

HIST 3398
Texas and the Southwest
College of Humanities and Sciences

Contact:

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Office Hours: TuTH 11:00AM to 12:15PM, and by appointment

Class Time: ONLINE

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The unique history of the American Southwest lays embedded in its geography and global history. It started as the seedbed of Neolithic American Cultures, and became an important crossroads of Indigenous American and European colonial ambitions in the 16th Century. The region has also been shaped by its origins in the hinterlands of Northern Mexico and absorption into the United States by the annexation of Texas and Mexican-American War. Even after its absorption into the United States the Southwest remained a frontier region full of danger and encounter. Railroads, the open range, and mineral speculation lay at the core of the region's development. The Southwest, however, largely remained a hinterland until the disasters of the Great Depression and Dust Bowl encouraged a rapid modernization of the American Southwest

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

This course is designed to develop students in the following skill areas

- To **interpret** and **apply** historical data and sources
- To **analyze** and **critique** arguments and interpretations of the past
- To **formulate** a clear understanding of the historical, geographic, and cultural factors that build American regional identities
- To **evaluate** the impact of the past upon the present, and **assess** the forces that shape the South, its identity, its politics, and its culture.

CLASS DIRECTIVES

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:

All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials. A copy of the University policy is available on the Sam Houston State University website. If you need clarification about what constitutes plagiarism, do not hesitate to ask or see me during office hours.

STUDENT ABSENCES ON RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS POLICY:

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the

observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Section 51.911 (a) (2) defines a religious holy day as: "a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20...." A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES POLICY:

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired. SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: No accommodation can be made until you register with the Counseling Center.

VISITORS IN THE CLASSROOM:

Only registered students may attend class. Exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis by the professor. In all cases, visitors must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. Students wishing to audit a class must apply to do so through the Registrar's Office.

CLASS STRUCTURE

Considering the online format, this course is designed to be an interactive directed readings seminar rather than a wholly traditional lecture course. The class will be broken into four units – one centered on each book. Along with the reading, there will be weekly tasks that need to be completed, all designed to help you contextualize and understand the readings, while encouraging students to engage with one another and the instructor on the material. In addition to weekly tasks, each unit will culminate with a book review assignment, which will always be due before midnight, on the final Friday of each unit. Grades for the course will be figured according to the following criterion: participation (completion of mini-lectures and note sessions), discussion boards, and book reviews.

Weekly Tasks:

Each week of the course will have supplementary material that will need to be completed by the end of that week, in addition to staying on top of the reading. **NO DISCUSSION BOARDS WILL BE ASSIGNED FOR WEEKS WHERE REVIEWS ARE DUE.**

These will include: recorded lectures (generally 10-15 minutes in length), downloadable PowerPoint presentations (these will complement and expand upon recorded lectures), other multimedia as deemed appropriate.

Discussion boards:

In weeks (as identified in the course schedule) where there is a discussion question every student will need to contribute. At a bare minimum, each student is required to produce their own response to the question(s) for the week and respond to at least two (2) other student responses. This is obviously purely the minimum, and students are encouraged to engage in the discussion boards as much as possible.

Discussion board format: Student answers to the main, instructor provided question are expected to be about 150 words in length. Replies to student contributions should be at least about 50 words in length. These are minimum thresholds, and – of course – responses may exceed that limit within reason. During discussion board weeks, initial posts will always be due by Wednesday, by 10 pm, unless indicated otherwise. Responses will always be due by Sunday, by 10 pm, unless indicated otherwise.

Discussion board decorum: This is a format for cooperative learning and debate. Disagreement over the material and how it is interpreted is not only welcome, but it is encouraged. That being said, this is an online class, not a Youtube comment section, debate must follow a set of rules. They are pretty simple. (1) Disagreement must be civil, and concerned only with course material. Injurious comments of a personal nature, insults, threats, etc. will **ABSOLUTELY NOT BE TOLERATED**. (2) Respect is the name of the game. Expect to receive it and make sure you give it.

Book Reviews:

This is the “meat and potatoes,” if you will, of the course. Each book review assignment will need to follow a format (provided below) and meet certain criteria (also provided below). All reviews will be graded according to how closely they meet format and criterion.

Book review format:

- All reviews need to be typed with one of the following word processor programs: MSWord, Word Perfect, WordPad, Google Docs (DO NOT USE NOTEPAD)
- All reviews must be submitted according to one of the following formats: MSWord File (.doc or .docx), Rich Text Format (.rtf), or PDF. If you use Google Docs, make sure to save your file as one of the aforementioned formats.
- All reviews must be typed in a 12 point font (Times New Roman, Cambria, Calibri, and Arial are all acceptable). Make sure all margins are 1 inch, and text should be double spaced. Indent paragraphs and do not insert an extra space between paragraphs.
- Reviews should be 3 to 5 pages in length. They may exceed that length, within reason, but should not fall below the minimum threshold of 3.
- Do not create extra headings to inflate the length of your papers. Simply provide your name at the top line of the first page.

Book review criterion:

- Book reviews should be thoroughly proofread and edited, and all typos, spelling errors, grammatical errors, and punctuation errors should be expunged.
- Book reviews 2 through 4 should respond to the stylistic notes provided in comments by the instructor. As the course moves on you should work to eradicate issues such as passive voice, tense agreement, verb agreement, pronoun agreement, word choices, and other stylistic issues out of your writing.
- Each book review must cover the following three areas (in your reviews you may use subheadings, if necessary, to indicate where you address each area): (1) Summary of the book, this should not exceed one page. (2) Tying the book into the historical context: this means integrating information from the book with material from lectures and notes. (3) Reflection: for this part you will draw on discussion boards. It is also more freeform, opening up for personal thoughts and opinions on the significance of the figure in question or that unit to a particular era of Southern History, or to Southern History as a whole.
- Citations: for information drawn from each biography you will need to provide a page number citation at the end of the sentence in parentheses. You may use outside sources to help you contextualize books, or if it is pertinent to the direction of your review. Full citations, however, of any outside source must be provided in either Turabian/Chicago Manual, MLA, or APA formats.

Midterm Journal:

This assignment will ask you reflect upon and evaluate the first half of the course. In this journal you will need to assess the value of the material presented, measure your progress in skills such as critical reading and analytical writing, and appraise each element of the course. What course components do you find the most helpful? What could be changed or tailored to improve your learning experience? Completion of your midterm journal will be figured as part of your participation grade.

DIGITAL OFFICE HOURS

Of course, I can always be reached by email; however, for those of you who would like to be able to have a more in depth discussion, and either live remotely or are unable to be on campus, I am more than happy to “hold office hours” by Skype. Contact me via email to arrange and schedule a skype session, and I will provide you with my skype address.

GRADES

All assignments and exams will be assessed according to the standard grading scale used by the College of Humanities and Sciences.

A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	<60

Final Grades in the course will be figured according to the following weights:

Book Reviews will be grading in ascending weight as the semester goes on. This is designed to reward your improvement over the course of the semester.

Book Review 1	10%
Book Review 2	15%
Book Review 3	20%
Book Review 4	25%
Discussion Boards	20%
Class Participation	10%

REQUIRED BOOKS

Pekka Hamalainen, *The Comanche Empire*
ISBN 13: 9780300151176

Book: Andrew J. Torget, *Seeds of Empire: Cotton, Slavery, and the Transformation of the Texas Borderlands, 1800-1850*
ISBN 13: 978-1469624242

Donald Worster, *Dust Bowl: The Southern Plains in the 1930s*
ISBN 13: 978-0195174885

Marc Reisner, *Cadillac Desert: The American West and Its Disappearing Water*
ISBN 13: 978-0140178241

COURSE SCHEDULE

Please note that the course schedule is subject to change, if necessary. Any amendments to the schedule of courses will be announced and distributed with ample notice.

UNIT 1: SPANISH, ANGLO, AND INDIAN FRONTIERS

Week 1 (Jan 17-21)

Weekly Tasks: Course Orientation

Reading Assignment: Begin Reading Pekka Hamalainen (PH)

Week 2 (Jan 22-28)

Weekly Tasks: Lecture and Notes – Introduction to the Borderlands

Discussion Board: 1st Tutorial – What is a Borderland?

Reading Assignment: PH, Introduction, Chapters 1-4

Week 3 (Jan 29 – Feb 4)

Weekly Tasks: Lecture and Notes – The Early Spanish Empire

Discussion Board: PH Question

Reading Assignment: Finish PH, Chapters 5-8, Conclusion

Week 4 (Feb 5-11)

Weekly Tasks: Lecture and Notes – The Comanche Alliance and Mexican Independence

BOOK REIVEW #1 DUE

UNIT 2: AMERICAN EXPANSION

Week 5 (Feb 12-18)

Weekly Tasks: Lecture and Notes – The Borderlands in Transition

Reading Assignment: Read Andrew Torget (AT), Introduction and Part I

Week 6 (Feb 19-25)

Weekly Tasks: Lecture and Notes – The Early Mexican Republic and Its Structural Weaknesses

Discussion Board: AT Question

Reading Assignment: AT, Part II

Week 7 (Feb 26 – Mar 4)

Weekly Tasks: Lecture and Notes – The War of Northern Aggression, 1846-1848

Discussion Board: AT Question

Reading Assignment: AT, Part III and Epilogue

Week 8 (Mar 5-11)

Weekly Tasks: Imperial Legacies in the Southwest Borderlands

BOOK REVIEW #2 DUE

UNIT 3: AGRICULTURE, ENVIRONMENT, AND POLICY

Week 9 (Mar 12-18)

Weekly Tasks: Spring Break

Reading Assignment: Read Donald Worster (DW), Introduction, Part I, Part II

Week 10 (Mar 19-25)

Weekly Tasks: Lecture and Notes – The Agricultural Crisis and the Great Depression

Discussion Board: DW Question

Reading Assignment: DW, Part III, Part IV

Week 11 (Mar 26 – Apr 1)

Weekly Tasks: Lecture and Notes – The New Deal in the Southwest

Discussion Board: DW Question

Reading Assignment: DW, Part V, Epilogue

Week 12 (Apr 2-8)

Weekly Tasks: Lecture and Notes – Capitalism in the Grasslands

BOOK REVIEW #3 DUE

UNIT 4: ARIDITY AND WATER IN THE WEST

Week 13 (Apr 9-15)

Weekly Tasks: Lecture and Notes – Environmental History in the Southwest

Reading Assignment: Read Marc Reisner (MC), Introduction, Chapters 1-4

Week 14 (Apr 16-22)

Weekly Tasks: Lecture and Notes – Making a Garden of Eden

Discussion Board: MC Question

Reading Assignment: MC, Chapters 5-8

Week 15 (Apr 23-29)

Weekly Tasks: Lecture and Notes – The Heart of America’s Unsustainable Empire?
Discussion Board: MC Question
Reading Assignment: MC, Chapters 9-12, Epilogue

Week 16 (Apr 30 – May 6)
BOOK REVIEW #4 DUE