

SPRING 2022

HISTORY 466

# NINETEENTH-CENTURY AMERICAN WEST

**LECTURER:** Professor Marsha Weisiger

**OFFICE:** 381 McKenzie Hall

**EMAIL:** weisiger@uoregon.edu

**OFFICE HOURS:** Wednesday and Thursday, 2-3 p.m., or by appointment

**CLASS SCHEDULE:**

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12 noon-1:20 p.m., 104 Condon Hall

## **INTRODUCTION**

This introductory survey of the history of the nineteenth-century U.S. West takes us from the Lewis and Clark expedition to the eve of the twentieth century. We will approach our study of the West by tracing five major themes: (1) conquest and settler colonialism, (2) the federal and corporate role in western development, (3) environmental change, (4) the West as a land of opportunity and hope, and (5) the mythic West. Major topics include cross-cultural encounters, exploration, federal Indian policy, mining rushes, ranching, and homesteading, with particular attention to the ways in which race, class, gender, and culture shaped those experiences.

*This course counts as a(n):*

- *upper division requirement for history majors, and*
- *core humanities course for majors in Environmental Studies and Environmental Science* due to its focus on environmental change through a historical perspective.

## **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

By the end of the term, you should be able to:

- Trace the historical development of the major course themes
- Analyze and interpret “primary” sources of historical information
- Identify an author’s argument or thesis
- Write an analytical essay that develops your own argument, supported by evidence

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

In addition to participating in class, this course involves extensive reading and writing, a term project, and a final exam.

## **READINGS**

History is a literary field, and thus this course is reading-intensive. The books are available at the Duck Store or as e-books through Knight Library. Primary sources and journal articles will be

posted on Canvas. Reading assignments are listed at the end of each week but are due on the date of the writing assignment or on the date of the related lecture. Anticipate reading 100 pages per week, though the actual number of pages may be more or less in a particular week. The workload is especially heavy in weeks 4, 6, 8, and 10, so please plan ahead.

<b>Books</b> (Available at the Duck Store)
James E. Crisp, <i>Sleuthing the Alamo: Davy Crockett's Last Stand and Other Mysteries of the Texas Revolution</i> (2005)
David A. Chang, <i>The Color of the Land: Race, Nation, and the Politics of Land Ownership in Oklahoma, 1832-1929</i> (2010), e-book, available through Knight Library
Elinore Pruitt Stewart, <i>Letters of a Woman Homesteader</i> (1914, reprint 2020), e-book available through Knight Library
<b>Articles</b> (Available on Canvas)
Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," <i>Annual Report of the American Historical Association for 1893</i> , 199-227.
Dan Flores, "Bison Ecology and Bison Diplomacy: The Southern Plains from 1850 to 1850," <i>Journal of American History</i> 78 (1991): 465-85.
Elliott West, "Animals," in <i>The Way to the West</i> (1995), pp. 51-84.
Jeffrey Ostler, "'They Regard Their Passing as Wakan': Interpreting Western Sioux Explanations for the Bison's Decline," <i>Western Historical Quarterly</i> 30 (1999): 475-97.
<b>Primary Sources</b> (Available on Canvas)
John C. Calhoun, "Opposes Incorporating Mexico"
John A. Dix, "Advocates Expansion onto Mexican Lands"
Ramón Martínez Caro, "True Account of the First Texas Campaign"
Cowboy ballads

### **CLASS PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE** (25 points)

The participation grade will be based on attendance and discussion in class. The dates by which you should do the readings are indicated in the syllabus.

**ATTENDANCE IS REQUIRED.** After the first two absences (including absences for illnesses, doctor's appointment, religious holidays, etc.), each absence will result in a loss of 5 points from your grade. Excused absences due to prolonged illness or other calamities will be determined at my discretion. **Please note:** I am well aware that some of you may be faced with unexpected difficulties due to the COVID-19 pandemic. If you are facing challenges that make it especially difficult to attend class, please contact me for alternative arrangements. If you become so ill that you must miss more than two class sessions, please email me through Canvas. Documentation may be required for you to submit a late assignment or take a make-up exam. Leaving early or arriving after the lecture has begun may count as an absence.

### **JOURNAL** (25 points)

For two essays (chosen from a list of three) on the destruction of bison herds, you will write a single 500-600-word analysis and reflection on Canvas. Your entry must be posted by 11:30 a.m. on the day of class discussion on the readings, April 7. Begin with an argument regarding both of the essays you're focusing on. Then select one interesting aspect of each essay and draw on their

evidence to support your argument. Conclude with a final reflection and whatever insight you might offer regarding the essays, collectively. Be sure to structure your essay with an argument and offer thoughtful reflection on relevant themes. Your short essay should be neither a rant nor a review. Do not gush. In assessing your journal entry, I look for the following:

- A persuasive argument
- Use of evidence to support points
- Discussion of both of your chosen readings, to some extent
- Reading comprehension
- Evidence of critical and/or creative thinking
- Thoughtful reflection
- Evidence of thesis, synthesis, analysis, and evaluation

***Grading Rubric:***

18-20 pts.= Offers insight, makes interesting connections, and shows depth of understanding of the issues raised. Offers a thesis and at least two specific examples as evidence.

16-17 pts.= Provides a clear thesis and at least one specific example as evidence but doesn't show real insight.

14-15 pts. = Clearly read and engaged with the essay but lacks a clear thesis and/or does not provide specific evidence.

0 pts. = It's not clear that you read and understood the essay.

**LAB NOTEBOOK (25 points)**

For the set of primary sources in Week 4, write a roughly 250-300-word analysis beginning with an argument that connects the entire set of documents. In crafting your argument, consider how these documents complement, challenge, or complicate each other and/or what we've been talking about in lecture. How do they change your perspective on a historical event or concept? After you state your argument, select ONE of the documents within the group and analyze it thoroughly. As you do this, remember to think about the document within the historical context of its production. (See "How to Read Primary Sources" for guidance.) This does not need to be a formal essay but should show thoughtful analysis of and reflection on one of the sources AND effectively connect all of the sources with an original argument. A strong "A" Lab Notebook entry will show some depth of understanding and analyze specific examples to support your points.

***Grading Rubric:***

18-20 pts.= Offers insight, makes interesting connections, and shows depth of understanding of the issues raised. Offers a thesis that connects the entire set of sources and clearly analyzes one source, placing it in its broader historical context.

16-17 pts.= Provides a clear thesis that connects the entire set of sources and discusses one source in some depth but does not analyze it clearly or provide any sense of historical context.

14-15 pts. = Clearly read and engaged with at least one primary source, but doesn't connect the entire set of sources, lacks a clear thesis, and/or does not provide evidence.

12 pts.= It appears that you have read only one of the sources in the set.

0 pts.= It is not clear that you have read any of the sources in the set.

**SHORT ANALYTICAL PAPERS** (50 points each, for a total of 150 points)

For two of the three books we read (*Sleuthing the Alamo* and *The Color of the Land*), you will write a 750-1000-word analytical essay. Analyze a theme or issue you think is important, interesting, provocative, or surprising in the book. The point is to think deeply about one of the issues that the author raises, or perhaps the book's argument or "big idea," and analyze it. Please submit your paper through Canvas by 11:30 a.m. on the day that the paper is due. **Tip:** I am NOT looking for a "book report," a synopsis of the book, or a discussion of whether or not you liked the book, any of which will merit a C, at best. I want analysis.

For the third book, *Letters of a Woman Homesteader* (a primary source) we will watch an Episode (#2) of the PBS "reality" series *Frontier House*, and you will watch an additional episode of your choice from Episodes 3-5, which will be posted on Canvas. I will also post several 10-minute clips from Episode 1 on Canvas, so that you can see how experts in 19th-century life tried to prepare them to survive for five months in Montana without the amenities of the 21st century. After reading the book and watching these episodes, you will write a 750-1000-word paper comparing the primary source to the experiences of modern-day families who were part of the televised simulation. I will provide additional guidance in class.

For further guidance, see "Tips for Writing Essays," which also provides a grading rubric.

**TERM PAPER** (100 points)

In Special Collections at the Knight Library, select three journals or diaries (or similar daily accounts) of people from three different parties who journeyed to Oregon between 1836 and 1869. The three journeys may have been via the Oregon Trail or the sea, but don't mix the two. (You may also—or instead—use published journals or on-line journals from an archival website, with my advance approval, but I strongly prefer that you choose at least one of the diaries in the UO archive.) I will provide a list of diaries to choose from on Canvas. (Option 2: You may choose another trail such as the Bozeman Trail, the Santa Fe Trail, the Mormon Trail, the Spanish Trail, the California Trail, the southern route blazed by the Mormon Battalion, or travel by sea to the California gold fields, written between 1822 and 1870. For this option, you may use published or on-line archival sources. All of the instructions for the term paper apply.)

Immerse yourself in the three diaries, paying particular attention to the five course themes, differences and similarities among the three diarists' experiences, and issues such as class, race, gender, ethnicity, and environment. Then write an 8-10-page history that makes an argument about the history of the Oregon Trail (or the water route), based on the experiences of your travelers. I will provide a handout with additional guidance early in the term.

There are two stages to this assignment:

(1) A one-page proposal that:

- lists the diaries you intend to use, with complete bibliographical citations (including URLs, if applicable) and
- states the question(s) you hope the three diaries will answer.

*The proposal is due on April 26*, uploaded as a Word doc/docx on Canvas. Failure to submit a proposal will result in a 5-point deduction from your term-paper grade. You may submit your proposal earlier, if you like, to get an earlier start on your research.

(2) The final paper is due by 5 p.m. on Friday, June 3, through Canvas.

*In assessing your term papers, I look for:*

- A clear argument, supported by evidence,
- A brief biographical introduction for each diarist,
- How well you develop the historical context of the journeys and the experiences of the diarists,
- The quality of your analysis and insights,
- That you meet assignment minimum length of 8-10 pages, and
- That you have cited the diaries and all secondary sources used in the paper

FORMATTING PAPERS AND CITATIONS
All essays should be double-spaced with one-inch margins and a Times New Roman 12-point font. Indent the beginning of each paragraph by 5 spaces. Do not add a space between paragraphs. (Microsoft's default format is 1.5 spaces with an extra space between paragraphs, so you need to reset those defaults.) All papers <b>must be saved in Word</b> and uploaded through Canvas.
If you're identifying a quotation within an assigned reading that is the sole focus of the assignment (as with the analytical essays), you should simply cite the page number in parentheses at the end of the sentence. For the Journal and Lab Notebook, you should also note which of the essays or primary sources you are analyzing in detail. In all other instances (such as the Term Project), please use the Chicago Manual of Style citation method (see Canvas).

### **FINAL EXAM** (100 points)

The final exam will have two sections: a matching-identification section and an essay section. In the matching section, you will match a name, place, or term to the best statement identifying it. In the essay section, you will write extended answers to two questions. You will have a choice of questions to answer, and you must write a coherent essay on each, drawing on the lectures and readings for the class. Each essay will be graded on the basis of the argument you make, the evidence you use to support your argument, your demonstrated understanding of the information and historical interpretations provided both in class and in the readings, and the overall coherence of the essay. We will discuss the exam format in more detail during an in-class review session. To help focus your studying, I will provide a list of possible questions and a list of names/places/terms from which the actual exam questions will be chosen.

## GRADING

Grading will be based on four components:

- participation in class discussions (25 points)
- one journal entry (25 points)
- one lab notebook entry (25 points)
- three three-page response papers (150 points)
- a term paper (100 points)
- a final exam (100 points)

TOTAL POINTS 425

### Grading Scale

417-425 = A+	400-416 = A	383-399 = A-
374-382 = B+	357-373 = B	340-356 = B-
332-339 = C+	316-331 = C	298-315 = C-
255-297 = D	<255 = F	

**Failure to engage any component of the course may result in failure of the entire course.**

### *Grading Rubric*

*This grading rubric is based on standards adopted by the history department. For the department's official standards, see: <http://history.uoregon.edu/undergraduate/index.php>.*

A+: Work of unusual distinction. This grade is rarely awarded.

A: Work that distinguishes itself by the excellence of its grasp of the material and the precision and insight of its argument, in addition to being well executed and reasonably free of errors.

B: Work that satisfies the main criteria of the assignment and demonstrates command of the material, but does not achieve the level of excellence that characterizes work of A quality.

C: Work that demonstrates a rudimentary grasp of the material and satisfies at least some of the assigned criteria reasonably well.

D: Work that demonstrates a poor grasp of the material.

F: Work that is weak in every aspect, demonstrating a basic misunderstanding of the material and/or disregard for the assignment, or work that is plagiarized.

For the department's official standards, see: <http://history.uoregon.edu/undergraduate/index.php>.

A rubric for writing essays will be posted on Canvas.

### **EXTRA CREDIT**

Up to 10 points of extra credit may be earned by attending Totem Pole Journey events, or by attending a public lecture on a related topic (announced in class and advertised on Canvas) and writing a reaction/reflection paragraph, due within 7 days of the lecture or event. These will use a rubric based on 3-5 points. To be eligible for any extra credit, you must have no more than 2 absences from the class lectures. Extra credit is not available to anyone who commits plagiarism on any assignment.

## CLASS POLICIES

Please turn off all electronic devices, including your computer, while in class. Studies show that computers distract those around you and that notes taken by hand help to promote memory recall. Texting and ringing phones in class are my pet peeves. Please do not leave the room to take a call or respond to a text; people moving in and out of the room disrupt my lectures.

I do not accept graded course work after the class period for which the assignment is due, and a missed deadline will result in a 0 on the assignment. It is your responsibility to read the syllabus and know the due dates. I will always accept an assignment early if you anticipate an absence. I do not accept emailed assignments; please plan ahead so that you successfully upload your work to Canvas before class. **“Make up” exams and late assignments will be accepted only for an excused absence due to illness, severe illness or death in your family, or a calamity you could not anticipate. Ideally, you should contact me before the deadline if you need an excused absence or extension.**

**I take plagiarism very seriously.** All work that you turn in must be your own. Any work submitted for credit that **includes the words or ideas of anyone else** must fully and accurately identify your source with a citation. Note that replacing words with synonyms, changing verb tense, stringing together phrases from a source, skipping words, or other minor alterations does not qualify as paraphrasing. Even with a citation, **failure to put quotation marks around direct quotations constitutes plagiarism**, because the absence of quotation marks implies that the writing is your own. (By the way, submitting the same paper to more than one class for credit is also academic misconduct.) In the event of an act of plagiarism, I will impose sanctions, as provided in the Student Code of Conduct. The minimum sanction will be an F (0 pts.) on the assignment, but plagiarism can also merit an F in the course, even for a first offense. Moreover, a letter detailing your plagiarism will be sent to the UO Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards for their records. See <https://dos.uoregon.edu/code-procedures>. If you are confused about this or do not understand the consequences of academic dishonesty at the UO—or the ethical issues behind these university policies—please read these guidelines: <https://researchguides.uoregon.edu/citing-plagiarism>

## ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE

**Accommodations:** Please let me know within the first two weeks of the term if you need assistance to fully participate in the course. Participation includes access to lectures, web-based information, in-class activities, and exams. The Accessible Education Center (<http://aec.uoregon.edu/>) works with students to provide an instructor notification letter that outlines accommodations and adjustments to class design that will enable better access. Contact the Accessible Education Center for assistance with access or disability-related questions or concerns.

**Mental Health and Wellness.** Life at college can be very complicated, and COVID-19 has made life even more challenging. Students often feel overwhelmed or stressed, experience anxiety or depression, struggle with relationships, or just need help navigating challenges in their life. If you're facing such challenges, there's help and support on campus. University Counseling Services (UCS) has a team of dedicated staff members to support you with your concerns, many

of whom can provide identity-based support, if needed. All clinical services are free and confidential. Find out more at [counseling.uoregon.edu](http://counseling.uoregon.edu) or by calling 541-346-3227.

### **CANVAS**

Please refer frequently to the course site on Canvas for announcements, reminders, and the following materials:

- Readings (other than the three required books)
- Book guides
- Note sheets (posted on Friday)
- Slides and videos (posted on Friday)
- Links to *Frontier House* videos
- Portals for submitting assignments
- Term paper guidelines (including how to analyze primary sources, Chicago Manual of Style citation guide, and a link to the citation machine”)
- Tips for critically reading history
- Tips for writing essays
- Tips for taking an essay exam
- Tips for avoiding plagiarism
- Example of an “A” essay
- Rubrics for grading essays and exam

## WEEKLY LECTURES AND ASSIGNMENTS

*Adjustments to the lecture schedule may occur at my discretion and will be announced in class.*

### **Week 1: Looking Westward**

**T ♦** (March 29): Introduction

**Th ♦** (March 31): Frederick Jackson Turner and the American Frontier

*Reading Assignment* (29 pp.):

Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" (C)  
(focus on pp. 199-206, 221-23, 226-27), **read by Thursday class time.**

### **Week 2: Beginnings of Empire**

**T ♦** (April 5): The Explorations of Lewis and Clark

**Th ♦** (April 7): The Fur trade

► ***Journals on two of the following three essays by Flores, West, and Ostler, due by 11:30 a.m., Thursday, April 7, through Canvas***

*Reading Assignment* (44-57 pp.):

Dan Flores, "Bison Ecology and Bison Diplomacy: The Southern Plains from 1850 to 1850," *Journal of American History* 78 (1991): 465-85. (C)

Elliott West, "Animals," in *The Way to the West* (1995), pp. 51-84. (C)

Jeffrey Ostler, "'They Regard Their Passing as Wakan': Interpreting Western Sioux Explanations for the Bison's Decline," *Western Historical Quarterly* 30 (1999): 475-97. (C)

### **Week 3: Conquest**

**T ♦** (April 12): Indian Removal and the Creation of Indian Territory

**Th ♦** (April 14): La Frontera/term project

*Reading Assignment* (198 pp.):

Crisp, *Sleuthing the Alamo* (due next week)

### **Week 4: The Border Crossed Us**

**T ♦** (April 19): U.S.-Mexico War

► ***Lab Notebook on primary sources (Calhoun, Dix, and Caro) due by 11:30 a.m., Tuesday, April 19, through Canvas***

**Th♦** (April 21): Discussion of *Sleuthing the Alamo*

► ***Analytical essay on Sleuthing the Alamo due by 11:30 a.m. Thursday, April 21, through Canvas***

*Reading Assignment:*

**(Due by Tuesday)**

John C. Calhoun, "Opposes Incorporating Mexico" (2 pp.) (C)

John A. Dix, "Advocates Expansion onto Mexican Lands" (2 pp.) (C)

Ramón Martínez Caro, "True Account of the First Texas Campaign" (9 pp.) (C)

**(Due by Thursday)**

Crisp, *Sleuthing the Alamo* (Entire)

**Week 5: O Pioneers**

T ♦ (April 26): Theocracy in a Desert Enclave

► **Term paper proposal due by 11:30 a.m., Tuesday, April 26, through Canvas**

Th ♦ (April 28): Emigrant Trails

*Reading Assignment (212 pp.):*

David A. Chang, *The Color of the Land* (due next week)

**Week 6: (Mis)Remembered Pasts**

T♦ (May 3): Screening: *Frontier House*

**Watch one additional episode of Frontier House on your own by Week 8**

Th♦ (May 5): Discussion of *The Color of the Land*

► **Analytical essays on The Color of the Land due by 11:30 a.m., Thursday, May 5, through Canvas**

*Reading Assignment:*

Chang, *The Color of the Land* (Entire)

**Week 7: Westward Expansion**

T♦ (May 10): Mother Lode

Th♦ (May 12): Civil War and the West

*Reading Assignment:*

Stewart, *Letters of a Woman Homesteader* (due next week)

**Week 8: It's Your Misfortune. . . .**

T ♦ (May 17): Home on the Range

Th ♦ (May 19): Discussion of *Letters of a Woman Homesteader*

► **Analytical papers on Letters of a Woman Homesteader due by 11:30 a.m., Thursday, May 19, through Canvas**

*Reading Assignment (282 pp.):*

Stewart, *Letters of a Woman Homesteader* (Entire)

**Week 9: The Octopus**

T♦ (May 24): Railroaded

Th ♦ (May 26): Chinese Immigrants

*Reading Assignment (6 pp.)*

Cowboy ballads (C)

**Work on your final papers!**

**Week 10: Legacy of Conquest**

T ♦ (May 31): Sodbusters and Populists

Th ♦ (June 2): Violent Ends/Review

*Reading Assignment:*

**Term projects due by 5 p.m., Friday, June 3, uploaded through Canvas.**

**FINALS WEEK ► T ♦ (June 7, 8-10 a.m.): Final Exam**

## Due Dates

Journal on bison essays due	April 7
Lab Notebook due on primary sources	April 19
Essay on <i>Sleuthing the Alamo</i> due	April 21
Term paper proposal due	April 26
Essay on <i>Color of the Land</i> due	May 5
(Optional: Totem Pole Journey Welcoming; “Science in Ceremony Symposium,” 2-4 p.m.)	(May 5)
(Optional: Whale Exhibit; “Art, Ceremony, Activism,” 12-1:30 p.m.)	(May 6)
(Optional: Whale People and Totem Pole Exhibit and Film screening, 8-10 p.m.)	(May 6 and 7)
Watch an episode of <i>Frontier House</i> on your own by	May 17
Essay on <i>Letters of a Woman Homesteader</i> and <i>Frontier House</i> due	May 19
Term paper due	June 3
Final exam	June 7

