

# HIST 6400: West, Nation, World

David Wrobel

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## Course Logistics:

Semester: Fall 2016

Time: T, 6:00-8:40PM

Office Hours: T, 1-4PM

Location: Bizzell CLC Conf. Room & WHC Classroom

Credit Hours: 3

Office: DHT 419; Phone: 405-325-6024



**Course Description:** “West, Nation, World” examines the North American West in the larger contexts of U.S. national and global history. The course reflects recent trends in the field of western history away from a singular emphasis on the region and its presumed exceptionalism and towards larger geographical and relational framings that help illuminate core themes such as empire and indigenous experiences, labor and migration, and environmental issues. We also need to acknowledge the deep scholarly roots of contemporary global positioning of the West. While the course focuses mainly on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, or first required course readings also address the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This is a colloquium style course that is focused on classroom discussion of required course readings, and comparative oral and written analysis of those readings and additional scholarly works. The course will also include videoconferencing with some of the authors.



**Course Objectives:** The course is designed to:

- provide a set of frameworks to think about the history of the North American West in global context and introduce you to a body of recent scholarship on the topic;
- introduce you to the wide range of approaches to researching, framing, and writing works of historical scholarship, through conversations with professional historians;
- help you develop your analytical, organizational, and prose skills (including rewriting) through the review essay format;
- provide preparation for students taking a comprehensive examination in western American, Native American, or environmental history.

**Course Structure:** During a good number of our sessions we will have the opportunity to conference with the authors of required readings, via the Blue Jeans system, and a couple of the authors will be with us in person. We will meet in the Collaborative Learning Center Conference Room in the Bizzell Library for our conferencing sessions, and in the Western History Collection classroom, Rm. 452, in Monnet Hall whenever we are not videoconferencing—this is all marked clearly in the Schedule section of the syllabus.

**Course Requirements and Grading:** Careful reading of all assigned materials, participation in class discussion, presentations on readings are all required. In addition, you will write three review essays (following closely the format in *Reviews in American History*). Each essay should be 2,500-3,000 words (10 pages, double spaced), should draw on three books (or two mammoth works). You should write on a minimum of eight books altogether, including at least two that are not required course readings. Regarding the two additional works: please select books you have not previously read. Re-writing of the first two of the three essays, based on peer and instructor feedback, is both permissible and encouraged. Each essay counts for 25% of your grade. Class discussion counts for the remaining 25% of your grade.

**Course Readings:** Required readings will include the following works + a relatively small number of additional articles that I will provide in PDF file format:

#### Global Wests

David Igler, *The Great Ocean, Pacific World's from Captain Cook to the Gold Rush* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

James Belich, *Replenishing the Soil: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo World, 1783-1939* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

David Wrobel, *Global West, American Frontier: Travel, Empire, and Exceptionalism from Manifest Destiny to the Great Depression* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2013).

#### Empires & Indigenous Experiences

Benjamin Kiernan, *Blood and Soil: A World History of Genocide from Sparta to Darfur* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

Anne Hyde, *Empires, Nations, and Families: A New History of the North American West, 1800-1860* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011).

Margaret Jacobs, *White Mother to a Dark Race: Settler Colonialism, Maternalism, and the Removal of Indigenous Children in the American West and Australia, 1880-1940* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009).

#### Environment

Ian Tyrell, *Crisis of the Wasteful Nation: Empire and Conservation in Theodore Roosevelt's America* (University of Chicago Press, 2015).

Kate Brown, *Plutopia: Nuclear Families, Atomic Cities, and the Great Soviet and American Plutonium Disasters* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013)

Donald Worster, *Shrinking the Earth: The Rise and Decline of American Abundance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

#### Labor & Migration

Kornel Chang, *Pacific Connections: The Making of the US-Canadian Borderlands* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

Mai Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton University Press, updated edition, 2014).

Deborah Cohen, *Braceros: Migrant Citizens and Transnational Subjects in the Postwar United States and Mexico* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011).

**Academic Integrity:** <http://integrity.ou.edu> Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language (Cleveland, 1964) states that plagiarism is "to take and pass off as one's own the ideas, writings, etc. of another." Plagiarism is easy to spot; more importantly, it is ethically unsound. Plagiarism on any work for the course will result in an "F" for the assignment, notification of the Student Conduct Office and Graduate College, and possibly an "F" for the class and further disciplinary action.

**Disabilities:** Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating his or her abilities should contact me personally as soon as possible so we can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and facilitate your educational opportunities. The Disability Resource Center provides support services to students with disabilities: see [www.ou.edu/drc](http://www.ou.edu/drc), or please contact Director Chelle' Guttery at [drc@ou.edu](mailto:drc@ou.edu), 325-3852 (Voice); or 325-4173 (TDD); or 325-4491 (Fax).

**Religious Accommodations:** It is the policy of the University to excuse absences of students that result from religious observances and to provide without penalty for the rescheduling of required class work that may fall on religious holidays.

**Classroom Etiquette:** Please, during class time, do not text, take phone calls, or use laptops, I-pads, tablets, or other electronic devices for anything other than class related purposes. Laptops, etc., may be used for note taking. Please do not arrive late for class, and do not leave class early without informing me of a special circumstance. Most importantly, please be constructive and supportive in your commentary on the work of peers, and respectful, congenial and collaborative in your interactions with them. You are part of a community of scholars and the privilege of membership in that community comes with significant responsibilities vis-à-vis personal comportment and collegiality.

### **Weekly Schedule:**

Wk 1, Aug. 23: I: Course Introduction; II: *The Great Ocean* (P&D)  
 Wk 2, Aug. 30: I: *The Great Ocean* (VC); II: *Replenishing the Earth* (P&D)  
 Wk 3, Sept. 6: I: *Replenishing the Earth* (D); Session II: *Global West, Am. Frontier* (P&D)  
 Wk 4, Sept. 13: I: *Global West, Am. Frontier* (C); II: *Blood & Soil* (P&D)  
 Wk 5, Sept. 20: I: *Blood and Soil* (P&D); II: *WHQ* Genocide Forum (P&D); Essay 1 (P)  
 Wk 6, Sept. 27: I: *Blood and Soil* (VC); II: *Empires, Nations, and Families* (P&D)  
 Wk 7, Oct. 4: I: *Empires, Nations, and Families* (P&D); II: *Empires, Nations, and Families* (C)  
 Wk 8, Oct. 11: I: *White Mother to a Dark Race* (P&D); II: Essay 2 (P)  
 Wk 9, Oct. 18: I: *White Mother to a Dark Race* (VC); II: *Crisis of the Wasteful Nation* (P&D)  
 Wk 10, Oct. 25: I: *Crisis of the Wasteful Nation* (VC); II: *Plutopia* (P&D)  
 Wk 11, Nov. 1: I: *Plutopia* (VC); II: *Shrinking the Earth* (P&D)  
 Wk 12, Nov. 8: I: Essay 3 (P); II: *Shrinking the Earth* (VC)  
 Wk 13, Nov. 15: I: *Pacific Connections* (P&D); *Pacific Connections* (VC)  
 Nov. 22: NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY  
 Wk 14, Nov. 29: I: *Impossible Subjects* (P&D); II: *Braceros* (P&D); Essay 4 (P)  
 Wk 15, Dec. 6: I: *Impossible Subjects* (?); II: *Braceros* (?); Essay 4, Essay 4 (P)

VC = videoconference; C = conference (w/ author); D = discussion (without author)  
 I = 6:00-7:15PM; II = 7:30-8:45PM

**Additional Readings:**

Week 2: Walter Nugent, "Comparing Wests and Frontiers," *Oxford History...* (1994)

Week 3: David Wrobel, "Considering Frontiers and Empires" *WHQ* (2015)

Week 4: Gregory Smithers, "Rethinking Genocide in North America," *OHGS* (2010)

Week 5: WHQ Forum on Genocide and Native Americans *WHQ* (2016)

Week 10: Nancy Langston, "Paradise Lost," *Environmental History* (2009)

Week 13: Mai Ngai, "Western History and the Pacific World" *WHQ* (2012)

Week 14: Grace Pena Delgado, "Border Control and Sexual Policing" *WHQ* (2012).

**\*Due Dates:**

Essay 1: Week 5

Essay 2: Week 9

Essay 3: Week 13

Essay 4: Week 15

\*Remember, you are only required to write 3 essays, but you have 4 essay options.

Essay rewrites are due a week after you receive the original essay back from me, and that will be one week after you submit it.