**GENDER IN THE AMERICAN WEST**

**Introduction**

“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. In the mythic West, Europeans became American and Americans tamed a wilderness. Indians came on stage only when whites arrived, and women appeared as scenery rather than actors.

Once thought of as a masculine place, the mythic West has been roundly challenged by revisionist historians. The idea of the West as a place of transformation endures, but scholars now describe it as a meeting ground of cultures, a crucible of inter-tribal relations as well as encounters between First Nations and Spanish, French, and English colonizers, Hispanic and Anglo-American emigrants, Asian and European immigrants.

As such, western history offers vivid case studies in race relations, cultural brokerage, colonialism and conquest, and their relation to gender. So too, economic forces are writ large. The harvest of natural resources tied western locales to national and international economies. Gender norms took shape in concert with the expansion of capitalism in the West.

Finally, cowboys and Indian warriors as well as Indian and white women became potent symbols in American popular culture. Analyzing these images offers insight into the formation of national identity, and the rationales of empire. Exploring how Native peoples redefined such images, in turn, sheds new light on processes of syncretism and resistance.

**Required Texts**


Albert Hurtado, *Intimate Frontiers: Sex, Gender, and Culture in Old California* (University of New Mexico Press, 1999).


Coursepack: Required documents and journal articles, available online at Rhodes “Academic Departments,” History, Garceau, Public Folder, History 445 Folder.
**Course Requirements**

1) Consistent attendance and participation. Two or more absences will lower your average by a full letter grade, because it would be the equivalent of missing 2 weeks worth of classes. Consider it a standing assignment that you come to class prepared; that is, having done the reading listed for that day. Good discussion depends upon your preparation.

2) Completion of assigned work, on time. Late papers will be averaged a grade lower than their content.

3) Please use Chicago-style footnotes (or endnotes) in all of your written work for this course.

4) All work, unless otherwise indicated, is assumed to be pledged under the Honor Code. Plagiarism is grounds for an ‘F’ in the course. Plagiarism is the unattributed use of another person’s research, writing, or publication.

**Formal Assignments**

1) Lead an in-depth class discussion on one of the following books, plus articles listed that day:


2) A **preliminary bibliography** for your research project. This should identify primary sources and a few secondary sources. Due January 30.

3) An **expanded prospectus** of your research project. This should include material from the preliminary bibliography, plus a brief statement of the issues you plan to address, and an expanded list of the available primary sources. Due February 13.

4) An **essay based on primary sources** related to your research topic. This is an 8-9 page paper in which you develop an original interpretation, using archival sources only. Due March 14.

5) An **final research paper** based on your previous interpretation of primary sources, now situated within the context of relevant scholarship on your topic. This is a 12-15 page investigation of your topic, well organized and clearly argued. All papers should be in finished form. That means edited, footnoted, and proofread. Due April 23.

6) A 10-minute **class presentation on your research**, to be scheduled April 9, 16, or 23.

**Course Grade**

- Class Participation: 25%  This includes daily discussion as well as leading discussion on a book.
- Primary Source Essay: 25%  Includes preliminary bibliography and expanded prospectus.
- Research Presentation: 25%
- Final Research Paper: 25%
COURSE OUTLINE

Jan 9   Introduction to the Course

   Gender, Myth-Making, and Western Identities


   Susan Armitage & Elizabeth Jameson, “Editor’s Introduction,” Writing the Range, 3-16.


UNIT I: MEN, WOMEN, TRADE AND COLONIZATION

Jan 16     The North American Fur Trade

   Reading: Sylvia Van Kirk, Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur Trade Society.

   George Ruxton on “The Trappers’ View of Women” [Coursepack]:168-69.

   Osburne Russell, “The Final Rendezvous” (1843) [Coursepack]: 396-98.

Jan 23      Indians, Spanish, and Mexicans in the Old Southwest

   Reading: Albert Hurtado, Intimate Frontiers: Sex, Gender, and Culture in Old California, “Introduction,” and Chapters 1 and 2.


Jan 30     Americans in the Southwest: Prospectors and Ranchers

   Reading: Hurtado, Intimate Frontiers, chapters 4, 5 and 6.

   Susan Johnson, “Bulls, Bears and Dancing Boys: Race, Gender, and Leisure in the California Gold Rush,” Across the Great Divide, 45-72.

UNIT II: EUROAMERICAN MIGRATIONS

Feb 6    The Mormon Migration

Reading: Jesse Embry, “Motivations for Practicing Polygamy” [Coursepack]: 41-52.
Lawrence Foster, “Polygamy and Mormon Women” [Coursepack]: 298-310.
Henry Bigler, “Journal” (1849) [Coursepack]: 172-80.

Feb 13    Polygamy, Patriarchy, and Violence

Reading: Jon Krakauer, Under the Banner of Heaven: A Story of Violent Faith.

Feb 20    Gender at the Crossroads: Overland Travel, Freighting and Mining


UNIT III: CROSSING BOUNDARIES


Will Roscoe, “‘That is My Road’: The Life and Times of a Crow Berdache” [Coursepack]: 47-55.
March 1-9: Spring Break

March 12 Defining Moments: Race, Gender, and Challenge to Social Boundaries


UNIT IV: COWBOYS AND INDIANS RECONSIDERED

March 19 Anglo and Indian Manhood in the Wild West Show

Reading: Joy Kasson, *Buffalo Bill’s Wild West: Celebrity, Memory and Popular History*.

March 20-23: Easter Break

March 26: Perspectives on Native American Women in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century West

Reading: Lillian Ackerman, “Complementary But Equal: Plateau Women’s Status” [Coursepack]: 75-100.


April 2  A Closer Look at Cowboys and Ranchers


Dee Garceau, “Nomads, Bunkies, Cross-Dressers, and Family Men: Cowboy Identity and the Gendering of Ranch Work,” Across the Great Divide, 149-6


April 9  Women Ranchers and Homesteaders


Student Research Presentations.

UNIT VI: REPORTS ON RESEARCH

April 16  Student Research Presentations

April 23  Student Research Presentations

**Final Research Paper due.** Please bring a hard copy to my office by 5pm.

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