Course Description:

This course focuses on the American West during the period of U.S. continental expansion (from the late colonial period to the close of the 19th century). Our main concern will be to analyze the West in relationship to the United States as an imperial nation-state (paying attention, as well, to global relationships).

The course is divided into two parts: before and after the Civil War. This is no accident, since U.S. expansion was a primary cause of the Civil War and since the way the war ended (the victory of the North and the consolidation of industrial capitalism) had an important impact on the American West and on the role of the West in the creation of the modern United States. In the first part of the course, our emphasis will be on the West’s impact on national development. In the second part of the course, we will shift our angle of vision to look at how the United States undertook a project of nation-building in the West.

Although much of the course will focus on ideologies, policies, institutions, politics, and war, we will also want to understand the positions and experiences of various groups, especially, though not exclusively, those defined in racial terms, affected by the building of America’s continental empire.

Readings:

The following required readings are available for purchase in the University bookstore (the published books are on reserve):

James Ronda, *Lewis and Clark among the Indians*
James Welch, *Fools Crow* (a novel)
Several readings available on Blackboard (list appended)
Course Requirements:

1. A 4-page paper in which you compare the Lewis and Clark expedition’s interaction with two of the Indian communities they encountered. Due October 21. Worth 20%.
2. A midterm exam. Part of the exam will be take-home (due Nov. 2), part will be given in class (also on Nov. 2). Worth 25%
3. A 4-page paper on an aspect of James Welch’s novel Fools Crow. Due November 23. Worth 20%.
4. An open-book, open-notes final exam to be given on Wednesday, December 9, from 3:15 to 5:15. Worth 35%.

Note: Graduate Students in 566 have additional requirements and should see the instructor by the end of the first week of class.

Schedule:

9/30 North America c. 1750 and the Seven Years’ War
10/5 The West and the American Revolution
10/7 Problems and possibilities of the West
  Readings: Blackboard 1-4 (Jefferson to Madison; Jefferson to Breckinridge; Jefferson’s 2d inaugural address; Federalist # 10)
10/12 U.S. Indian policy and Indian strategies
10/14 Lewis and Clark and Indians
  Reading: Ronda, Lewis and Clark among the Indians (entire)
10/19 Indian removal and slavery
  Reading: Blackboard 5-6 (Wallace, Green)
10/21 Hispanic North America and Texas independence
  Interactions Paper Due
10/26 Mexican War and Oregon
  Reading: Blackboard 7-8 (Benton, Nugent)
10/28 The West and the Civil War
  Reading: Blackboard 9-10 (Kelman, Utley)
11/2 Midterm exam
  Search for order in the post-Civil War West
11/4 Memories of the Gold Rush and racialization in California
  Reading: Blackboard 11-12 (Johnson, Almaguer)
11/9 Hispanics in the Southwest
  Reading: Blackboard 13-14 (Meier and Ribera; Deutsch)
11/11 Conquest of Plains Indians
11/16  Blackfoot history  
       Reading: Welch, *Fools Crow* (entire)
11/18  Chinese and Mormons in the Rocky Mountains  
       Reading: Blackboard 15-16 (Zhu; Van Wagoner)
11/23  Class conflict/Question of genocide  
       Reading: Blackboard 17-18 (White; Kiernan)
11/25  No class
11/30  Closing of the frontier  
       Reading: Blackboard 19 (Turner)
12/2   Creation of western mythology  
       Reading: Blackboard 20 (Butler)
12/9 (3:15): Final exam


13. Matt S. Meier and Feliiano Ribera, excerpt from *Mexican Americans/American Mexicans:*


