Course Description:

This course focuses on the history the West. It explores the region, processes, and myths that have defined the West. Chronologically, this course is very broad in scope. It considers Native America, European exploration, contests of empires, American incorporation, and political and economic changes into the 20th century.

After 1850, we explore an era of consolidation and incorporation, when the U.S. surveyed a West that had only recently become American in name and worked to make it a West that was American in fact. One of the most diverse regions of the United States, the West is home to many peoples and many cultural groups. We will explore how people have made a living in the West, how they have formed communities, how they have struggled over resources and identities. From cowboys and miners to cannery workers and farmers, western people have very different stories to tell.

The West is also important as a mythic region and symbol. We will explore the significance of the “frontier” in popular culture and politics. Through documentaries, secondary monographs, and film, we will examine representations of the West and western people and analyze how these representations have changed over time.
**Conduct in Class:** Be respectful to your classmates and the instructor during lectures and discussions. Especially in class, please refrain from talking, texting, reading newspapers, leaving early, or any other disruptive behavior. Also, please be sure that cell phones are turned off. For further information on UWSP’s policies regarding student rights and responsibilities, see [http://www.uwsp.edu/admin/stuaffairs/rights/rightsChap14.pdf](http://www.uwsp.edu/admin/stuaffairs/rights/rightsChap14.pdf).

**Additional Notes**

- Any student who needs special accommodations in order to meet any of the requirements of this course should speak to me as soon as possible or contact the Disability Services Office, 103 Student Services Center, Voice: (715) 346-3365, TTY: (715) 346-3362, [http://www.uwsp.edu/special/disability/studentinfo.htm](http://www.uwsp.edu/special/disability/studentinfo.htm)
- Any instance of academic misconduct such as plagiarism or cheating will be pursued fully and aggressively.

**This course follows university practice concerning academic misconduct and plagiarism.** For the university policies on these issues, and a general understanding of academic policies at UWSP and for this course, please refer to [http://www.uwsp.edu/centers/rights/RRBOOKLET8-2005-06.pdf](http://www.uwsp.edu/centers/rights/RRBOOKLET8-2005-06.pdf).

Below is a rough outline of the grades for our course.

- Discussion, Participation, and In-Class Assignments = 10% of your grade
- Film/Book Reviews = 25% of your grade
- Short Writing Assignments = 20% of your grade
- Mid-Term Exam = 20% of your grade
- Final Exam = 25% of your grade

**Grade Description:**

- **A (95-100):** demonstrates excellent command of historical knowledge (ideas, names, places, dates, etc.) and an informed, thoughtful interpretation of that information
- **A- (90-94.9):** demonstrates very strong command of historical knowledge and interpretation
- **B+ (86-89.9):** demonstrates a good command of historical knowledge and some interpretation of that information; demonstrates significant preparation and thoughtful study
- **B (82-85.9):** demonstrates minimal command of historical knowledge; demonstrates minimal preparation for assigned tasks
- **B- (79-81.9):**
- **C+ (76-78.9):**
- **C (72-75.9):** demonstrates minimal command of historical knowledge; demonstrates minimal preparation for assigned tasks
- **C- (69-71.9):**
- **D+ (66-68.9):** demonstrates inaccurate historical knowledge or a general lack of information
- **D (62-65.9):** demonstrates inaccurate historical knowledge or a general lack of information
- **D- (60-61.9):** fails to answer the correct question or/and demonstrates little preparation for assigned tasks
- **F (60 or less):**
A note on attendance and participation: Your attendance is required. Mere physical presence, however, will not result in a high grade for participation. Attending class prepared to discuss the readings, offering thoughtful comments and questions, and engaging in *respectful* discussions with colleagues are required. If you are unable to meet these requirements for any reason, you must discuss this with me in my office hours.

Film Review:
Since the role of Western American History in popular culture is a key component of this class, we will watch several films throughout the course of the semester. I will offer evening screenings for these films. The evening screenings are required. If you have an unavoidable work conflict, please see me to make alternative arrangements. Watching the film with your colleagues will have the added advantage of a short post-film discussion that should help to launch your written analysis of the film.

Book Review:
As an upper-level history course, you must be able to understand, contextualize, and criticize a scholarly monograph. Since western history is such an expansive topic, you may select a monograph from a list I will provide in class. Your book review will need to go beyond summary. You should draw on other readings, lectures, and films to situate the book within a broader historiography. You must assess the significance of the book to the field, explore its main arguments, and examine the primary sources the author uses to support his or her argument.

Film Screenings:
We will screen a handful of films/documentaries over the course of the semester. We will schedule the out of class screenings in order to accommodate most students. Please make note of these times/places when announced in class. Out of class screenings are required. We will watch *High Noon* and *Lone Star*.

A Note on Readings and Course Prerequisites:

*Frontiers* is the central text for our class. It is a comprehensive overview of western history. This course assumes that you have basic familiarity with U.S. history. Please use *Frontiers* as well as other U.S. History textbooks to supplement your assigned reading if you are unfamiliar with a topic or historical event. Please see me during office hours for additional recommended reading if you need clarification or are particularly interested in a topic.

Howard Lamar’s *The New Encyclopedia of the American West* is another excellent reference book for this course. Browsing through the entries can be very helpful. Be curious and explore. The encyclopedia is available in the Reference section of the library.

Other reading will be organized by week and available through E-Reserves. This reading is marked “D2L” on your syllabus and will consist of important articles, book excerpts, primary documents, and other readings. You may access this reading either through our course page or through the UWSP library page.
Calendar and Topics:

Week 1: Jan. 25-27

Introductions and Themes of Western History

Reading: *Frontiers*, Preface and Chapter 1

Week 2: Feb. 1-3

Native America

Reading: *Frontiers*, Chapter 2

Week 3: Feb. 8-10

New Spain and the Spanish Frontier

Reading: *Frontiers*, Chapter 3 and D2L

Week 4: Feb. 15-17

New France and the Fur Trade

In – Class Screening of *Black Robe*

Reading: *Frontiers*, Chapter 5

Week 5: Feb. 22-24

Early British/American Expansion and Native Removal

Reading: D2L

Screening: *Lone Star*
**Week 6: March 1-3**
Overland Travel, Pioneers, Homesteading
*Frontiers*, Chapter 6; D2L

**Week 7: March 8-10**
Gold Rush and Manifest Design
Reading: *Frontiers*, Chapter 8 and D2L (Read only selection assigned in class)

**Week 8: March 15-17**
Extractive Industries and the Railroad
Reading: None; prepare for exam

*Mid-Term Exam* = March 17

**SPRING BREAK**

**Week 9: March 29-31**
Populism and Labor Radicalism
Reading: D2L

**Week 10: April 5-7**
The Social Safety Valve and Western Myths
Reading: *Frontiers*, Chapter 11

Submit Book Reviews (hard copy and turnitin.com) no later than April 7, 5pm: Office 473 CCC.
**Week 11: April 12-14**

Great Depression, Dust Bowl West

*Screening: High Noon*

Readings: D2L

**Week 12: April 19-21**

WWII, Internment, and the Militarization of the West

Readings: D2L

*Screening: A Family Gathering*

**Week 13: April 26-28**

Civil Rights and the Cold War in the West; Zoot Suit Riots

Readings: *Frontiers*, Chapter 13 and D2L

**Week 14: May 3-5**

Tourism and the West; The Frontier Survives

Readings: D2L

**Week 15: May 10-12**

Contemporary Western Politics: Sagebrush Rebellions, Environmental Activism

Readings: D2L

**Final Exam** = Thursday, May 20th 10:15am

Please note that the syllabus and calendar are subject to change; please check e-mail and our D2L Course page frequently.