

History 250.2
229.2
Dee Garceau
Clough 301
T,Th, 8-9:30am
Theater

Theater

Cookie Ewing
Kennedy 105
McCoy

INTERPRETING THE AMERICAN WEST____

Course Description

In this course students will explore both the analytical and expressive possibilities of collaboration between History and the Theater Arts. Students will engage in primary historical research, using archival materials from the history of the American West. From these sources, students will develop a performance piece. Professor Garceau will guide students through the processes of historical interpretation; Professor Ewing will guide students through the processes of dramatic interpretation.

____The history of the American West offers a compelling blend of myth, scholarly debate, and evidence that invite further study. “For more than a century,” wrote Richard White, “the American West has been the most strongly imagined section of the United States.” Through oral and written history, songs, fiction, art, and film, the West has been identified with mythic themes of adventure and transformation. Once thought a simple tale of white migration westward, historians now recognize the West as a meeting ground of cultures, a crucible of intertribal diplomacy as well as encounters between Indian nations and EuroAmerican colonizers.

By studying in depth three of the most mythologized forms of migration --the fur trade, the Overland Trail, and the cattle drives-- students can appreciate the complexity of western history and search for its dramatic core. We hope that students will come away with new insight into the processes of constructing history as well as the processes of creating theater.

Course Structure

Class time will be spent in discussion of the articles, journals, and narratives assigned each week; as well as in scripting, staging, and acting workshops. Assignments will include written analysis of archival materials, in-class exams, production of scripts, and exploration of acting and directing; all of which will culminate in a dramatic performance.

Course Requirements

1) Consistent attendance and participation. Over two absences will lower your average by a full letter grade.

2) Journal of historical interpretation: Keep a journal of insights drawn from the articles and from class discussion. Identify key issues and larger themes; how does this evidence change your understanding of the American West?

3) Scripting Folder: Keep a folder of excerpts from the narratives that we have identified in class as good dramatic material. You will draw from this when scripting the performance piece.

4) Exams: There will be two written exams and one performance exam. The first written exam will be an in-class essay on the fur trade. The second written exam will be an in-class essay on the Overland Trail. The final performance exam will be the dramatic production which develops out of the whole semester's work.

Required Texts

Richard White, Its Your Misfortune and None of My Own; A New History of the American West (University of Oklahoma Press, 1991).

Coursepack: Available at the History Department office, Clough 308.

COURSE OUTLINE

Jan 14 Introduction to the Course

Jan 19 What's Theater Got To Do With It?

Jan 21 History, Memory, and Myth

Reading: Richard White, "The Imagined West," Its Your Misfortune a

Jan 26 Scholars ReEnvision the American West

Reading: Donald Worster, "New West, True West," pp.21-33.

James Axtell, "The Ethnohistory of Native America," pp.11-27.

Susan Armitage, "Through Women's Eyes: A New View of the West," pp.9-18.

Katherine Morrissey, "Engendering the West," pp.132-44.

Jan 28 Lecture
Introduction to the Fur Trade

Discussion
"Many Tender Ties": The Economics and Politics of Kinship

Reading: Sylvia Van Kirk, "The Role of Native Women in Fur Trade S

George Ruxton, "On Life Among the Trappers,"

Frederick Choteau, "Indian Marriage," p.130.

Feb 2 Rivalry and Alliance: Doing Business Across Cultures

Reading: Arthur Ray, "The Fur Trade as an Aspect of American History," pp.147-55.

Edmond Atkin, "Reasons for French Success in the

LeBorgne, A Crow Chief, "Tell the Hidatsas to Protect and Trade With the Whites" (1805), p.1.

Peter Skene Ogden, "Journal" (1822), pp.386-89.

Thomas Forsyth, "Observations Respecting Our Relations With the Indian Nations" (1831), pp.936-38.

The Fort Tecumseh and Pierre Journal (1832), pp.975-81.

J. Thomas Farnham, "An Indian Trapper," p.175.

Feb 4 Individualism and Community: Revisiting the Mountain Man

Reading: Richard White, "Trade With the United States," Its Your Misfortune, pp.44-52.

Charles Larpenteur, "Narrative" (1835), pp.70-74.

N.J. Wyeth's Instructions for the Fort Hall Trading Post (1834), pp.177-80.

American Fur Company Papers (1836), pp.943-46.

James Clyman, "Journal of a Mountain Man," pp.11-15, 26-28, 31-33.

Jedidiah Smith, "Diary," pp.19-22, 69-73.

Feb 9 Unforeseen Legacies: Game Depletion and Epidemic Disease

Reading: Colin Calloway, "Horses, Guns, and Smallpox," pp.37-42.

Lone Dog's Winter Count (1800-1871), pp.31-35.

**** Readings continue, next page. ****

Feb 9 Unforeseen Legacies: Game Depletion and Epidemic Disease **(cont'd.)**
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Reading: Saukamappee, "Memories of War and Smallpox,"
(1788), pp.43-7.

"I Bring Death': The Kiowas Meet Smallpox" (1839-40),
pp.50-3.

Thomas Farnham, "Smallpox Among the Blackfeet"
(1828), pp.265-66.

Chief Sharitarish (Pawnee), "The End of the Pawnee
Way of Life" (1822), p.238.

Osburne Russell, "The Final Rendezvous" (1843),
pp.396-98.

Feb 11 Process

Feb 16 "Medicine Fiddle" (a documentary film about Metis culture)

Feb 18 Reading: John Faragher, "Americans, Mexicans, Metis: A Community
Process

Feb 23 **First Exam**

Feb 25 Introduction to the Overland Trail

Reading: Richard White, "The Oregon and California

Glenda Riley, "The Specter of a Savage: Rumors and
Alarmism on the Overland Trail," pp.427-44.

John D. Unruh, "The Traveling Community of

Documents, "Oregon Fever" (1843, 1845), p.1.

Peter Burnett, "Propaganda for Oregon," pp.453-54.

March 2 On the Wagon Road

Reading: John Faragher, "Women and Their Families on the Overland Trail

**** Readings continue, next page ****

March 2 On the Wagon Road **(cont'd.)**

Reading: Keturah Belknap's "Running Commentary,"
(1841-43), p.194-200, 206-09.

Lydia Allen Rudd, "Notes By the Wayside En Route to

Sallie Hester, "Journal" (1850), pp.238-40, 243-45.

Rebecca Hildreth Nutting Woodson, "A Sketch of Her

Henry Bigler, "Journal" (1849), pp.172-80.

George Cannon, "Narrative" (1849), pp.218-20, 232-40, 253-54.

Jacob Stover, "The Pinney-Savage Story" (1849), p.291.

March 4 Conflict and Morality on the Trail

Reading: John Phillip Reid, "Punishment of Expulsion,"

28. John Phillip Reid, "Imperative of Harmony," pp.209-28.

Russell Bidlap, "Letters Home"(1849), pp.11-12.

Augustus M. Heslep, "Letters"(1849), p.15.

John Bruff, "Journal" (1849), p.38.

James Davis, "California Diary" (1850), p.39.

Celinda Hines, "Oregon Diary" (1853), p.93.

Tabitha Brown, "Diary" (1847), pp.52-56.

Thomas Farnham, "A Mutiny" (1849), pp.90-91.

Addison Pratt, "Journal History" (1849), pp.111-12.

Abigail Scott, "Oregon Journal" (1852), pp.143-44.

Thomas Reid, "Letter from California" (1849), p.1.

Alfred DeWitt, "Letter to His Brother" (1849), p.1.

March 6-14 **SPRING BREAK**

March 16 Letters From Gold Rush San Francisco

Reading: William S. Jewett, Letter to His Sister (1850), 1p.

Edward Austin, Letters to His Brother (1849), 2pp.

Henry DeWitt, Letter to His Brother, Will (1850), 1p.

Alfred DeWitt, Letter to His Brother, George (1849), 1p.

Charles Dulany, Letter to His Sister (1850), 1p.

Henry Murray, Letter to His Brother (1849), 1p.

Charles Tuttle, Letter to His Wife (1850), 2pp.

John McCracken, Letter to His Sister (1850), 1p.

Ann Booth, Letter Home (1849), 1p.

Jerusha Merrill, "We Are Quite Satisfied to Dig Our Gold in San Francisco" (1849-1851), pp.7-14.

John T. Rundle, Letter to His Sisters (1850), 1p.

John D. Mitchell, Letter to His Family (1850), 1p.

Johnathan Locke, Letters to His Wife (1849-50), 3pp.

J.K. Osgood, Letter (recipient unidentified) (1849) 3pp.

March 18 Process

March 23 Process

March 25 **Second Exam**

March 30 Introduction to the Cattle Drives

Reading: Richard White, "The Great Plains," Its Your Misfortune, pp.216-27.

George Duffield, "Diary" (1862), pp.592-95.

Charles Siringo, "Return to Texas, 1880," pp.324-28.

James Briskin, "How to Make Money Raising Cattle," (1881), pp.320-24.

Richard Allen, "Harvard Men in the Cattle Business,"
(1892), pp.183-92.

March 31-April 4 **EASTER BREAK**

April 6 Cowboy Culture

Reading: J.T. Armstrong, "The Big North," pp.36-39, 45.

Andy Adams, "Log of a Cowboy," pp.24, 320.

Ike Blasingame, "Dakota Cowboy," pp.205-06, 255.

Teddy Blue Abbott, "We Pointed Them North," pp.8, 35-6, 81-2, 89, 107-13, 141-43, 207-08, 230.

C. L. Sonnichsen, "The Code," pp.52-53.

Folksongs:

"I Ain't Got No Use For The Wimmen."

"Bucking Broncho."

"The Stampede."

April 8 Black Cowboys, Indians as Cowboys, and Changes on the Range

Reading: Kenneth Porter, "The Labor of Negro Cowboys," pp.343-57.

Peter Iverson, "When Indians Became Cowboys," pp.16-31.

John Clay, "End of the Open Range," pp.610-12.

Elsie Lloyd & Amy Chubb, Oral History, pp.2-12.

Catherine McCarty, "Her Cattlemen Neighbors,"

Folksongs: "Little Old Sod Shanty on the Claim."

"Woman's Reply to 'Little Old Sod Shanty on the Claim.'"

April 13 Scripting

April 15 Scripting

April 20 Scripting

April 22 Scripting

April 26, 27, 28: Evening Rehearsals, 7-9pm.

Morning class will be cancelled, unless needed for additional rehearsal.

April 29: Performance, 7pm.