

Frontier in American Culture HIS 324-01

Fall 2007

MWF 1:00-1:50

MHRA 1215

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Phone:

Office Hours: MWF 11:30-12:30

And by appointment

Course Description

This course will focus on the history of the Frontier from early settlement through the closing of the frontier in the 1890's. Not only will we discuss the history of the frontier but the role that the frontier has played in the development of American identity into the present day.

Learning Objectives

Upon completing this course students will be able to:

- Identify and explain key periods and events in the history of the American Frontier
- Explain the complexity of the frontier and its importance in American culture
- Understand the importance of race, gender, class, region, ethnicity, and ideology in the formation of the idea of the frontier
- Explain the major developments and arguments of the historiography of the American frontier
- Use a variety of sources to study the American frontier as a place, time frame and idea

Required Readings

Available at UNCG Bookstore any bookseller you choose

Eric Hinderaker and Peter C. Mancall, *At the Edge of Empire: The Backcountry in British North America*, 2003.

Stephen Ambrose, *Undaunted Courage: Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson, and the Opening of the American West*, 1996.

Joy S. Kasson, *Buffalo Bill's Wild West: Celebrity, Memory and Popular History*, 2000.

Other reading Assignments will be handed out in class or on Blackboard and are listed on the course schedule

Grading and Assignments

First and foremost I do not give grades you earn them and I report them. I grade on the ten point scale with plus and minuses. Your grade will be determined by a number of aspects listed below. I WILL NOT ACCEPT LATE WORK. YOU KNOW THE DUE DATES THE MOMENT YOU RECEIVE THE SYLLABUS.

Participation: 20%

Midterm: 15%

Final Exam: 15%

Research Project: 30%

Response Papers: 20%

Participation: This grade is a mixture of your performance in class discussions, reading quizzes and attendance. Attendance is an important part of this class and should be taken very seriously. No student who has missed more than three days of class can make than a B+ on their class participation. Any student who misses six or more days will receive an F for class participation regardless of their performance when in class.

Other ways your class participation is evaluated

#1. Be respectful to all others in the class. This class is an open forum where all beliefs and opinions are welcome to be shared. This is important for any of us to take part in. Hearing and sharing of view points is a major part of higher education.

#2. TURN OFF YOUR CELL PHONES AND ANY OTHER ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT!!! Cell phones and laptops are not allowed in class. Any student using a cell phone to text message will be counted absent for the day. Turn off your cell phones prior to entering the classroom, this includes vibrate mode. If a cell phone does go off please turn it off as quickly and politely as possible. If it becomes a common occurrence it will affect the student's participation grade.

3#. Cheating will not be tolerated at any level. This includes plagiarism and copying other people's test.

Plagiarism Policy: The University defines plagiarism as "intentionally or knowingly representing the words of another, as one's own in any academic exercise."¹ (See the University's [Academic Integrity Policies](#) for further information.) All sources (books, articles, documents, internet sites, etc.) used in any paper or assignment must be properly cited or will be considered plagiarism and appropriate action will be taken.

Midterm and final exam: These tests are to rate your overall understanding of the material covered in class. The format of the tests will be partly based on your input and the instructor's preference. The date for the mid-term is provided on the schedule. The day and time for the final exam is set by the university. This test cannot be made up. If you fail to make an exam time without prior notifying me of the circumstances you will receive an F for the test.

¹ <http://studentconduct.uncg.edu/policy/academicintegrity/violation/plagiarism/>

Research Project: This assignment will be a project that each student does on a frontier topic such as a person, geographic region, theme, public history site, etc. More information on this assignment will be handed out in class and on blackboard.

Response Paper: We will discuss the details of this assignment in class. Basically I will ask you to discuss various reading assignments in a brief paper. The purpose of this assignment is for the instructor to judge your critical thinking skills and writing ability.

Course Schedule

Week 1 The Frontier

August 20: Introduction to the course and one another

August 22: Is the frontier and Idea or a place

August 24: The Wilderness in Western Culture, **John Winthrop Document**

The Frontier and Colonial Expansion

Week 2 Wonder, Famine and Conquest

August 27: At the Edge of Empire (AEE) Pages 1-26, **John Winthrop 1629 Document**

August 29: AEE 26-45, John Smith and the Jamestown Colony

August 31: **William Bradford Document,**

Week 3 The Early American Frontier in Film

September 3: Labor Day

September 5: Mary Rowlandson Diary on Blackboard

September 7: AEE 46-72, Bacon's Rebellion

Week 4 Defining America and its Frontier

September 10: AEE 73-97 The Move South

September 12 AEE 97-124 The Clash of Empires

September 14: Seven Years War, *Bougainville Journal* 156-185

Week 5 The Last of the Mohicans

September 17: *The Last of the Mohicans*

September 19: *The Last of the Mohicans*

September 21: Discussion and Last of the Mohicans Writing Assignment Due

The Frontier and Independence

Week 6 The Frontier and the British Problem

September 24: **Woody Holton, “The Ohio Indians and the Coming of the American Revolution”** *Journal of Southern History* (Aug, 1994) pp. 453-478

September 26: **Woody Holton, Continued**

September 28: The Frontier in the American Revolution

October 1: Midterm Exam

The Frontier and the New Nation

Week 7 Lewis and Clark

October 3: The Whiskey Rebellion and Shays, AEE 161-183

October 5: *Undaunted Courage*, 68-92

Week 8 Lewis and Clark Cont.

October 8: *Undaunted Courage*, 176-202

October 10: Writing Assignment on *Undaunted Courage* Due,
Tecumseh and the War of 1812

October 12: Andrew Jackson and the Frontier Myth

Week 9

October 15: Fall Break

October 17: Fall Break

October 19: Open Day, catch up and what not

Week 10 Indian Removal

October 22: Native Americans in the New Nation

October 24: The Removal of the Indians,
The Indian Removal Act

October 26: Manifest Destiny
“The Myths of Manifest Destiny”

The Frontier and Manifest Destiny

Week 11 The Push West

October 29: The Alamo and the War for Texas

October 31: The fur Trade

“George Ruxton Depicts Life Among the Trappers, and the Trappers’ View of Women.”

The Alamo Internet Assignment Due

November 2: The Gold Rush

“Alvin Coffey’s Experiences of a Black Forty-Niner”

“A Federal Agent Assesses Mining’s Impact on the Indians”

Week 12 Frontier Life

November 5: “Domestic Life in the Diggings”

November 7: Slavery and the Frontier and the Coming of the Civil War

“Freedmen and Slaves in Oregon Territory, 1840-1860”

November 9: Cowboys, the Great American West and Chicago

Week 13 The Indian Wars

November 12: Native American Society on the Great Plains

November 14: Custer’s Last Stand to Wounded Knee

“Custer’s Last Stand”

November 16: Geronimo

The Frontier and the American Mind

Week 14 Thanksgiving

November 19: Lawyers, Guns, and Money, the outlaw and the American West

“Outlaw Gangs and Social Bandits”

November 21: Thanksgiving Break

November 23: Thanksgiving Break

Week 15

November 26: *Buffalo Bill Part I, 11-160*

November 28: Buffalo Bill cont.

November 30: Turner Thesis

“Revisiting the Vanishing Frontier: The Legacy of Frederick Jackson Turner”

Week 16: The West and pop-culture

December 3: *Buffalo Bill Part II, 161-264*

December 5: **Research Projects DUE!!!!**

December 7: *Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Conclusion 265-276,*

Final Writing Assignment Handed out

Week 17

December 10: Last day of class

Final Writing Assignment Due

December 12: Final Exam 3:30-6:30