

Settlement of the US West, 1800-1900

HIS 244

Spring 2016

MWF 9:30-10:20

Chambers 1006

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Office hours: Tuesday, 9-11 am; Wednesday, 1:30-3:30 pm; Friday, 1:30-3:30 pm; and by appointment

Course description

This is a history course focused on the nineteenth-century settlement of the American West. But this is also a methods course, so right from the start I want to highlight that there is an argument embedded in the course title. What does it mean to frame the nineteenth-century West as a period of “settlement”? What does that word call to mind? I see covered wagons and pioneers; I picture the Wilder family and their homestead, or that screen from the *Oregon Trail* computer game that asks the traveler to make a difficult decision: caulk the wagon or ford the river? Settlers are one part of this history, and we’ll certainly study them and their experiences. But they aren’t the only people in the nineteenth-century West, and settlement is only part of the story. This semester we’ll explore other frames for thinking about the West—as homeland, frontier, borderland, and empire. We’ll look at the kinds of debates historians are still having about the history of the West—and about how to tell that history. And we’ll participate in those scholarly conversations through class discussions and short writing assignments that will prepare us to pursue research questions, analyze primary and secondary sources, and develop arguments grounded in the rich historiography of the American West.

Learning outcomes

This course is designed to introduce you to key concepts in the history of the nineteenth-century US West, and to support you as you develop and practice the skills historians use to research and write history. Your work for this course should demonstrate that you can:

- (a) explain key concepts and debates in the history and historiography of the nineteenth-century US West, as well as their significance
- (b) read and analyze a range of primary and secondary sources
- (c) conduct historical research using both print and digital materials
- (c) craft arguments about the history of the American West and support them with evidence, in your writing and in conversation
- (d) articulate and engage with the key questions and themes raised by our readings and discussions

Required texts (please acquire hard copies)

Ned Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West* (2008)

Susan Lee Johnson, *Roaring Camp: The Social World of the California Gold Rush* (2000)

Samuel Truett, *Fugitive Landscapes: The Forgotten History of the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands* (2008)

Rebecca Solnit, *River of Shadows: Eadward Muybridge and the Technological Wild West* (2004)

Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History* (current edition)

These texts are available for purchase at the Davidson College Store. They are also on reserve at the E. H. Little Library.

All other assigned readings will be made available to you on Moodle; please print them out and bring them to class on the day we are scheduled to discuss them.

A note on participation

This course is designed to introduce you to—and immerse you in—the work historians do, and as such, it is organized around discussions of primary and secondary source material. Sometimes we'll work in small groups, and sometimes we'll have conversations as a whole class. I expect that you will show up each day prepared to jump into these conversations. We'll talk more about how to read like a historian, and how to prepare for an analytical discussion—these are skills we will be practicing a lot this semester—but I want to highlight here that regular, thoughtful (and vocal) participation is necessary to do well in this course.

Assignments

6 short writing assignments (on average, 2 pages each)

Preparatory work for research paper (including proposal, primary source selection, annotated bibliography, historiographical essay, draft introduction)

Research paper (10-12 pages) + short reflection (1-2 pages)

Response based on outside history lecture (1-2 pages)

Guidelines for submission of written work

You will submit papers and short writing assignments via Moodle. The work you turn in for this class should be double-spaced, in 12 pt Times New Roman font, with 1-inch margins. Put your name, the course number (HIS 244), and the date at the top of the first page. Everything you hand in is pledged work; please indicate this on your assignments. When citing ideas and/or texts that are not your own, please use a standard citation format. (We'll practice Chicago style, which is also the format we'll use for our research papers this semester, but on short writing assignments, MLA is fine, too.) Also, **remember to proofread!**

Writing Center

Because much of your grade in this course will be based on written work, I want to draw your attention to an excellent writing resource on campus, the Davidson Writing Center. The Writing Center is located on the first floor of the library and is open afternoons and evenings. You can sign up for an appointment online at davidson.mywconline.com.

Grading*

Participation 15%

Short writing assignments (6) 30%

Preparatory work for research paper 20%

Research paper 30% (20% paper, 5% presentation, 5% reflection)

Attendance at an outside history lecture and short response (not summary) 5%

***Note: you must complete all assignments in order to pass this course.**

Policy on absences and lateness

You are allowed two absences, no questions asked. Additional absences will impact your grade in this class: for each unexcused absence beyond the two you are allowed, your final grade will be

lowered by 1/3 of a letter. If you do miss a class meeting, you are responsible for finding out what you missed and making up the work so that you are prepared for the next class meeting. Please be on time; lateness will also affect your grade. If you need to miss class due to illness, emergency, athletics, religious observance, etc., please talk with me as soon as you can. Please also note that it is Davidson College policy that a student who misses more than 25% of scheduled class meetings will earn a failing grade in the course.

Late work

I will accept late work; however, it is in your best interest to submit work on time, as late assignments will be penalized 1/3 of a grade for being late, and an additional 1/3 of a grade for every day that it is late after that. So, a B+ paper turned in up to 24 hours after the deadline would earn a B; a B+ paper submitted 2 days late would earn a B-, etc. If you know you are going to be late with an assignment, talk to me as soon as you can. I very rarely grant extensions on late work on or after the due date. I am far more likely to approve an extension if you talk to me ahead of time.

Davidson policies

I respect and adhere to Davidson College policies and regulations pertaining to the observation of religious holidays, assistance available to students with disabilities, plagiarism and academic integrity, sexual harassment, and racial or ethnic discrimination. Students are advised to familiarize themselves with these policies and encouraged to discuss any questions or concerns they may have with me. In particular, please look carefully at the syllabus during the first week of class. If any of the assignments conflict with a major religious holiday for your faith, please let me know. I will make every effort to make the necessary accommodations.

Accommodations for students with disabilities and learning differences

Full accommodations are the legal right of students with all kinds of disabilities, whether learning differences or physical disabilities. I am happy to provide these accommodations. If you are a student with a learning disability who might need accommodations, please identify yourself to me in the first two weeks of class so that I can learn from you as early as possible how best to support your learning in this course. All such discussion will be confidential unless you stipulate otherwise.

Academic honesty

It is expected that you will abide by Davidson's Honor Code. Please be sure to familiarize yourself with the Honor Code, and in particular, the college's policy on plagiarism. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism or proper citation, please feel free to ask!

A note on technology

The technological developments of the last few decades have transformed the ways that historians research and write history. Digital photography in the archive, electronic access to scholarly journals and digitized materials, new software to help with organizing sources and ideas—there are so many reasons why I'm thrilled to be a historian in the digital age. I imagine that we will all use digital tools to complete the work we'll do together this semester, but I ask that we keep our group discussions analog. Please bring hard copies of the assigned readings—and your notes on them—to class, but keep laptops, tablets, and phones stowed (unless you and I have made other arrangements as part of a conversation about learning differences and accommodations). This course is discussion-centered, and it can be hard to connect across a table or around a room when we're all looking at screens instead of at the people we're talking with!

Course calendar (subject to change)

Please come to class ready to discuss the materials listed for that day on this calendar. (I'm including a schedule of writing assignments and workshops listed out by week, and a gridded calendar of daily readings and assignment deadlines at the end of this syllabus.)

Week 1: What is—and where is—the West?

1/11 M: Introductions and Expectations

1/13 W: Mary Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, Chapter 1; start reading for Friday.

1/15 F: Ned Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West*, Read Introduction and skim Ch 1-2 (up to p. 88 — this is the pre-1800 section of the book)

Week 2: The West and Native History

1/18 M: MLK DAY, NO CLASS

1/20 W: Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land*, Ch 3-5, pp. 88-175

1/22 F: Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land*, Ch 6-7, pp. 176-266

Week 3: The West and Narrative

short writing assignment #1 (Blackhawk précis) due Wed (1/25) 9:00 AM via Moodle

1/25 M: Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land*, Epilogue, pp. 267-293

1/27 W: Dr. K AWAY

1/29 F: Dr. K AWAY

Week 4: The Significance (?) of the Frontier

short writing assignment #2 (Turner précis) due Monday (2/1) 9:00 AM via Moodle

2/1 M: Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" (M)

2/3 W: What is historiography? Rampolla, Chapter 2 and 3.

2/5 F: William Cronon, "Revisiting the Vanishing Frontier: The Legacy of Frederick Jackson Turner," *Western Historical Quarterly*, Vol.18, No. 2 (April 1987), pp. 157-176; Margaret Washington, "African American History and the Frontier Thesis," *Journal of the Early Republic*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (Summer 1993), pp. 230-241; Stephen Aron, "Lessons in Conquest: Towards a Greater Western History" *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 63, No. 2 (May 1994), pp. 125-147. *Note: these articles are not on Moodle, but can be located by using the library website. Familiarize yourself with the process of using databases like JSTOR to locate scholarly articles.

Week 5: Settlers and Social History

2/8 M: Conevery Bolton Valencius, "Places," in *The Health of the Country: How American Settlers Understood Themselves and Their Land* (2004) pp. 85-108 (M); Anne Hyde, "The Geography of Empire in 1804," in *Empires, Nations, and Families: A New History of the North American West, 1800-1860* (2011), pp. 1-24 (M)

2/10 W: Primary source workshop: what are primary sources, and what can we do with them? To prepare for today's activity, look at the *Slate* blog, "The Vault." (http://www.slate.com/blogs/the_vault.html). Read through a handful of nineteenth-century entries, choose one, and bring it to class.

2/12 F: Susan Lee Johnson, *Roaring Camp: The Social World of the California Gold Rush*, Prologue and Part 1, pp. 25-95

***sometime before the end of week 8, come to office hours to talk about paper ideas...**

Week 6: The Gold Rush, Identity, and Social History

short writing assignment #3 (on firsthand accounts) due Monday (2/15) 9:00 AM via Moodle

2/15 M: Library session (Meet in E. H. Little Library)

2/17 W: Johnson, *Roaring Camp*, Part 2, pp. 95-186

2/19 F: Johnson, *Roaring Camp*, Part 2, pp. 187-234

Week 7: Technology and Transformation in the West

2/22 M: Johnson, *Roaring Camp*, Part 3, pp. 237-313

2/24 W: Johnson, *Roaring Camp*, Epilogue, pp. 313-344

short writing assignment #4 (digital project analysis) due Friday (2/26) 9:00 AM via Moodle

2/26 F: look at digital projects on the Gold Rush, Overland Trail, and Transcontinental Railroad before class; Rampolla, Chapter 4-5.

SPRING BREAK 2/26 Fri 4:30 PM to 3/7 Mon 8:30 AM

Week 8: The Civil War and the Indian Wars

3/7 M: For class today, read the Homestead Act

(<http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=31&page=transcript>); light reading today, so work on your research proposal!

3/9 W: The Army in the West; review Rampolla, Chapters 6-7 (section on citation)

3/11 F: Martha Sandweiss, "Introduction: Picture Stories: Photography and the Nineteenth-Century West," in *Print the Legend: Photography and the American West* (2004) pp. 1-14 (M)

Research paper proposal due Friday (3/11) 5:00 PM via Moodle

Week 9: The West and Spatial History

3/14 M: Samuel Truett, *Fugitive Landscapes: The Forgotten Landscapes of the US-Mexico Borderlands*, Prologue and Part 1, pp. 1-51

3/16 W: writing workshop (bring proposal)

3/18 F: NO CLASS; Dr. K at C19

3 primary sources due Friday (3/18) 5:00 PM via Moodle

Week 10: Borderlands and Boundaries

3/21 M: Truett, *Fugitive Landscapes*, Part 2, pp. 55-130

3/23 W: Truett, *Fugitive Landscapes*, Part 3, pp. 132-184

3/25 F: writing workshop (using your primary sources)

EASTER BREAK 3/25 Fri 4:30 PM to 3/30 Wed 8:30 AM

Week 11: NO CLASS THIS WEEK; WORK ON ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY (DUE FRIDAY)

3/30 W: Dr. K at ASEH

4/1 F: Dr. K at ASEH

Annotated bibliography due Friday (4/1) 5:00 PM via Moodle

Week 12: Race, Class, and Gender in Western History

4/4 M: **short writing assignment #5 (on *Deadwood* S1 EP 1) due Monday (4/4) 9:00 AM via Moodle**; be prepared to discuss in class.

4/6 W: Margaret D. Jacobs, "Getting Out of A Rut: Decolonizing Western Women's History," *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 79, No. 4 (November 2010), pp. 585-604 (M); Karen J. Leong, "Still Walking, Still Brave: Mapping Gender, Race, and Power in U.S. Western History," *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 70, No 4 (November 2010), pp. 618-628 (M)
4/8 F: writing workshop (constructing an argument)

Week 13: The West and Cultural History

4/11 M: Rebecca Solnit, *River of Shadows: Eadward Muybridge and the Technological Wild West*, pp.1-74

historiographical essay + draft introduction due Wednesday (4/13) 9:00 AM via Moodle

4/13 W: writing workshop (bring a copy of your historiographical essay and draft introduction to class)

4/15 F: Solnit, *River of Shadows*, pp. 74-124

Week 14: The West and Modernity

4/18 M: Solnit, *River of Shadows*, pp. 127-176

4/20 W: Solnit, *River of Shadows*, pp. 179-238

short writing assignment #6 (on Solnit) due Friday (4/22) 9:00 AM via Moodle

4/22 F: Solnit, *River of Shadows*, pp. 241-259

Week 15: The West and Imperial History

4/25 M: Laura Wexler, "What a Woman Can Do With a Camera" in *Tender Violence: Domestic Visions in an Age of U.S. Imperialism* (2000), pp. 15-51 (M)

All presentation notes due Wednesday (4/27) 9:00 AM via Moodle

4/27 W: Mini-presentations (first half)

4/29 F: Mini-presentations (second half)

Week 16: After 1900? The West and Memory

5/2 M: WRAP UP

5/4 W: TBD

5/5 READING DAY

Wednesday (5/11) 5:15 PM (End of final exams*): Research papers + short reflection on research and writing process due

***The final exam period for seniors ends Monday (5/9) at 5:15 PM.**

Detailed Schedule of Writing Assignments and Workshops

Week 1: NONE

Week 2: NONE

Week 3: short writing assignment #1 (Blackhawk précis)

Week 4: short writing assignment #2 (Turner précis)

Week 5: [primary source writing workshop #1]

Week 6: short writing assignment #3 (firsthand accounts); library session

Week 7: short writing assignment #4 (digital project analysis)

Week 8: research paper proposal

Week 9: [writing workshop with proposals]; three primary sources due

Week 10: [primary source writing workshop #2]

Week 11: annotated bibliography

Week 12: short writing assignment #5 (*Deadwood* SI E1); [writing workshop on arguments]

Week 13: historiographical essay and draft introduction due; [writing workshop with drafts]

Week 14: short writing assignment #6 (Solnit)

Week 15: mini-presentations (notes due)

Week 16: NONE

End of Finals: Research paper and short reflection due

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1 What is—and where is—the West?	Jan. 11 Introductions and Expectations	Jan. 12	Jan. 13 Rampolla, Chapter 1 Start reading for Friday	Jan. 14	Jan. 15 Blackhawk, <i>Violence Over the Land</i> , Intro and skim Ch. 1-2 (to p. 88)
2 The West and Native History	Jan. 18 MLK DAY NO CLASS	Jan. 19	Jan. 20 Blackhawk, pp. 88-175	Jan. 21	Jan. 22 Blackhawk, pp. 176-266
3 The West and Narrative	Jan. 25 SWA #1 due 9:00 AM Blackhawk, pp. 267-293	Jan. 26	Jan. 27 NO CLASS; DR. K AWAY	Jan. 28	Jan. 29 NO CLASS; DR. K AWAY
4 The Significance (?) of the Frontier	Feb. 1 SWA #2 due 9:00 AM Turner, "Significance of the Frontier" (M)	Feb. 2	Feb. 3 Rampolla, Chapters 2 and 3	Feb. 4	Feb. 5 Cronon, Washington, and Aron articles on Turner (find on library website)
5 Settlers and Social History	Feb. 8 Valencius, "Places" (M) and Hyde "Geography of Empire in 1804" (M)	Feb. 9	Feb. 10 Do <i>Slate</i> assignment to prep for class; primary source workshop	Feb. 11	Feb. 12 Johnson, <i>Roaring Camp</i> , Prologue and Part 1, pp. 25-95
6 The Gold Rush, Identity, and Social History	Feb. 15 SWA #3 due 9:00 AM LIBRARY SESSION	Feb. 16	Feb. 17 Johnson, pp. 95-186	Feb. 18	Feb. 19 Johnson, pp. 187-234
7 Technology and Transformation in the West	Feb. 22 Johnson, pp. 237-313	Feb. 23	Feb. 24 Johnson, pp. 313-344	Feb. 25	Feb. 26 SWA #4 due 9:00 AM Look at digital projects before class.
SPRING BREAK	Feb. 29 SPRING BREAK	Mar. 1	Mar. 2 SPRING BREAK	Mar. 3	Mar. 4 SPRING BREAK
8 The Civil War and the Indian Wars	Mar. 7 Read the Homestead Act before class.	Mar. 8	Mar. 9 Review Rampolla, Chapters 6-7, as you work on research proposal.	Mar. 10	Mar. 11 Sandweiss, "Introduction" pp. 1-14 (M) Research paper proposal due 5:00 PM
9 The West and Spatial History	Mar. 14 Truett, <i>Fugitive Landscapes</i> , pp. 1-51	Mar. 15	Mar. 16 writing workshop (bring proposal)	Mar. 17	Mar. 18 NO CLASS; DR. K AT C19 3 primary sources due 5:00 PM
10 Borderlands and Boundaries	Mar. 21 Truett, pp. 55-130	Mar. 22	Mar. 23 Truett, pp. 132-184	Mar. 24	Mar. 25 writing workshop (bring your primary sources)
11 EASTER BREAK	Mar. 28 EASTER BREAK	Mar. 29 EASTER BREAK	Mar. 30 NO CLASS; DR. K AT ASEH	Mar. 31	Apr. 1 NO CLASS; DR. K AT ASEH Annotated bibliography due 5:00 PM
12 Race, Class, and Gender in Western History	Apr. 4 SWA #5 due 9:00 AM	Apr. 5	Apr. 6 Jacobs and Leong articles (M)	Apr. 7	Apr. 8 writing workshop (on arguments)
13 The West and Cultural History	Apr. 11 Solnit, <i>River of Shadows</i> , pp. 1-74	Apr. 12	Apr. 13 historiographical essay & draft intro due 9:00 AM (bring copy to class)	Apr. 14	Apr. 15 Solnit, pp. 74-124
14 The West and Modernity	Apr. 18 Solnit, pp. 127-176	Apr. 19	Apr. 20 Solnit, pp. 179-238	Apr. 21	Apr. 22 SWA #6 due 9:00 AM Solnit, pp. 241-259
15 The West and Imperial History	Apr. 25 Wexler article (M)	Apr. 26	Apr. 27 presentation notes due 9:00 AM mini-presentations (first half)	Apr. 28	Apr. 29 mini-presentations (second half)
16 After 1900? The West & Memory	May 2 WRAP UP	May 3	May 4 TBD	May 5	May 6

END OF FINAL EXAMS: RESEARCH PAPERS AND SHORT REFLECTION DUE