

History 365: American West



The Last of the Buffalo, by Albert Bierstadt, 1888

North Carolina State University, Spring 2020

Tuesday/Thursday, 11:45am-1:00pm, 218 Daniels Hall

Prof. Dean Bruno

Department of History

Email: dbruno@ncsu.edu (preferred means of contact)

Office Hours: W 1-3, or by appointment

274 Withers Hall

Description:

This course will explore the history of the people, places, spaces, processes, and myths that have defined and shaped the American West. It will do so from the perspectives of both Native Americans, and European/American settlers. Starting with the varied and changing world of early Native America, we will cover a broad chronological scope, including: exploration, cultural contact, colonization, violence and resistance, contests of empires, extraction of natural resources, American incorporation, construction of the transcontinental railroad, founding of the National Parks, environmental catastrophe and transformation, and the militarization of the physical and cultural landscape. We will explore the significance of the American West in popular culture and politics, and will examine how collective memory of the West has been created and shaped over time. Why do some stories about the American West become part of our national heritage while others are forgotten?

Course Requirements

This seminar course is focused primarily on readings and discussion, with some lectures to provide supplemental material. ****PLEASE NOTE--THE READING LOAD IS SIGNIFICANT, AND WILL INCLUDE ASSIGNMENTS OF 100+ PAGES A WEEK**.**

- You must read and digest the assigned material *before* class begins.
- Regular attendance and informed participation in class discussion is mandatory.
- Roll will be taken at the start of every class. You may miss two class meetings without penalty. Each subsequent unexcused absence will result in a two-point reduction in your final grade.
- Except for prior arrangement with the instructor or serious, proven emergency, late assignments will not be accepted.
- All essay assignment must be typed in 12-point font, double-spaced with one-inch margins. Essay assignments must also be footnoted properly.
- All assignments must be completed to pass the course.

Attendance is mandatory. Arrive on time; roll will be taken at that start of every class meeting. Should anything happen that interferes with your ability to attend class it is your responsibility to maintain necessary communication with me, to obtain appropriate documentation, and to schedule make-up work. Verification that a student has a legitimate medical or personal reason for missing class is necessary to qualify for an excused absence. All documentation must be provided to me by the final class day of the semester.

For anticipated absences, provide appropriate documentation to me:

For example, this applies to the following: representing the University in an official capacity, attending a professional meeting, serving as a member of judging team, serving as a member of athletic team, military service, required court attendance (with certified documentation from the Clerk of Court), etc.

For short-term illness (colds) or injury: provide a doctor's note that includes the date of your absence(s) to me.

For death in family, funeral attendance, serious illness, and/or religious observance, please refer to the following: Division of Academic and Student Affairs (<https://dasa.ncsu.edu/students/absence-verification-process/>) and email appropriate documentation to: (absence-verification@ncsu.edu). DASA will assist you to verify the absence. It is your responsibility to make sure that this is completed in a timely manner. For additional information and/or clarification on the University's absence policy, see the details at this link: <http://policies.ncsu.edu/regulation/reg-02-20-03>

Drop/Add Policy:

To make seats available for as many students as possible, I am following the University regulation that allows me to Drop students for Non-Attendance in the first week of classes. The rule is "By the third class/laboratory period or the fifth business day of the semester (whichever comes first) students who have not attended class or contacted the instructor regarding his/her

absence may be dropped from the undergraduate class roll.” You must attend class, or contact me to discuss the legitimacy of your reason for missing classes.

Please check your enrollment on MyPack before the end of Day 10 of the semester to verify your intended schedule of classes.

Academic Integrity:

You are expected to produce original work on all course assignments. Plagiarism and cheating are contrary to historical inquiry. **Offenders will receive a failing grade on the assignment. I will report instances of plagiarism and cheating to the University Office of Student Conduct - penalties include expulsion.** Read the following definitions and consequences of academic dishonesty in section 7-13:

http://www.ncsu.edu/policies/student_services/student_discipline/POL11.35.1.php

Briefly, plagiarism means:

- Copying large or small sections of written text—or even a single sentence—without appropriate quotations and citation.
- Paraphrasing written materials without citing the source.
- Citing a source other than that from which you obtained your evidence.
- Altering or contriving evidence.

For more information on what plagiarism is and how to identify it, see the History Department’s website: <http://history.ncsu.edu/undergrad/plagiarism.php>

Signing or typing your name on a paper signals that you are upholding the University's honor code and have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance. For more information on university regulations governing academic integrity and plagiarism, see sections 7-13 in the Code of Student Conduct: <http://policies.ncsu.edu/policy/pol-11-35-01>. For definition of academic dishonesty see:

http://www.ncsu.edu/policies/student_services/student_conduct/POL445.00.1.htm

Disabilities:

Students with personal, medical or physical barriers to success should contact the instructor as soon as possible. Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with verifiable disabilities. By law, no accommodations can be made unless students first register with Disability Services for Students at 1900 Student Health Center, Campus Box 7509, 515-7653.

http://www.ncsu.edu/provost/offices/affirm_action/dss/

Use of Technology:

Please turn off your cell phones. Students may use laptops **only** to take notes or to access readings and other material referenced in class. Use of cell phones or inappropriate use of laptops or other devices will result in the student being marked absent for that day. **I do not grant permission for any component of this course to be recorded.**

CHASS Career Services:

Explore career options related to your major, make decisions about your major or minor, build resumes and cover letters, prepare for interviews, develop internship/ job search strategies, maximize career fairs, and more. Use ePACK to make an appointment with your career contact-- Woody Catoe -- at ncsu.edu/epack. Career Development Center: careers.ncsu.edu.

Supporting Fellow Students in Distress:

As members of the NCSU community we share a responsibility to ensure that classrooms, and the campus as a whole, remain safe learning environments. If you encounter a fellow classmate whose personal behavior concerns or worries you, please report this behavior to the NC State Students of Concern website: <http://studentsofconcern.ncsu.edu/> Although you can report anonymously, it is preferred that you share your contact information so they can follow-up with you personally.

Learning Objectives and Outcomes:

HI 365 fulfills the NCSU General Education Program (GEP) Humanities Requirement for 3 credit hours. Beyond the ability to answer the questions posed in the course description, by the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Better understand the human experience by interpreting events from the past in their appropriate temporal context. (Means of evaluation: readings, discussions, reading assessments)
- Become aware of the act of interpretation itself as a critical form of knowing in the Humanities as well as the variety of factors that shape how you, as an individual, view and interpret the past. (Means of evaluation: discussions, reading assessments, papers)
- Gain a familiarity with the practice of history; or the means that historians use to offer informed perspectives on the past as well as relevant debates about that past among historians. (Means of evaluation: readings, discussions, reading assessments, papers)
- Demonstrate your critical thinking skills by composing your own arguments based on analysis, interpretation, and critique, and using primary and secondary source evidence. (Means of evaluation: midterm essay and final paper)

In summary, this class will help you to refine your critical thinking skills, your ability to create and defend well-reasoned arguments, your aptitude to analyze primary and secondary sources, and your capacity in drawing your own interesting and valuable conclusions. Developing a richer understanding of the past provides us with a clearer and more interesting perspective on the present.

Evaluation:

History is a disciplined way of understanding our world as well as the record of the past. The goal is for you to learn to think historically by reading and writing historically. The assignments in this course will enhance your learning experience, assess your performance, and determine your final grade. **I will evaluate your essays on both form and content.** **Content** refers to your ability to integrate and analyze—not merely summarize—general themes and ideas as you fashion an argument from available evidence. **Form** refers to the coherence, logical and chronological, of your papers as well as your grammatical and citation proficiency.

Student grades are calculated as follows:

20% Reading Responses (In Class)
40% Midterm Essay (Take Home)
40% Final Essay (Take Home)

The grading scale for the course:

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|--------------|--------------|
| • A = 93-100 | C = 73-76 |
| • A- = 90-92 | C- = 70-72 |
| • B+ = 87-89 | D+ = 67-69 |
| • B = 83-86 | D = 63-66 |
| • B- = 80-82 | D- = 60-62 |
| • C+ = 77-79 | F = Below 60 |

In determining final grades, I reserve the right to award improvement in student performance over the entirety of the course.

Class Attendance & Participation: Regular attendance and informed participation in class discussion is required. You may miss two class meetings without penalty. Each subsequent unexcused absence result will result in a two-point deduction in your final course grade. Any student with more than four unexcused absences will receive a failing grade for the course.

Reading Responses: To ensure good reading habits and to facilitate our class discussions, you can expect up to twelve (12) unannounced reading responses based on the assigned material. These short answer responses will occur at the beginning of class and will cover the reading for that day. You cannot make up these responses if you are absent (without an official excuse), or late for class. I will drop your lowest response grade at the end of the course.

Midterm Essay – Take Home (8 pages): At the end of class on February 20, I will provide an essay prompt covering material and readings from the first half of the course. **The midterm essay is due via Moodle no later than 1pm on February 26.**

Final Essay – Take Home (8-9 pages): In lieu of a final exam, on the last day of class on April 23, I will provide an essay prompt covering material and readings from the second half of the course. **The final essay is due via Moodle no later than 1pm on April 30.**

Course Readings:

The following required texts are available at the University Bookstore, or other retailers including - www.amazon.com. Any edition of these books, hardcover or paperback, is acceptable. Please feel free to purchase used copies.

Cahokia: Ancient America's Great City on the Mississippi (Penguin Library of American Indian History), by Timothy Pauketat (Penguin Books, 2010)

Sleuthing the Alamo: Davy Crockett's Last Stand and Other Mysteries of the Texas Revolution (New Narratives in American History), by James Crisp (Oxford University Press, 2005)

Desperate Passage: The Donner Party's Perilous Journey West, by Ethan Rarick (Oxford University Press, 2008).

The Destruction of the Bison: An Environmental History, 1750-1920 (Studies in Environment and History), by Andrew Isenberg (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2001)

The Worst Hard Times: The Untold Story of Those Who Survived the Great American Dust Bowl, by Tim Egan (Mariner Books, 2006)

The Missile Next Door: The Minuteman in the American Heartland, by Gretchen Heffner (Harvard University Press, 2012)

A Note about the Readings:

One of the main goals of this course is to teach you how to critically read and interpret material relatively quickly. Critical reading is a vital skill that will serve you throughout your academic journey at NC State and in your chosen career path. You may not completely understand everything in one reading, but do not get discouraged. **Focus on identifying the author's main thesis, key themes, and arguments. What evidence and sources does the author utilize to support the claims he/she is making?** Together, we will strive for clarity and comprehension during our discussions in class. In addition, I am always available to you during office hours.

Schedule of Classes and Weekly Assignments:

PLEASE NOTE: This schedule is a proposed course of action, not a contract. Due dates, topics, and assignments are subject to change with notice.

Week One: Beginnings & Lay of the Land

T 1/7 Introductions

TH 1/9 John Coleman, excerpts from *Here Lies Hugh Glass: A Mountain Man, a Bear, and the Rise of the American Nation*, Hill and Wang, 2012 (see Moodle page).

Week Two: "...Print the Legend."

T 1/14 Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" (1893), Chapter 1.

TH 1/16 Patricia Limerick, "What on Earth is the New Western History?"
Montana: The Magazine of Western History, Vol. 40, No. 3 (Summer 1990) 61-64.

Week Three: Older Worlds, Older Wests

T 1/21 Pauketat, *Cahokia: Ancient America's Great City on the Mississippi* (Intro through Chapter 6)

TH 1/23 Pauketat, *Cahokia: Ancient America's Great City on the Mississippi* (Chapter 7 through Chapter 12)

Week Four: Contested Physical Places & Cultural Spaces

T 1/28 Michael Trujillo, "Oñate's Foot: Remembering and Dismembering in Northern New Mexico," Aztlán: A Journal of Chicano Studies, Vol. 33, No. 2, (Fall 2008), pp. 91-119.

TH 1/30 Heather Trigg, "Food Choice and Social Identity in Early Colonial New Mexico," Journal of the Southwest, Vol. 46, No. 2, (Summer, 2004), pp. 223-252.

Lecture: Juan de Oñate & the Acoma Pueblo Massacre of 1599, Popé & The Pueblo Revolt of 1680.

Week Five: Dreams, Discoveries & Meanings

- T 2/4 David Dzurec, "Of Salt Mountains, Prairie Dogs, and the Horned Frogs: The Louisiana Purchase and the Evolution of the Federalist Satire 1803-1812," Journal of the Early American Republic, Vol. 35, No. 1, (Spring 2015) pp. 79-108.
- TH 2/6 Sally McBeth, "Memory, History, and Contested Pasts: Re-imagining Sacagawea/Sacajawea," American Indian Culture and Research Journal 27:1 (2003) 1-32.

Week Six: Remembering the Alamo?

- T 2/11 Crisp, *Sleuthing the Alamo* (Intro through Chapter 2)
- TH 2/13 Crisp, *Sleuthing the Alamo* (Chapter 3 through Afterward)
- Lecture: Manifest Destiny, Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo of 1848, (Image: Westward the Course of Empire)

Week Seven: The Depths of Survival

- T 2/18 Rarick, *Desperate Passage: The Donner Party's Perilous Journey West* (Prologue through Chapter 15)
- TH 2/20 Rarick, *Desperate Passage: The Donner Party's Perilous Journey West* (Chapter 16 through Author's Note)

****Prompt for Midterm Essay provided at the end of class on February 20 and due no later than 1pm on Wednesday, February 26. Please upload your essay to the course Moodle page****

Week Eight: Through the Looking Glass

- T 2/25 Image Analysis – In Class Exercise (featuring the work of various artists)
- TH 2/27 Image Analysis/Documentary

Week Nine: All That Glitters Is Not Gold

- T 3/3 Kevin Starr, "Rooted in Barbarous Soil: An Introduction to Gold Rush Society and Culture," California History Vol. 79, No. 2, (Summer, 2000), pp. 1-24.
- Nancy Taniguchi, "Weaving a Different World: Women and the California Gold Rush," California History Vol. 79, No. 2, (Summer, 2000), pp. 141-168.

TH 3/5 Michael Magliari, "Free State Slavery: Bound Indian Labor and Slave Trafficking in California's Sacramento Valley, 1850–1864," Pacific Historical Review, Vol. 81, No. 2 (May 2012), pp. 155-192.

Week Nine: Spring Break!

T 3/10 No Class (Mischief)

TH 3/12 No Class (Mayhem)

Week Eleven: Lords of the Prairie

T 3/17 Isenberg, *The Destruction of the Bison* (Introduction through Chapter 3)

TH 3/19 Isenberg, *The Destruction of the Bison* (Chapter 4 through Conclusion)

In class: Last of the Buffalo, Albert Bierstadt – Image Analysis

Week Twelve: Claiming, Naming & Taming

T 3/24 Adam Wesley Dean, "Natural Glory in the Midst of War: The Establishment of Yosemite State Park," Civil War History, Volume 56, Number 4, December 2010, pp. 386-419.

TH 3/26 Jennifer Raab, "Panoramic Vision, Telegraphic Language: Selling the American West, 1869-1884," Journal of American Studies, Vol. 47, Issue. 2 (May 2013) 495-520.

Week Thirteen: Buffalo Soldiers - "We Can, We Will"

T 3/31 Gregory Paynter Shine, "Respite from War: Buffalo Soldiers at Vancouver Barracks, 1899-1900," Oregon Historical Quarterly, Vol. 107, No. 2, (Summer 2006), pp. 196-227.

TH 4/2 Alexandra Koelle, "Pedaling on the Periphery: The African American 25th Infantry Bicycle Corps and the Roads of American Expansion," Western Historical Quarterly, Vol. 41, No. 3, (Autumn 2010), pp. 305-326.

David McCormick, "The Buffalo Soldiers Who Rode Bikes," Wild West, Vol. 25, No. 5, (February 2013), pp. 36-41.

Week Fourteen: Dust in the Wind

T 4/7 Egan, *The Worst Hard Time* (Introduction through Chapter 10)

TH 4/9 Egan, *The Worst Hard Time* (Chapter 11 through Epilogue)

In class: View excerpts from PBS documentary, Ken Burns: The Dust Bowl, Episode 1 - "The Great Plow Up."

Lecture: John Steinbeck and *The Grapes of Wrath*

Images: Dorothea Lange – Migrant Mother and other selections

Week Fifteen: The Atomic West

T 4/14 Heefner, *The Missile Next Door* (Introduction through Chapter 4)

TH 4/16 Heefner, *The Missile Next Door* (Chapter 5 through Conclusion)

Week Sixteen: New Wests

T 4/21 In class: San Francisco 2.0 (HBO Documentary, 2015)

TH 4/23 End of the Trail

****Final Essay (Take Home) prompt provided on last day of class on April 23, with your responses due no later than April 30 at 1pm. Please upload your Final Essays to the course Moodle page****