of questions and methods of historical inquiry interest you the
most. You will have several options (listed below) for what this response might look like. Thoughtful completion of these assignments will contribute to your discussion section grade.

Options for weekly response posts:

- Answer one or more of the Friday questions that I will send out in weekly emails
- Respond to another student’s post
- Analyze one or more of the week’s primary sources
- Reflect on something from the readings that interested you, confused you, or reminded you of another historical topic
- Raise a series of questions related to the readings or lectures

Quizzes: 30%
Instead of a traditional midterm and final exam, this course will have four low-stakes “check-in quizzes” (each valued at 7.5% of your final grade). If you attend lecture and section regularly, read the assigned material, take good notes, and review those notes, you should do well on these. Each quiz will consist of two historical questions that I will ask you to answer in a few paragraphs by drawing on the readings and lecture materials. These will be interpretative rather than factual questions, and you will have access to your notes as you craft your responses. If you are not happy with your grade, you may choose to retake one of these.

Primary Source Analysis (2 pages): 10%
Primary sources are the building blocks that all historians use to interpret the past, and in your first short paper for the course you will analyze one primary source from the syllabus to answer a historical question about the early North American West. You can find detailed guidance on how to approach the assignment, including an outline and rubric, on our course Canvas site.

I encourage you to come to my and Nicolás’s office hours to discuss your papers as you begin writing—we love to talk through your ideas as you get started on the assignment. The History Lab also offers appointments for one-on-one meetings with graduate students who can help you at any stage of the writing process including choosing a topic, analyzing primary sources, developing arguments, citing evidence, and writing effectively. The Lab can also support challenges faced by English-language learners. You can schedule an appointment with the History Lab here: [https://history.wisc.edu/undergraduate-program/the-history-lab/](https://history.wisc.edu/undergraduate-program/the-history-lab/)

Comparative Paper (5 pages) 15%:
For this assignment you will analyze two primary sources, either contemporary or successive, to make a historical argument about some aspect of the early North American West. One of these sources can be the document that you analyzed in your first paper—I encourage you to use this assignment to expand on and nuance the argument that you made in your first paper. Draw on at least one secondary source from the syllabus to help you interpret the primary sources that you have chosen. You can find more detailed guidance on how to approach the assignment, including an outline and rubric, on our course Canvas site. We will be working on the skills that you need to do well on each paper throughout the course.

Op-Ed (1-2 pages): 10%
Historians often weigh in on contemporary issues or policy debates through short “Opinion Pieces” published in major newspapers. For your final writing assignment for the course, I will ask you to do the same. It might initially seem like events that transpired centuries ago would hold little relevance for the world we find ourselves in today, but you would be surprised! Your goal in this assignment is to connect a contemporary
issue, political debate or controversy to a historical topic, theme, or event covered in this course. How does the past help us to better understand a problem or debate that we are grappling with today?

There are a few different approaches you might take to this piece of historical writing:

- **Historical Origins**: Explain why we cannot fully understand a contemporary problem without considering what got us here. Consider how past policies, patterns, or power struggles laid the groundwork for the issue that we are facing today.
- **Historical Analogy**: Compare a contemporary problem with a similar issue from the past. How does attention to a previous period in the history of the North American West help us to make sense of the situation we are confronting today?
- **Forgotten Visions**: Explore how an individual or organization from the past proposed solutions to a problem we are facing today. Explain how attention to their visions and strategies might offer a roadmap for generating meaningful change.

**DEADLINES AND EXTENSIONS:**
You are welcome to request an extension on any of the graded assignments for the course if the requirements of other classes, workplace responsibilities, family commitments, health concerns, or other issues make it difficult to submit an assignment on time. All requests for extensions made 24 hours in advance of the deadline will be granted. Requests for extensions made on or after the deadline will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

**HONORS OPTION:**
I encourage you to consider pursuing the honors option for HIST 151. Please come by my office hours at any point during the semester to discuss this possibility. In order to take the course for honors credit (reflected on your transcript), you can complete one of two possible assignments:

- **Option 1**: Analyze 3 primary sources and 2 secondary sources in your Comparative Analysis Paper, rather than 2 primary sources and 1 secondary source.
- **Option 2**: Attend two events on campus during the semester and write a short (1 paragraph) reflection connecting each to a theme or topic that we’ve discussed in HIST 151.

**STUDENTS’ RULES, RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES**

**DIVERSITY & INCLUSION STATEMENT**
I aspire to create a classroom strengthened by students who feel heard, safe, and supported. If you have concerns about any aspect of the course, please let me know. Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals. The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background — people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world.

**ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES STATEMENT**
I am committed to providing any accommodations that will enable you to thrive in our course, including but not limited to those requested through the McBurney Disability Resource Center. The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity.
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform faculty [me] of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. Faculty [I], will work either directly with the student [you] or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA. (See: McBurney Disability Resource Center)

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT**

By virtue of enrollment, each student agrees to uphold the high academic standards of the University of Wisconsin-Madison; academic misconduct is behavior that negatively impacts the integrity of the institution. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these previously listed acts are examples of misconduct which may result in disciplinary action. Examples of disciplinary action include, but is not limited to, failure on the assignment/course, written reprimand, disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion.

**Academic Calendar & Religious Observances**

**COURSE EVALUATIONS**

You will be provided with several opportunities to evaluate this course and your learning experience. Your participation is an integral component of this course, and your confidential feedback is important to me. You will receive an official email two weeks prior to the end of the semester, notifying you that your course evaluation is available. In the email you will receive a link to log into the course evaluation with your NetID. I strongly encourage you to participate in this anonymous course evaluation and will provide you with time in lecture to complete the evaluation.
Week 1: Introduction
*No readings or section meetings this week*
  September 8 Introduction and Welcome

Week 2: Vast Early America
*Section meetings begin this week*
  September 13 No Such Thing as Prehistory: Native America Before 1492
  September 15 Myths of the Spanish Conquest

  Readings:
  Secondary Sources:
  NPR Throughline Podcast on “Tenochtitlan: A Retelling of the Conquest” (2021)

  Primary Sources:
  Hernando Cortés Describes Tenochtitlan to King Charles V (1520)
  A Nahuatl Account of the Siege of Tenochtitlan: The Florentine Codex Book 12 [excerpts]

Week 3: New Worlds
  September 20 Pueblo and Caddo Responses to New Spain’s “Northern Frontier”
  September 22 The English Invasion, The Jamestown Myth

  Readings:
  Secondary Sources:

  Primary Sources:
  Antonio de Otermin, “An Account of the Lamentable Tragedy” (1680)
  Pedro Naranjo Relates the Pueblo Revolt (1681)
  Declaration of Josephe, a Spanish-Speaking Indian, on the Pueblo Revolt (1681)

Week 4: Fictions of Discovery
  September 27 French Incursions into Anishinaabewaki
  September 29 “Metacom’s War” in History and Memory

  Readings:
  Secondary Source:
Primary Sources:
Jean de Brébeuf, Instructions for the Fathers of Our Society Who Shall be Sent to the Hurons (1637)
Micmac Elder, Speech to French Settlers (c. 1677)
Metacom Relates Wampanoag Grievances Against the English Settlers (1675)
Increase Mather, A Brief History of the War with the Indians in New England (1676)

Week 5: Atlantic Slavery
Quiz 1
October 4
October 6 Enslavement and Resistance in the 18th Century American West

Readings:
Secondary Sources:

Primary Sources:
Olaudah Equiano, an 11-Year-Old Ibo from Nigeria, Remembers His Kidnapping into Slavery (1789 account of events of the 1750s)
Antoine Simon Le Page Du Pratz Describes French Conflict with the Natchez (1729)
White South Carolinians Debate Action Against a Maroon Community (1766)

Week 6: Imperial Warfare and Colonial Crises
Quiz 2
October 11 The First Global War in the Ohio River Valley

Primary Source Analysis Due
October 13 Empires of the Plains

Readings:
Secondary Sources:
Tiya Miles, The Dawn of Detroit: A Chronicle of Slavery and Freedom in the City of the Straits (2019) Chapter 1

Primary Sources:
Pontiac’s Speech to an Ottowa, Potawatomi, and Huron Audience (1763)
Spanish-Comanche Treaty, New Mexico (1786)

Week 7: Saltwater Borderlands
Quiz 2
October 18 Pacific Worlds and Saltwater Borderlands
October 20

Readings:
Secondary Source:
Joshua Reid, The Sea is My County: The Maritime World of the Makahs (2015) Chapter 1
Primary Sources:
Captain James Cook, Nootka Sound and the Northwest Coast Native Nations (1776)

Week 8: American Revolutions
October 25 Wars for Independence
October 27 The Mission Revolts

Readings:
Secondary Sources
Maria John, “Toypurina: A Legend Etched in the Landscape of Los Angeles” (2014)

Primary Sources
The Haudenosaunee Confederacy in the American Revolution (1776)
Freedom Petitions (1777-1779)
Little Turtle Comments on the Treaty of Greenville (1795)

Week 9: Early Republics
November 8 The United States
November 10 Mexico

Readings:
Secondary Source:
Maurice Crandall, These People Have Always Been a Republic: Indigenous Electorates in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands, 1598-1912 (2019) Chapter 3

Primary Sources:
1810 Revolution—Father Miguel Hidalgo, Agrarian Reform and Edict Against Slavery Rebellion Crushed in New Mexico (1837)
Thomas Jefferson Secret Letter to Congress (1803)
Speech by Tecumseh to William Henry Harrison (transcribed 1810)

Week 10: Removals and Resistance
November 1 Land Grabs in the Age of Jackson
November 3 The Removal Era in the Midwest

Readings:
This Land Podcast Episode 4: The Treaty

Primary Sources:
Address of the Committee and Council of the Cherokee Nation to the People of the United States (1830)
Two Accounts of the Trail of Tears (1838-39)
Black Hawk’s Account of Removal West, from Life of Ma-Ka-Tai-Me-She-Kia-Kiak or Black Hawk, Dictated by Himself (1833) [excerpt]
Week 11: Manifest Design
November 15 Quiz 3
November 17 Citizens and Subjects

Readings:
Secondary Source:
Rosina Lozano, An American Language: The History of Spanish in the United States (2018)
Chapter 4

Primary Sources:
Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848)
Juan Cortina, Proclamation to the Mexicans of Texas (1859)
El Corrido de Juan Cortina (1860s)
Cenecú Pueblo Claim (1868)

Week 12: Interlude
November 22 No Class—Individual Check-In Meetings
November 24 No Class—Thanksgiving Break

Week 13: Pacific Worlds
November 29 California in the Global Gold Rush
December 1 Unfree Labor in the “Free West”
Comparative Paper Due

Readings:
Secondary Source

Primary Sources:
Sarah Winnemucca, Life Among the Piutes: Their Wrongs and Claims (1882) [excerpt]
1850 California “Act for the Governance and Protection of Indians”
1850 California “Act to Regulate Mines and Foreign Miners”
J.D. Borthwick, “The Gold Diggings Ball” (1857)

Week 14: Civil Wars
December 6 Imperial Visions in Conflict: Kansas, California, Nicaragua
December 8 The Civil Wars

Readings:
Secondary Source:
Stacy Smith, Freedom’s Frontier: California and the Struggle Over Unfree Labor, Emancipation, and Reconstruction (2013) Chapter 6

Primary Sources:
1860 Republican Party Platform
Dakota War in 1862: Letter from a Prisoner
Week 15: Conclusions
   December 13 Conclusions, Reflections, and Ongoing Questions
   Op-Ed Due

No readings

Quiz 4 during final exam week—you can take it anytime between December 16 at 12 am and December 20 at 11:59 pm