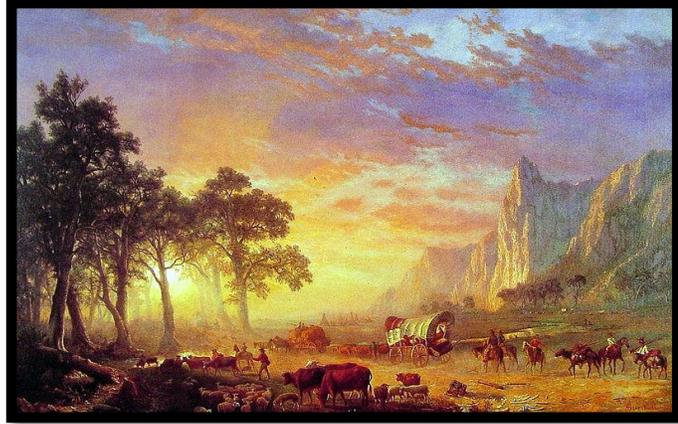


# THE FRONTIER IN AMERICAN CULTURE (HIS 324-01)

University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Spring 2014  
Tuesday and Thursday 3:30-4:45pm ~ Curry 238

**Instructor:** Ms. Sarah E. McCartney  
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**Office:** MHRA 3103  
**Office Hours:** Tuesday and Thursday  
from 2:15pm-3:15pm and by appointment  
**Mailbox:** MHRA 2118A



Albert Bierstadt, *Emigrants Crossing the Plains* (1867).

## Course Description:

This course explores the ways that ideas about the frontier and the lived experience of the frontier have shaped American culture from the earliest days of settlement through the twenty-first century. Though there will be a good deal of information about the history of western expansion, politics, and the settlement of the West, the course is designed primarily to explore the variety of meanings the frontier has held for different generations of Americans. Thus, in addition to settlers, politicians, and Native Americans, you will encounter artists, writers, filmmakers, and an assortment of pop culture heroes and villains.

History is more than a set of facts brought out of the archives and presented as “the way things were;” it is a careful construction held together with the help of hypotheses and assumptions.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, this course will also examine the “construction” of history as you analyze primary sources, discuss debates in secondary works written by historians, and use both primary and secondary sources to create your own interpretation of history.

## Required Texts:

Robert V. Hine and John Mack Faragher. *Frontiers: A Short History of the American West*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007. [ISBN: 978-0-300-11710-3]

\*available at the UNCG bookstore and at online retailers

Additional readings are accessible through the UNCG Library Databases and Blackboard.

\*This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. Changes in the syllabus or course schedule will prioritize effectiveness for student learning. Any changes will be announced in-class and on Blackboard.

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<sup>1</sup> James West Davidson and Mark Hamilton Lytle, *After the Fact: The Art of Historical Detection*, Volume I, 6<sup>th</sup> edition (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2010), xiii.

## COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to:

- Analyze historical duration, succession, and change across historical eras in terms of the meaning of the frontier in American cultural history from the colonial era through the present. [Historical Comprehension]
  - Draw comparisons across time periods and regions in order to define enduring issues as well as large-scale or long-term developments that go beyond regional and temporal boundaries.
- Analyze historical duration, succession, and change across historical eras in terms of human agency and the larger systems or structures in American frontier history from the colonial era through the present. [Historical Comprehension]
  - Demonstrate an understanding of major events and themes in the history of the frontier from the initial settlement of the Americas to the present.
  - Evaluate the interactions of diverse groups of people in the American frontier, paying particular attention to the factors of gender, race, ethnicity and cultural diversity.
- Use historical thinking to contextualize and analyze primary and secondary sources representing different points of view. [Historical Analysis]
  - Differentiate between historical facts and historical interpretations, acknowledging that the two are related, but that historians select facts based on their ideas about what is most significant about the past.
  - Analyze historical sources by evaluating their authenticity and credibility, and their social, political, economic, and cultural context.
- *Goals for Primary Sources:*
  - Evaluate different types of historical evidence documenting the American frontier including maps, paintings, films, documents, and such popular cultural inventions as the Wild West Show.
  - Apply the arguments and interpretations from assigned readings to analyze different types of primary source evidence in the context of the symbol of the frontier in American culture during a particular historical period.
  - Reconstruct the literal meaning of a historical passage by identifying who was involved, what happened, where it happened, what events led to these developments, and what consequences or outcomes followed.
  - Read historical narratives imaginatively, taking into account what the narrative reveals of the humanity of the individuals and groups involved--their probable values, outlook, motives, hopes, fears, strengths, and weaknesses.
  - Appreciate historical perspectives by: (a) describing the past on its own terms through the eyes and experiences of those who were there, as revealed through their literature, diaries, letters, debates, arts, artifacts, and the like; (b) considering the historical context in which the event unfolded—the values, outlook, options, and contingencies of that time and place; and (c) avoiding “present-mindedness”—judging the past in terms of present-day norms and values.
- *Goals for Secondary Sources:*
  - Evaluate historical debates among historians concerning the role and significance of the frontier in American history and in the development of American culture.

- Identify the central question(s) the historical narrative addresses and the purpose, perspective, or point of view from which it has been constructed.
- Compare and contrast central arguments of each reading assignment and synthesize major points of agreement or disagreement among particular authors.
- Distinguish between unsupported expressions of opinion and informed hypotheses grounded in historical evidence.
- Challenge arguments of historical inevitability by formulating examples of how different choices could have led to different consequences.
- Hold interpretations of history as tentative, subject to changes as new information is uncovered, new voices heard, and new interpretations broached.
- Conduct original research by investigating and interpreting primary and secondary sources. [Historical Research]
- Use evidence-based reasoning to interpret the past coherently while developing and presenting an original argument orally and in writing. [Historical Interpretation]
  - Support interpretations with historical evidence in order to construct closely reasoned arguments rather than opinions.

## COURSE POLICIES

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**Attendance Policy:** Class attendance is mandatory, and you are expected to arrive on time. You are allowed 3 unexcused absences during the semester. Having more than 3 unexcused absences will negatively impact your grade. Remember you will receive a 0 for participation on the days you miss.

- If you know you are going to be absent from a class, please notify me *prior* to that class and include the reason for your absence. Notify me of an absence as far in advance as possible, so that alternative arrangements can be made to compensate for the missed class and assignments, if necessary. If you are on an athletic team or will miss class because you are representing UNCG elsewhere, I may request a letter from your coach or supervisor detailing the days you will be absent. If you are missing class for a religious observance, you must notify me in writing *prior* to the absence. *\*Important – telling me you will miss class does not constitute an excused absence.*

**Electronic Devices:** Laptops and other electronic note-taking devices are permitted; however, I reserve the right to ban them individually or as a group should they be used for purposes unrelated to class, or if they distract other students. Use of electronic devices for anything other than class-related activities will result in deductions in your participation grade.

**Classroom Etiquette:** In the study of history, we often discuss emotionally charged topics. We will not always agree with one another, but interpretation is at the core of historical debate. The classroom should be a place where students feel free to express their ideas and perspectives and a place where we can disagree and challenge one another in honest debate. Thus, personal attacks and offensive language will not be tolerated. When challenging another's arguments, do so in a way that shows civility and respect.

**Assignment Policy:** Assignments will be submitted both in hard copy and electronically through *SafeAssign*. Assignments submitted late will receive a *fifteen point* deduction. Late assignments will not be accepted more than one week after the original due date. With appropriate documentation, I

may accept late assignments without penalty at my discretion. *If you leave an assignment in my mailbox, you should email me to let me know it is there.*

\* Should you be unable to print a hard copy to submit on the due date, I will accept an electronic copy of the assignment as a placeholder until the next class period *if it is emailed prior to class time*. I must receive the hard copy during the following class or the late policy will apply.

**Blackboard:** Be sure to check Blackboard often for course announcements, readings, assignments, and links to important websites.

**Electronic Communication:** The easiest way to contact me is by email. I will reply to all emails, and I try to respond promptly, so if you do not hear from me within 24 hours (48 hours during weekends), try again. Any emails sent after 6pm can expect a response the following morning. I will send out any class emails through Blackboard to your UNCG email address, so be sure to check it regularly.

- All emails should include “HIS 324” in the subject line.
- Emails should be professional and courteous. You should begin with a salutation and conclude with your name.
- *Emails sent from class during class time will not receive a reply.*

**Academic Integrity:** You are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity. It is your responsibility to avoid even the appearance of dishonesty regarding your work. UNCG defines plagiarism as “intentionally or knowingly representing the words of another as one’s own in any academic exercise,” and the university’s Academic Integrity policy is available online: <http://sa.uncg.edu/handbook/academic-integrity-policy/>. All sources used in any paper or assignment must be properly cited or they will be considered plagiarism. Any instance of plagiarism will receive a 0 for the assignment and may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for appropriate action.

## EVALUATION

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### Grading:

Homework (Timeline, Annotations, Discussion Preparation)	15%
Reflection Essays (2)	10%
Writing Assignments (3)	25%
Research Project	30%
Participation	20%

**Homework:** There will be several homework assignments throughout the semester. These assignments will serve as preparation for class discussion and course assessments.

- **Timeline:** Studying history is not simply about memorizing a series of dates; however, understanding chronology is vital to an understanding of history. As part of your homework grade, you will keep a timeline throughout the semester. I may ask to review your timelines periodically, so they should be kept up-to-date with the course material. You will receive instructions in class for creating a timeline.
- **Annotations:** As part of the research skills component of this course, you will annotate course readings throughout the semester. The process of citing a reading and writing an annotation will be modeled and discussed in detail during class time. The due dates for annotations are listed in the Course Schedule. Each annotation should be approximately 150 words. It should be typed and a printed copy should be brought to class. Be sure to include your name.

- **Discussion Preparation:** You may be asked to answer specific questions about readings or websites prior to class for the purpose of preparing you for the class discussion.

**Reflection Essays:** This course focuses on representations of the frontier in American culture; therefore, you will be asked to make observations about the idea of “frontier” in your daily life. You will write two 250-word essays over the course of the semester – one must be submitted before Spring Break (by March 11) and one after Spring Break (last class April 24). Each reflection essay should describe one representation of the “frontier” (advertising, film, books, music, speeches, brands, etc.) and explain the meaning and definition of “frontier” in that example. You will present your findings to your classmates on the day you submit each reflection essay.

**Written Assignments:** There are 3 formal writing assignments throughout the semester. Due dates are listed in the Course Schedule. Specific information about each assignment will be discussed during class as the due date approaches. All written work should be typed, double-spaced, in 12pt. Times New Roman font, with standard 1-inch margins.

**Research Project:** The frontier has generated thousands of myths and legends that have permeated American culture. You will be asked to choose one cultural representation of the frontier and examine it from both a popular and scholarly perspective. This project will include a short paper explaining your choice, an annotated bibliography, and a brief presentation to your classmates.

**Participation:** Simply attending class will not give you an “A” for participation. You are expected to come to class prepared to make comments and ask questions. You should contribute to each class period through discussion and active engagement with in-class activities. Using electronic devices for purposes unrelated to class will result in deductions in your participation grade.

### Grading Rubric for Daily Portion of Participation Grade

Grade	Criteria
A	Student is always well prepared for class; Student participates frequently in class sessions and makes relevant contributions to discussions; Student actively listens when others talk and “builds off” the ideas of others; Student always shows respect for classmates and instructors
B	Student is prepared for class; Student regularly participates in most class sessions and makes relevant contributions to discussions; Student actively listens when others talk; Student shows respect for classmates and instructors
C	Student is usually prepared for class; Student occasionally participates in class sessions and makes some relevant contributions to the discussion; Student listens when others talk; Student shows respect for classmates and instructors
D	Student is seldom prepared for class; Student seldom participates in class sessions and rarely makes relevant contributions to the discussion; Student rarely listens when others talk
F	Student is rarely prepared for class; Student almost never participates in class sessions and rarely makes relevant contributions; Student almost never listens when others talk

## COURSE SCHEDULE

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### Week 1 – Introduction

Tuesday, January 14 – Introductions

### UNIT I: DEFINING “FRONTIER”

Thursday, January 16 – The American Frontier: An Overview

Readings:

Bboard: *Frontiers*. Chapter 15 and 16

### Week 2 – Debating the Significance of the Frontier

Tuesday, January 21 – The “F” Word

Readings:

Bboard: Limerick, “Adventures of the Frontier in the Twentieth Century.”

JStor: Klein, Kerwin Lee. “Reclaiming the ‘F’ Word, or Being and Becoming Postwestern.” *Pacific Historical Review* 65, no. 2 (May 1996): 179-215.

Thursday, January 23 – Frederick Jackson Turner

Readings:

Bboard: Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History.”

[[link to the Project Gutenberg website on Blackboard](#)]

Riley, “Turner Overlooked the Ladies.”

### Week 3 – Frederick Jackson Turner’s Legacy

Tuesday, January 28 – Frederick Jackson Turner’s Legacy

Readings:

JStor: Limerick, Patricia Nelson. “Turnerians All: The Dream of a Helpful History in an Intelligible World.” *The American Historical Review* 100, no. 3 (June 1995): 697-716.

Cronon, William. “Revisiting the Vanishing Frontier: The Legacy of Frederick Jackson Turner.” *The Western Historical Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (April 1987): 157-176.

**Annotate one of the readings. Bring a hard copy to class.**

### UNIT II: THE COLONIAL AND TRANS-APPALACHIAN FRONTIER

Thursday, January 30 – The History of the American Frontier

Readings:

*Frontiers*, Introduction and Chapters 2-4

**Writing Assignment #1 due**

## Week 4 – The Emergence of the American Frontier Hero

Tuesday, February 4 – The Frontier Hero[ine] Emerges

Readings:

Bboard: MacNeil, “The American Frontier Hero in Mary Rowlandson’s Narrative”  
Rowlandson, Mary. “Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson.” [[link to the Project Gutenberg website on Blackboard](#) - \*Read Introduction and “The First Remove” through “The Fourth Remove”]

Thursday, February 6 – *NO CLASS*

## Week 5 – Colonial Frontier Society

Tuesday, February 11 – Consumers on the Frontier

Readings:

JStor: Kern, Susan. “The Material World of the Jeffersons at Shadwell.” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, 62, no. 2 (April 2005): 213-242.  
Perkins, Elizabeth A. “The Consumer Frontier: Household Consumption in Early Kentucky.” *The Journal of American History* 78, no. 2 (Sep. 1991): 486-510.

Thursday, February 13 – Violence and Negotiation on the Frontier

Readings:

JStor: Holton, Woody. “The Ohio Indians and the Coming of the American Revolution in Virginia.” *The Journal of Southern History* 60, no. 3 (August 1994): 453-478.  
Gorn, Elliott J. “‘Gouge and Bite, Pull Hair and Scratch’: The Social Significance of Fighting in the Southern Backcountry.” *The American Historical Review* 90, no. 1 (Feb. 1985): 18-43.

**Annotate one of the readings. Bring a hard copy to class.**

## Week 6 – Visions of the Western Frontier

Tuesday, February 18 – Expansion

Readings:

*Frontiers*, Chapter 5

Bboard: Jefferson, Thomas. “Instructions to Lewis and Clark.” [[link to the Library of Congress transcript of the letter on Blackboard](#)]

Library of Congress. “Rivers, Edens, Empires: Lewis & Clark and the Revealing of America.” [[link to the online exhibit on Blackboard](#)]

**Annotate the Lewis and Clark online exhibit. Bring a hard copy to class.**

Thursday, February 20 – Tall Tales, Legends, and Legacies

Readings:

JStor: Allen, Michael. “‘Sired by a Hurricane’: Mike Fink, Western Boatmen and the Myth of the Alligator Horse.” *Arizona and the West* 27, no. 3 (Autumn 1985): 237-252.

Aron, Stephen. “The Legacy of Daniel Boone: Three Generations of Boones and the History of Indian-White Relations.” *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 95, no. 3 (Summer 1997): 219-235.

## UNIT III: THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY FRONTIER

### **Week 7 – The People of the Frontier: Native Americans and African Americans**

Tuesday, February 25 – Native Americans

Readings:

- Bboard: Calloway, “Our Hearts Fell to the Ground Introduction.”  
 Flores, “Bison Ecology and Bison Diplomacy.”  
 Smithsonian Institute. “Tracking the Buffalo: Stories from a Buffalo Hide Painting.” [*link to the online exhibit on Blackboard*]  
 Oklahoma State University Digital Library. “Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties, Volume II (Treaties, 1778-1883).” [*link to the sources on Blackboard*]  
**Annotate one treaty from the Oklahoma State University site. Bring a hard copy to class.**

Thursday, February 27 – African Americans in the West

Readings:

- Bboard: Ravage, “Black Westerners in White Mythology.”  
 Riley, “Black Women in the West.”  
 Billington, “Buffalo Soldiers in the American West.”  
 National Park Service. “Presidio of San Francisco: The Buffalo Soldiers” [*link to website on Blackboard*]  
 Ball State University. “Buffalo Soldiers: African Americans in the Frontier Army.” [*link to website on Blackboard*]

### **Week 8 – The People of the Frontier: Laborers and Immigrants**

Tuesday, March 4 – Miners and Laborers on the Frontier

Readings:

- Frontiers*, Chapter 8 and 9  
 Bboard: Limerick, “John Sutter Prototype for Failure.”  
 California State Parks, “Sutter’s Fort Museum Collection” [*link to website on Blackboard*]

Thursday, March 6 – Immigrants on the Frontier

Readings:

- Frontiers*, Chapter 12  
 Bboard: Luebke, “Introduction – *European Immigrants in the American West*.”  
 University of Wisconsin, “Wisconsin Pioneer Experience.” [*link to UW site on Blackboard*]  
 Library of Congress. “California as I Saw It: First-Person Narratives of California’s Early Years, 1849-1900.” [*link to LOC website on Blackboard*]  
 Library of Congress, “Nebraska Photographs and Family Letters.” [*link to LOC website on Blackboard*]  
 Library of Congress, “Pioneering the Upper Midwest.” [*link to LOC website on Blackboard*]  
 Missouri Digital Heritage. [*link to website on Blackboard*]  
 Kansas Memory. Kansas Historical Society. [*link to website on Blackboard*]  
 American Heritage Center. University of Wyoming. [*link to website on Blackboard*]

**Choose and annotate two primary sources. Bring a hard copy to class.**

## Week 9 – Spring Break

Tuesday, March 11 – *NO CLASS*

Thursday, March 13 – *NO CLASS*

## Week 10 – The People of the Frontier: Pioneers and Homesteaders

Tuesday, March 18 – Pioneers

Readings:

*Frontiers*, Chapters 6 and 11

Bboard: Howard, William Willard. *Harper's Weekly* (May 18, 1889). [[link to article on Cornell's library website on Blackboard](#)]

The Oregon Trail® [[link for website on Blackboard](#)]

National Park Service. "The Oregon Trail" [[link for NPS site on Blackboard](#)]

PBS, "Frontier House Series" [[link to website on Blackboard](#)]

### **Writing Assignment #2 due**

Thursday, March 20 – Laura Ingalls Wilder

Readings:

Bboard: Wilder, Laura Ingalls, *By the Shores of Silver Lake* (excerpts). [[The chapters you should read are highlighted in the Contents on PDF pages 5-6](#)]

Jameson, "Unconscious Inheritance and Conscious Striving"

## Week 11 – The People of the Frontier: Creating Masculinity

Tuesday, March 25 – Cowboys

Readings:

*Frontiers*, Chapter 10

Bboard: Porter, "Black Cowboys in the American West."

Love, Nat. *The Life and Adventures of Nat Love, Better Known in the Cattle Country as "Deadwood Dick" by Himself[...]*. University of North Carolina, Documenting the American South. [[link to reading on Blackboard - \\*Read "Chapter VI" through "Chapter VIII" and "Chapter XIII". Look through all of the images included in the book](#)]

National Cowboy Museum [[link for website on Blackboard](#)]

Thursday, March 27 – Manhood and Leadership

Readings:

Bboard: Ball, "Cool to the End: Public Hangings and Western Manhood"

Moos, "Rough Riding Across America."

## Week 12 – The People of the Frontier: Entertainers and Artists

Tuesday, April 1 – Buffalo Bill's Frontier

Readings:

Bboard: White, "When Turner and Buffalo Bill Both Played Chicago."

Kasson, "Performing National Identity."

Buffalo Bill Center of the West. [[link for website on Blackboard](#)]

Thursday, April 3 – The Artist and Writer’s Frontier

Readings:

- Bboard: Lyon, “The Literary West.”  
 Etulain, “Chapter 3, Frontier Art.”  
 Hassrick, “William Ranney: A Painter’s Requiem to the Mountain Man.”  
 Remington, Frederic. Artwork. [*link to website on Blackboard*]  
 Catlin, George. Artwork [*link to website on Blackboard*]  
 Hudson River School. Artwork [*link to website on Blackboard*]  
 Remington, Frederic and Charles M. Russell. National Cowboy Museum.  
 Artwork. [*link to website on Blackboard*]  
 Remington, Frederic and Charles M. Russell. Amon Carter Museum of Art.  
 [*link to website on Blackboard*]

## UNIT IV: THE FRONTIER IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY AND BEYOND

### **Week 13 – The Frontier in Film and Television**

Tuesday, April 8 – The Western on Film

Readings:

- Bboard: Rollins and O’Connor, “Introduction: The West, Westerns, and American Character.”

***Writing Assignment #3 due***

Thursday, April 10 – The Western on Television

Readings:

- Bboard: Yoggy, “Prime-Time Bonanza! The Western on Television.”

### **Week 14 – The Frontier Past and Future**

Tuesday, April 15 – Walt Disney’s Frontier

Readings:

- JStor: Steiner, Michael. “Frontierland as Tomorrowland: Walt Disney and the Architectural Packaging of the Mythic West.” *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 48, no. 1 (Spring 1998): 2-17.  
 Francaviglia, Richard. “Walt Disney’s Frontierland as an Allegorical Map of the American West.” *The Western Historical Quarterly* 30, no. 2 (Summer 1999): 155-182.

Thursday, April 17 – Space: The Final Frontier?

Readings:

- Bboard: Primary Source: John F. Kennedy’s Moon Speech, September 1962  
 Launius, Roger D. “Heroes in a Vacuum: The Apollo Astronaut as Cultural Icon.”  
 Opt, Susan K. “American Frontier Myth and the Flight of Apollo 13: From News Event to Feature Film.”  
 Worland, Rick. “From the New Frontier to the Final Frontier: Star Trek from Kennedy to Gorbachev.”

## Week 15 – The Frontier in the 21st Century

Tuesday, April 21 – The Electronic Frontier

Readings:

- JStor: Wills, John. "Pixel Cowboys and Silicon Gold Mines: Videogames of the American West." *Pacific Historical Review* 77, no. 2 (May 2008): 273-303.
- McLure, Helen. "The Wild, Wild Web: The Mythic American West and the Electronic Frontier." *The Western Historical Quarterly* 31, no. 4 (Winter 2000): 457-476.

Thursday, April 24 – Reflecting on the Frontier

***Research Presentations***

**RESEARCH PAPER DUE: TUESDAY, MAY 6 BY 6:30PM**