

**History 216, Spring 1012: History of the American West  
Tues/Thurs 11-12:15, Hillcrest 103**

Prof. Kathryn Morse, x2436; [kmorse@middlebury.edu](mailto:kmorse@middlebury.edu)

Two offices: Starr-Axinn 240/Hillcrest 119

Office Hours, Spring 2012:

Tues. 3:30-4, Axinn 240/Wed. 1-1:30, Hillcrest 119/Thurs. 3-4, Axinn 240  
and by appointment

Office hours and other info also on web page:

<http://community.middlebury.edu/~kmorse>

**Course Description and Goals:** In this course we will focus on the history of that part of North America usually defined as the trans-Mississippi American West (with some consideration of the other side of that river as well). Though we will touch on earlier patterns and conflicts, the bulk of the course will cover the period from the mid-1840s to the mid-1990s (roughly the Alamo to the Rodney King riots). The central themes of the course include violence, conquest, inter-racial and inter-ethnic conflict over who gets to claim an identity as American and as western, and the role of western mythology in both western history and American popular culture more broadly.

**Assigned Readings:** The following books will be available at the college store. The books are also available at various on-line booksellers. All are on reserve at the Davis Library. There will be additional readings provided electronically as well, either on the web or on our class share folder through the classes server.

James Grossman, ed., The Frontier in American Culture

Karl Jacoby, Shadows at Dawn: An Apache Massacre and the Violence of History

Marilynn S. Johnson, Violence in the West

Katherine Benton-Cohen, Borderline Americans

Carter Niemeyer, Wolfers

Anna Deavere Smith, Twilight: Los Angeles

**Films:** Because a major theme of the course is the role of the West in American popular culture, students are required to see the following films in the course of the semester (and can see more if they want to): Stagecoach (1939); High Noon (1952); and Lone Star (1996). These three required films constitute basic research for the final paper. The class screenings are listed in the weekly schedule below, but students are allowed to watch them at other times if personal schedules conflict with screening times. The films are shown in chronological order to allow us to trace the development of the genre of western film, so it is to the student's advantage to see

them in this order, and in the weeks they are assigned. All of the films are on reserve at Davis Library, and many are available elsewhere as well.

**Requirements:** Students must turn in all required assignments to pass the course.

1. Attendance is required at all classes.
2. Reading and Films: Assigned reading is listed below in the weekly schedule. Students are required to see three films. Screenings are announced in the weekly schedule but students may see the films on their own at a convenient time.

Six graded assignments:

3. Topics/Questions drawn from High Country News (due Mon. 2/27 by 5 pm), emailed to [kmorse@middlebury.edu](mailto:kmorse@middlebury.edu) as a .doc or .docx with the file name Your Last Name\_HIST 216\_HCN Topics.doc(x)
4. Mid-term exam. An in-class, 75 minute exam is scheduled for Tues. March 13. This will be a closed-book exam.
5. Historical questions/annotated bibliography (due Apr. 13 by 5 pm), emailed to [kmorse@middlebury.edu](mailto:kmorse@middlebury.edu) as a .doc or .docx with the file name Your Last Name\_HIST 216\_Ann Bib.doc(x)
6. Film review (written paper), due either Apr. 6 or Apr. 27, emailed to [kmorse@middlebury.edu](mailto:kmorse@middlebury.edu) as a .doc or .docx with the file name Your Last Name\_HIST 216\_Film Reivew.doc(x)
7. Final film/history paper. A final 10-12 pp. paper, details below, due Friday May 11 at 5pm, by email to [kmorse@middlebury.edu](mailto:kmorse@middlebury.edu) as a .doc or .docx with the file name Your Last Name\_HIST 216\_Film Paper.doc(x)
8. Final exam, closed book, scheduled for Saturday May 19.

### **Course Policies:**

**1) Honor Code:** The honor code is in effect for all work in this class, and should be stated and signed on all formal written work (papers and final exam).

**2) Grades:** As the semester progresses, I will provide handouts and further information on specific criteria for grading on specific assignments. Final grades will be determined by the following percentages, though there is always room for adjustment based on extenuating circumstances: High Country News articles/topics/questions: 5%; Annotated Bibliography: 10%; Film Review: 20%; Mid-term exam: 20%; Final Paper: 25%; Final Exam: 20%.

### **3) Late Papers and Extensions:**

Each student may take two (2) “extension days” during this semester in this class to use or spend to extend paper deadlines without penalty. As a result a student may turn in one paper two days late without penalty, or both papers 1 day late each, to make a total of two “late days.” However, the student is responsible for NOTIFYING the professor when turning the paper in that their free

“extension days” are in effect. A day is considered 24 hours, and Friday-Monday will count as one (1) 24-hour period. The half-day addition: Students may consider a 12-hour extension a one-half (1/2) day extension.

Earning more extension days: Students may earn and bank additional extension days by attending approved events related in some way to history. One such lecture is listed below (April 12). Other history lectures may be eligible as well. The Hirschfield Film series is screening Meek’s Cutoff on Feb. 18<sup>th</sup> (Saturday)—another possibility. Students may choose to watch other westerns as well (with approval of the choice). In order to earn an additional extension day, a student must attend the event and email me a one-paragraph (7-10 sentence) reaction or reflection linking the event to some broader theme of American history or the American West or the practice of history (i.e. don’t just summarize the event).

**4) Intercollegiate Athletics and Other Activities:** If you are a member of a team or engaged in other campus activities, you may, at various times during the semester, have athletic or other events scheduled during our class times. Although **no other activity can require** that you miss class or other academic events, you may need to choose which activity (class or non-class) you would prefer, or have a responsibility, to attend. Those choices are entirely your own, and I will respect them as valid choices. However, be aware that according to college policy such absences are explained rather than excused. It is **your responsibility** to inform me of your schedule, what work you will miss, and how and when you intend to make up that work. I do not regularly check sports schedules or know team departure times, so it is your job to present me with that information, well in advance of the absence itself.

**5) Email Policy.** Students are welcome to email (or call my office phone) with questions at any point. Please be advised that I do not read and answer email constantly or immediately. I will attempt to return your email or call within 24 hours, if possible.

BEFORE you email ANY professor, ask yourself this important question: Is there ANY other way to gain this information or answer this question without asking a professor? If so, use that other method! NOTE: The above does not apply to true emergencies, such as those involving serious illness or loss. In the event of such an event, emailing a professor is always a good choice. I will respond as quickly as possible.

**6) Classroom behavior.** I expect students to treat each other (and me) with courtesy and respect. Although the classroom is open to vigorous and thoughtful debate, and to disagreement on topics under discussion, we all must work to critique each other’s ideas, and not each other as fellow students and scholars. If at any time you feel limited by me or others in your ability to express your ideas openly, please let me know in person or by email.

**7) Disruptive classroom exits:** Finally, unless you are experiencing a physical or emotional emergency, please do not leave the classroom during our 75-minute classes once we have begun

class. If you need to leave a specific class early, please let me know at the beginning of class, and sit near the door so as to minimize the disruption caused by your departure. and sit near the door so as to minimize the disruption caused by your departure.

### **8) Accessibility, Accommodations, Abilities:**

We all have varying abilities; we all carry various strengths and weaknesses. Some of these might even be “documented” with a place like the ADA Office. If so, please just let me know. With or without documentation, it is my intent to make our learning experience as accessible as possible. With documentation, I am especially interested in providing any student accommodations that have probably been best determined by the student and the ADA Coordinator (Jodi Litchfield) in advance. Please let me know NOW what we can do to maximize *your* learning potential, participation, and general access in this course. I am available to meet with you in person or to discuss such things on email.

The ADA Office is located at Meeker House 003. [46 Porter Field Road]  
 Jodi Litchfield, coordinator: 802.443.5936; [litchfie@middlebury.edu](mailto:litchfie@middlebury.edu)  
<http://www.middlebury.edu/studentlife/doc/ada/about>

**9) Intercollegiate Athletics and Other Activities:** If you are a member of a team or engaged in other campus activities, you may, at various times during the semester, have athletic or other events scheduled during our class times. Although **no activity can require** that you miss class or other academic events, you may need to choose which activity (class or non-class) you would prefer to attend. Those choices are entirely your own, and I will respect them as valid choices. However, be aware that according to college policy such absences are explained rather than excused. It is **your responsibility** to inform me of your schedule, what work you will miss, and how and when you intend to make up that work. I do not regularly check sports schedules or know team departure times, so it is your job to present me with that information, well in advance of the absence itself.

### Weekly Schedule of Topics and Assignments:

#### Week 1:

Tues Feb 14: Introductions and Themes

Thurs Feb 16: The West to 1848

Assigned Readings for class:

- 1) John L. O’Sullivan, “The Great Nation of Futurity,” United States Democratic Review 6:23 (November 1839), 426-30.

Online at: <http://faculty.txwes.edu/csmeller/Human-Prospect/ProData09/01ModCulMatrix/ModWRTs/OSullivan1813/OSul1839Futurity.htm>

- 2) John C. Calhoun and John Dix debate the incorporation of Mexico (in share folder)
- 3) Reaction to Calhoun's speech: "Calhoun's Speech on the Conquest of Mexico," American Whig Review 7:3 (March 1848), 217-230. Online through Cornell's Making of America Primary Documents website. Search for American Whig Review in Midcat under Titles (or by title under "Journals,") then select electronic resource: Making of America from Cornell, and find the issue for March 1848 and open this article.

### Week 2:

Tues Feb 21: Lecture: Migrations I: California: A mixed and sometimes violent world  
Assigned Readings for class: All in share folder in Feb 21 Subfolder: **Primary documents:** Excerpts from Louisa A.K.S. Clappe, The Shirley Letters: From the California Mines, 1851-52; brief excerpts from Spanish-language newspaper in Los Angeles, El Clamor Publico; **Three scholarly articles (read these efficiently, for argument and shared themes:** Antonia Casteneda, "Anglo American Stereotypes of Californias," (1990); Benjamin Madley, "Yuki Indians: Defining Genocide in Native American History" (2008); Tamara Venick-Shelton, "Squatters' Rights, Secession Anxiety, and the 1861 'Settlers' War' in San Jose," (2010).

Tues Feb 21: evening film: 7:30, MBH 220, Stagecoach (1939).

Thurs Feb 23: Lecture: Migrations II: Mountain Meadows and Rock Springs  
Assigned Readings for class: Mark Twain excerpts on Mormons and the Mountain Meadows Massacre from Roughing It (1872; Testimony on massacre at Rock Springs Wyoming (in share folder); excerpt from G. B. Densmore, The Chinese in California (1880)—all in Share folder in Feb 23 Subfolder.

### Week 3:

Mon. Feb. 27, due by 5 pm by email:

Brief statement of three topics/areas of interest and related questions drawn from reading of recent journalism (*High Country News*) on western issues and/or conflicts. Details in assignment handout.

Tues Feb 28: Lecture: Overland Migrations and Invasions  
Assignment: Briefly survey web page for Shadows at Dawn, found at: <http://www.brown.edu/Research/Aravaipa/index.html>

Thurs Mar 1: Civil War and Indian Wars

Reading: Shadows at Dawn, Introduction through "Los Vecinos," pp. 1-93.

Week 4:

Tues Mar 6: Civil Wars, Indian Wars continued

Reading: Shadows at Dawn, pp. 94-180.

Thurs Mar 8: Federal Power: Land and Indian Policy

Reading: Shadows at Dawn, pp. 181-end.

Week 5:

Tues Mar 13: In class exam, with focus on Shadows at Dawn, but covering weeks 1-4.

Thurs Mar 15: Myth and History: Examples

Readings: **Two** readings: Frederick Jackson Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History” (1893). On-line: <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/TURNER/>  
**Click on chapter I, which is the essay in question.**

AND: In Grossman ed., The Frontier in American Culture, Introduction by James Grossman.

Questions on Turner and Grossman:

1. What is Turner’s frontier? Where is it? What happens there? Why is it so important, so significant?
2. Who are Americans in Turner’s essay? What are their characteristics and qualities and where do those qualities come from? Who are the heroes of this story?
3. Why might Turner be announcing the end of the frontier? Why might that ending pose problems?
4. What role do Indians play in Turner’s history of the United States?
5. What are Grossman’s key arguments in his critique of Turner?

Week 6:

Tues Mar 20: Myths and Violence: Types of Western Violence

In Grossman, ed., The Frontier in American Culture: Richard White Essay

Thurs Mar 22: Myth and History—Themes for the Final Paper

Reading: In Grossman, ed., The Frontier in American Culture, Limerick Essay

\_\_\_\_\_Spring Break\_\_\_\_\_

Week 7:

Tues April 3: The Open Range: Cattle in the West

Reading: Marilyn Johnson, Violence in the West, Introduction and Documents on Johnson County War

Tues. evening April 3: Film, 7:30, MBH220, High Noon (1952).

Thurs April 5: Farmers and Ranchers: The Johnson County War on film

Friday April 6: Film review due on Stagecoach and High Noon (if writing on those 2): 5 pm, by email.

Week 8:

Tues April 10: Labor Violence

Reading: M. Johnson, Violence in the West, Ludlow Massacre documents

Thurs April 12: Labor and Nature: The Imperial Valley

No assigned reading. Assignment due Friday.

**April 12, 7:30, Dana Auditorium: Earn an extra extension day:** Annual History Dept.

Lecture from Former Middlebury President John McCardell: Charles S. Grant Memorial Lecture, Thursday, April 12, at 7:30 in Dana: "History Teaches Us to Hope: Reflections on Teaching and the Historical Profession."

Friday April 13: Annotated Bibliography on two chosen topics/conflicts and your historical questions about them. Due by email, 5 pm, emailed to [kmorse@middlebury.edu](mailto:kmorse@middlebury.edu) as a .doc or .docx with the file name Your Last Name\_HIST 216\_AnnBib.doc(x)

More details on assignment sheet.

Week 9:

Tues April 17: Race, Immigration, and Americanization

Reading: Benton-Cohen, Borderline Americans pp. TBA.

Thurs April 19: The Progressive West

Reading: Benton-Cohen, Borderline Americans, pp. TBA.

Week 10:

Tues April 24: Western Agriculture: A Brief Survey

Reading: Brief Excerpt from Carey McWilliams, Factories in the Field (1939); one other reading TBA (all in share folder).

Tues. evening film: 7:30, MBH 220: Lone Star (1996)

Thurs April 26: A Discovered Country: Western Tourism

Tourism readings TBA (relatively brief), in share folder.

Friday April 27: Film review due on either: Stagecoach /Lone Star OR High Noon/Lone Star, by 5 pm, by email.

Week 11:

Tues May 1: Japanese Internment

Read, Carter Niemeyer, Wolfer (pages TBA).

Thurs May 3: Killing Animals/Saving Animals: Wildlife in the Atomic West

Read: Carter Niemeyer, Wolfer (pages TBA).

Week 12:

Tues May 8: The Post-WWII West, continued: Blazing Saddles and Race

Read: Anna Deavere Smith, Twilight: Los Angeles, pages TBA.

Thurs May 10: Orange County and the Reagan Revolution

Read: Anna Deavere Smith, Twilight: Los Angeles, pages TBA.

Friday May 11: Due by 5pm, by email, Final film paper (details on assignment sheet).

Exam: Saturday May 19, 7-10 pm