Instructor: Josh Reid

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Overview
The American West conjures forth a range of iconic and mythical images for many people both in and beyond this nation. In popular imagination, independent-minded white pioneers settled the West and made it part of the United States. But this region that is now part of our nation has a much longer and more diverse story. It has a narrative peopled by many distinct indigenous peoples, Mexicans and Mexican Americans, Asians and Asian Americans, African Americans, and immigrants from European countries. The powerful federal government and monolithic corporations fueled by urban capital dominated the region in complex ways. However, the challenges faced by the various peoples who have called this region their home at one time or another still make this the quintessential American story. This course will cover the early history of the North American West, beginning with the ways indigenous peoples transformed this region into homelands and concluding with the nineteenth-century contestations over the lands, resources, and meanings of the West.

In this course, students will understand:
• The diversity of peoples who have called the North American West their home.
• The complex relationship people have had with the environment of the North American West.
• How frontier myths arose in the popular culture of this nation and what these myths tell us about US history.
• How diverse peoples remade the environments of the North American West as they transformed it into their home.
• The political struggles and economic arrangements that accompanied westward expansion and annexation.
• How settlement of the North American West reshaped the politics and economy of this nation.
• How the North American West has been connected to other national and transnational regions.

Expectations & Responsibilities
You, the student, can expect the following from me, the instructor:
• Create and foster a safe and stimulating learning environment in which students can take intellectual risks.
• Facilitate historical inquiry.
• Clarify expectations and help students prepare for exams and papers.
• Effectively assess student work in a fair and timely manner – I will provide suggestions for improvement and affirm work that is done well.

I, the instructor, can expect the following from you, the student:
• Share ideas and listen to others.
• Respect the learning environment.
• Punctually attend all class sections – if you are late, please enter quietly.
• Come prepared to learn and participate: if a discussion activity is scheduled for a specific session, complete the reading assignments before coming to class.
• Alert me to any concerns you may have and seek help when needed.

Course Readings
You may purchase required books at the university bookstore or any number of local and online retailers. Please feel free to purchase used copies of these texts. Unless it is available online, I will place copies of each book on reserve at the library. Finally, there are a number of additional required readings that I will post on our course Canvas site. These are marked with an (OL) on the syllabus.

The required books (in order) are:
• David Weber, What Caused the Pueblo Revolt? (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 1999).
• Colin Calloway, Our Hearts Fell to the Ground (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 1996).

Please note that Reséndez’s book is available online through the UW Libraries.

Class Sessions
Although this course is structured around lectures, I have set aside time for several discussions because there are no assigned discussion sections. These will help you construct sophisticated arguments useful for historical inquiry. Writing assignments require you to incorporate material from lectures and readings; the class discussions will help you connect the readings to the lectures. This is why I expect you to attend every class and to come having finished the required readings on the days during which I have scheduled a discussion activity. Repeated absences and/or failing to stay caught up on the assigned readings will strongly hamper your ability to excel in this class.

Canvas
Although this is not an online course, having reliable and regular access to a computer and the Internet will be necessary. All assignments will be submitted through Canvas. Papers will need to be uploaded to Canvas, which will allow me to leave detailed comments helping you to improve your writing and analytical skills. If this is going to be a problem for you, please bring this to my attention immediately so we can figure out how to support you. A number of readings (marked “OL”) will be posted to this site. Handouts, PDFs of PowerPoint slides, instructions, and other helpful material will be distributed through Canvas; if, for some reason, you are unable to open or access these, please notify me immediately so I can send them to you in another
format. I will use PDFs for material disbursed online, so having Adobe Acrobat Reader or Preview (Mac) installed on your computer will be critical.

Assignments & Evaluation
Each student earns his or her own grade. My job as the instructor is to assess your work along clearly articulated guidelines and expectations. I also value and reward improvement. Therefore, it is critical that you do all the assignments, attend all the class sessions, and engage with the course concepts. It is impossible for me to evaluate what you have not turned in or articulated! Please note that late work will be penalized 5% per day (with a maximum loss of 30%), including weekends and holidays.

Your final grade will be determined by:

- Midterm Exam* (online, due 10 PM, Nov. 3) 100 pts.
- Paper: Part 2* (due noon, Dec. 6) 250 pts.
- Final Exam (online, due 10 PM, Dec. 18)* 200 pts.
- Writing Exercise (due noon, Oct. 11) 50 pts.
- Discussion Reflections (online, throughout the quarter) 100 pts.
- Online Forums (near exams) 50 pts.
- Participation (throughout the quarter) 100 pts.

In order to be eligible to earn a passing grade for this course, you must complete all items marked with an asterisk.

Papers
You will be required to write a progressive essay in this course. Think of it as two parts to a paper that you will develop over the quarter, hence why two paper parts contribute toward the final grade. In the first paper assessment (due Sunday, Oct. 25), you will write three to five pages in which you will formulate an original argument; structure a formal, academic paper with an introduction, body, and conclusion; and support assertions using substantial and specific evidence. It is important that this essay argues a specific point of view that encourages the reader to agree or disagree. I am a challenging but fair evaluator, and I provide substantial feedback, which you will then incorporate into your second paper assessment. Working with my feedback, you will expand the paper, building on the argument you established in the first paper assessment by drawing on additional sources and concepts. By the end of the quarter, your finished paper will be from eight to ten pages in length. A higher percentage of the final grade is assigned to the second paper assessment in order to reward significant improvement in your writing.

I will provide a more detailed set of instructions for each paper assessment well before the due date. These instructions will include the prompt, guidelines for writing an effective essay, proofreading checklist, formatting requirements, and any other relevant information. I strongly encourage you to visit me during office hours to discuss paper topics in advance. Please remember that late work will be penalized 5% per day (with a maximum loss of 30%), including weekends and holidays.
**Exams**

Both exams will be administered online through Canvas and will ask you to engage with the IDs discussed in the lectures. On the midterm, you will have a set of IDs to address; on the final, you will have two sets to address. For the ID sets, I will give you several sets from which to choose. Students will detail the IDs in the set (or sets) of their choice, supplement it with an additional ID of their choice, and then for each set write about how they are related. I will show you some examples of this before the midterm. Possible IDs you will be asked to write about will be listed on each lecture handout.

Each exam will also have an essay-question section. On the midterm, you will address one question; on the final you will write about two separate questions. The essay questions will require you to formulate an original argument demonstrating your command of broader course themes. The final exam is cumulative in the sense that you will be expected to reflect on the entire chronology of the class at the end of the quarter.

**Writing Exercise**

I have scheduled one writing exercise early in the quarter. This is designed to practice your analytical writing skills, which you will also use in the more formal paper. Moreover, this will alert me to any writing challenges you may have and provide you with some examples of what I am looking for when I assess student writing.

**Online Discussion Reflections**

I will also evaluate eight of our discussions through online discussion reflections, accessible through Canvas. After several of the in-class discussion activities, you will write a short reflective piece (250-300 words) about the discussion. You can write about one or two compelling discussion points that emerged, questions you still have about the reading or about a topic raised in the discussion, or a different perspective that struck you after thinking back on the discussion. You might also connect the discussion to other concepts and readings relative to the course. This is meant to be an open-ended exercise encouraging you to think critically about the discussion activity and demonstrate that you learned something from it. Of course, it will be impossible for you to do well on specific journal entries if you do not attend class that day, participate, and take notes. **Please note that all reflections are due by noon the day after the discussion activity.**

**Participation and Online Forums**

Throughout the quarter, I will assess your participation. Students who do well on this grading category attend class regularly, complete the assigned readings in a timely fashion (i.e., before the discussion activities), and participate thoughtfully in the discussion activities.

Twice during this quarter I will set up online forums in which all students are expected to participate. These forums will help prepare you for the exams. Through the forums, you will interact with other students in the course and with the content of the forum itself. For example, answer the question and respond to the topic I have posted; however, it is more important that you respond to each other by analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating concepts and issues from each other’s posts. Be sure to support your assertions with evidence drawn from the assigned readings and lectures.
Before we do the first online forum, I will post further instructions, including more specific expectations and how I will assess your participation in these activities. Please remember that I expect students to engage each other respectfully when online, just as they would in the classroom. If you have any questions or concerns about this graded course requirement, please do not hesitate to ask. You can access the discussion forums through the course Canvas site.

**Grading Scale**

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<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>(929-900 pts.)</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>(899-870 pts.)</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>(869-830 pts.)</td>
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<td>B-</td>
<td>(829-800 pts.)</td>
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<td>C+</td>
<td>(799-770 pts.)</td>
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<td>C</td>
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**Emergencies**

In the event of illness, a death in your family, or other catastrophic, personal crisis, I will be sympathetic and flexible, provided that you alert me as soon as possible and preferably in advance of an assignment’s due date. Belated excuses will not account for poorly done or late work. You will need to support any medical excuses with the appropriate, written documentation.

**Communication**

Meeting with me personally during my office hours is the best way to communicate. If you have more immediate needs, feel free to ask me at the end of lecture or to contact me via email. I usually check my email once in the morning and once in the evening.

At the beginning of each week, I send out a class announcement via Canvas. This reminds everyone what they should be working on, including readings and assignments. Additionally, I will remind/notify people if there is a change of venue for the class, if we have a guest speaker coming in, or if there are any changes to the schedule. Please be sure to set up your Canvas preferences so you can receive course announcement through your email.

**Schedule**

Below is the schedule for the quarter. I expect you to have completed all readings before class begins on the days scheduled for discussion activities.

**Unit 1: Early Indigenous West**

- Oct. 1: Introductions & Origins
- Oct. 6: Making the Red Continent
- Discussion Reflection 1 due noon, Oct. 7

**Unit 2: Imperial Spain in the North American West**

- Oct. 8: Thinking Historically – Prelude to Spanish Conquest of Mesoamerica
- Writing Exercise due noon, Oct. 11
- Oct. 13: Beginnings of European Expansion
• Oct. 15: Spaniards in the North American West – Discussion: Reséndez, *A Land So Strange*
• Discussion Reflection 2 due noon, Oct. 16
• Oct. 20: Spanish Expansion into the American Southwest
• Oct. 22: No Class (at the Western History Conference)
• Paper (Part 1) due noon, Oct. 25
• Discussion Reflection 3 due noon, Oct. 28
• Oct. 29: Indigenous Limits on Spanish Expansion
• Online Forum 1: complete participation by 10 PM, Nov. 2
• Nov. 3: Online Midterm due by 10 PM (no class session)

**Unit 3: The Ambiguous West**

• Nov. 5: Frontiers & Furs – Discussion on Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History” (OL) & Gitlin, excerpts from *Bourgeois Frontier* (OL)
• Discussion Reflection 4 due noon, Nov. 6
• Nov. 10: Daniel Boone – The Ambiguous American (Part 1)
• Nov. 12: Daniel Boone – The Ambiguous American (Part 2)

**Unit 4: The US West**

• Nov. 17: American Expansion into the West – Discussion: Lewis & Clark Journal excerpts
• Discussion Reflection 5 due noon, Nov. 18
• Nov. 19: Fur Trades in the Far West
• Nov. 24: Settling the West – Discussion: Burlend, *True Picture of Emigration*
• Discussion Reflection 6 due noon, Nov. 25
• Nov. 26: No Class (Thanksgiving)
• Dec. 1: American Empire in the West
• Discussion Reflection 7 due noon, Dec. 2
• Paper (Part 2) due noon, Dec. 6
• Dec. 8: The “Indian Problem” in the American West – Discussion: Calloway, excerpts from *Our Hearts Fell to the Ground*
• Discussion Reflection 8 due noon, Dec. 9
• Dec. 10: The Political Cost of Western Expansion
• Online Forum 2: complete participation by 10 PM, Dec. 16
• Dec. 18: Online Final Exam due by 10 PM

I reserve the right to emend these policies and schedule at my discretion and will give adequate notice of any changes.