SYLLABUS-HISTORY 3315: Spring 2010
THE HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN WEST

Instructor: Dr. Kay Reeve
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Office: 5102 SS Classroom Bldg.
Office Hrs: T &Th 10:30am- 12:00pm
And By Appointment

Contact Information:
Emails: For Course related contact, please use course email for contact.
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Class Meetings: Tuesday & Thursday 2:00-3:15pm SS 2035

Important Dates:
Last Day to Drop w/out Academic Penalty: March 5
Approximate Date for Midterm Exam: February 25
Spring Break: March 6-12
Last Class Day: April 29
Paper Due Date: (TBA)
Final Exam Date: May 4 2:00-4:00pm

Tour Texts:
Richard Etulain, Does the Frontier Experience Make America Exceptional? (Selected Essays)
Walter Nugent, Into the West: A Story of Its Peoples (Selected pp.)

Additional Readings: Primary documents, scholarly historical essays, and short stories posted on the GeorgiaVIEW course site. (The majority of the course reading load is provided an this on-line access form.)

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course surveys the history of the American West with special emphasis on the development of the Trans-Mississippi West from the early 19th century to recent years. The crucial influences of the environment, the interaction of Native Americans, Hispanics, Euro-Americans and other cultural groups, and the unique relationship of the region with the Federal government are explored.

In general, class will explore the history and cultures of the American West, with major emphasis on the region beyond the Mississippi River. The some literature will be utilized in the class. These stories are selected from works by 20th century authors who give voice to more recent interpretations of the sometimes over-glorified western experience. The stories reflect enduring elements and traits of the American West and its peoples. Students will receive the opportunity to historically contextualize the literature they read, and to learn how literature can reflect and interpret history. The reading load may seem heavy at times, but students are expected to be prepared for class.

Additionally, this course stresses historiography and a critical reading of literature as well as a mastery of basic historical content. It requires students to be able to learn from a variety of sources, to learn in class ad on their own, and to have the ability to recognize historical interpretations and “dissect” historical arguments. Be prepared to read and think – a lot. While the instructor hopes you will enjoy the class, it is intended to be rigorous, especially with regard to close reading and critical thinking. (Sorry folks, “it ain’t all Cowboys and Indians”!!)
COURSE CONCEPTS OVERVIEW:
The content and assignments in this course will explore:

- The major historical interpretations of the region and its importance in the history of the nation.
- The unique influence of the physical environment, and other elements that contribute to the West as a region or identifiable “place.”
- The broadly accepted "facts” of major developments that occurred in the region, especially in the 19th century, with a brief overview of 20th century developments.
- The myths and images that have shaped and still shape the American peoples' perceptions of the West.

INSTRUCTOR METHODS & STUDENT AIDS:

- The class will include lecture, discussion (both instructor and student led), and group activities. Not all classes will be equally divided between these methods.
- Maps and other visual aids will be utilized. These will be posted in the MAPS Folder on the course website, or otherwise made available on the site or in class. Use them!
- Most lectures will have an accompanying Powerpoint, but not all. PPs that accompany a lecture will be posted just prior to or following the lecture, to encourage old fashion note taking.
- General outlines for the material included in specific lectures will be posted farther in advance to provide students with guidance in grasping major terms, concepts highlighted in the lecture and discussion, and to help students connect lecture topics and the readings. These are study aids, NOT substitutes for notes.
- The readings assigned for each topic will be connected to the lecture through questions and discussion during class. Most documents & essay readings will have guide questions posted in the folder containing the readings.

OBJECTIVES: As a result of their study of the West through the course content (as outlined above) and participation in class activities, students should:

1. Demonstrate a mastery of basic facts concerning the history of the American West. (Exams, quizzes and other assignments)
2. Demonstrate an understanding of both the factual material and differing ways of interpreting it. (Class discussions, quizzes & activities, exams, paper.)
3. Demonstrate the ability to critically analyze material presented as "fact.” (All material.)
4. Demonstrate the ability to recognize and be able to analytically discuss varying interpretations of historical events or topics.(Focus of the term paper.)
COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

RESPONSIBILITY FOR COURSE INFORMATION: Elements within a course are subject to adjustments and changes. Students are expected to check the GeorgiaVIEW course homepage regularly (at least every two days) for any updates, changes, announcements, etc. In-class announcements, and the course site act as the major sources for course information. Announcements made in class are considered to also be FORMAL notice of any course changes, due dates, or course expectations. Changes will be posted in writing on the site as far in advance as possible, but students are expected to be aware of announcements made in class. Announcements in class and/or posted on the course home page will keep students up to date on pacing. Pacing always varies based on class participation and unforeseen events.

READING: Students are expected to do the reading assigned for each class. A Topics and Readings Schedule is posted separately in the same folder as this syllabus. The date that a topic is scheduled to be covered may change, but once the readings for that topic are posted in the folder, those will be the readings for that topic. Any changes will be minor (such as deciding to omit an assigned reading) and all changes will be announced and an “update” posted to be appended to the readings schedule.

FOR FALL 2010 - IMPORTANT NOTICE:
- The readings for some topics are being updated for copyright, clarity of image and other reasons.
- Not all readings are currently posted, and some currently posted in the topic folder might change following the update.
- Do not print out the readings beyond those in the Environment folder until given notice that updates to the reading for a specific topic has been completed.
- Updates for readings will be provided.
- All changes will be completed by Feb. 1st and a revised Topics and Reading List posted.

PARTICIPATION & DISCUSSION LEADERS ASSIGNMENT: All students are expected to do the assigned reading before the class meeting when it is to be discussed, attend classes, and participate in discussion and class activities. For each topic, a group of 3 students will be assigned to act as “experts” on the assigned readings. “Experts” will receive a grade that includes peer evaluation of the effort dedicated to the assignment. (Pull your weight!) This grade is equal to two readings quizzes added to your quizzes.

EXAMINATIONS: There will be a MIDTERM and a FINAL EXAM. (Part One of the Final may be given the last day of class.) The Exams will include multiple choice, short response questions, identifications and (a choice) of fuller length essays. All will include questions drawn from lecture, in class activities, class discussion, and the assigned readings.

QUIZZES: There will be 4 to 6 quizzes on the readings assigned for the various topics for the weekly meetings. They will include questions on readings already covered, and/or those to be cover that week. Some quizzes will be completed outside of class time. Most quizzes will be scheduled and announced at least one class period in advance, but the instructor reserves the right to give “pop” quizzes if necessary to assure student preparation for class discussions. There may be some other in-class writing assignments and group work that will be part of your quiz grade.
Grades for acting as “topic readings expert” will be added as additional quiz grades. You must attend class to take in class quizzes. Make-ups are allowed for documented medical reasons only.

**TERM PAPER:** The specific description of the paper is posted separately under Paper Instructions on the course website. In general, students will write a term paper that requires them to reflect on scholarly writing about a topic we cover in class. It will include 4 sources, one to two provided in class, and two to three scholarly essays chosen by the students. The readings, the literature, and the material presented and discussed in class will help set the essays in a broader context. The paper must be written using correct historical citation and writing style, as well as correct grammar. Grades will reflect the expectation that the paper demonstrate the advanced undergraduate level of the course with regard to written expression and analytical skill.

**TO BEGIN PREPARATION:**
On January 7 you will “draw straws” for a general topic you will write about. (These are all topic covered in the class.) On January 12, Dr. David Parker will lead the class in a helpful session on utilizing the library databases and other resources to access scholarly articles. He will provide other helpful “search tips” and point out some helpful sources on writing and citation style. (He is NOT responsible for explaining the particulars of the paper assignment itself. I will provide ample information during the semester.) This will be an invaluable session as a review, or for those who have not consistently used these resources. With these two session completed, you will be ready to start work on finding “outside sources” for your term paper. Additional information on due dates for the “steps” in completing the paper will be posted in the Paper Instruction Folder.

Special Arrangements: For students who are particularly interested in the connection between history and literature, you can discuss the option of including literature as well as historical essays in your term paper with me directly.

**ATTENDANCE:** Students who do not attend class, or who do not attend for the full scheduled time will lose points on their final average in proportion to the severity of the problem. Under no circumstances (except documented medical reasons) should a student miss more than three classes. (Tardiness count’s as 12 absence.) For each absence over three, there will be a deduction of a letter grade. Again, documented medical related absences are excused, as are “death in family” absences.

**COURSE GRADE COMPONENTS:**
- Quizzes, Other Assignments, Participation and Attendance = 25%
- Total of Midterm (25%) & Final (25%) Exams = 50%
- Term Paper = 25%
- TOTAL = 100%

**FINAL GRADE SCALE:**
- 100-90=A
- 80- 89=B
- 70- 79=C
- 60- 69=D
- Below 60 =F

**CLASS POLICIES:**
- Please turn cell phones off when you enter the classroom. No texting, etc. during class. If you can’t commit to be fully engaged in the class each day, consider taking another class.
• Laptops are to be used for note taking. If you are using a laptop you may be asked to “share” those notes. Be sure you are using the technology for class purposes, not for entertainment. Students who distract their classmates by using laptops to check Facebook, browse the web, etc., will NOT be allowed to use their laptop for any purpose, and may receive a grade reduction.

• Commitment to learning, preparation for class, thoughtful participation and engagement in the activities of the class, and respectful treatment of your peers is expected. You will be asked to leave the class if your behavior or attitude interferes with the ability of others to have a full opportunity to learn.

• There will be ample opportunities to do well on assignments; there is no “extra credit” and the grading scale is set, unless lack of attendance or disruptive class behavior lowers your grade. Tardiness to class (and leaving early) = ½ absence.

• THE INSTRUCTOR RESERVES THE RIGHT TO MODIFY THIS SYLLABUS AS NEEDED DURING THE COURSE OF THE SEMESTER.