



Independent Study | in Idaho

**Hist 462
History of the
American West**

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Course Guide

Independent
Study | in Idaho

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Hist 462 History of the American West

University of Idaho
3 Semester-Hour Credits

Prepared by:

Ken Faunce Ph.D.
Adjunct Faculty History Department
University of Idaho

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Hist 462: History of the American West

3 Semester-Hour Credits: UI

Welcome!

Whether you are a new or returning student, welcome to the Independent Study in Idaho (ISI) program. Below, you will find information pertinent to your course including the course description, course materials, course objectives, as well as information about assignments, exams, and grading. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the ISI office for clarification before beginning your course.

Policies and Procedures

Refer to the ISI website at www.uidaho.edu/isi and select *Students* for the most current policies and procedures, including information on setting up accounts, student confidentiality, exams, proctors, transcripts, course exchanges, refunds, academic integrity, library resources, and disability support and other services.

Course Description

Survey of major developments in the American West, from the Great Plains to the Pacific Ocean and beyond, including racial and ethnic diversity, environment, gender, politics, and economics.

12 graded lessons, 2 proctored exams

Students may submit up to 3 assignments at a time/6 per week. Before taking exams, students MUST wait for grades and feedback on assignments, which may take up to three weeks after date of receipt by the instructor.

ALL assignments and exams must be submitted to receive a final grade for the course.

Course Materials

Required Course Materials

Hine, Robert, John Mack Fargher, and Jon T. Coleman *The American West: A New Interpretive History*. Yale University Press, 2017 ISBN: 978-0300185171

Wagner, Tricia. *African-American Women of the Old West*. Two Dot Press 2007 ISBN: 978-0762739004

Nichols, Roger. *The American Indian: Past and Present*. University of Oklahoma Press, 2008. ISBN: 978-0806138565

Course Delivery

All ISI courses are delivered through Canvas, an online management system that hosts the course lessons and assignments and other items that are essential to the course. Upon registration, the student will receive a *Registration Confirmation Email* with information on how to access ISI courses online.

Course Introduction

This course focuses on the history the West. It explores the region, processes, and myths that have defined the West. Chronologically, this course is very broad in scope. It considers Native America, European exploration, contests of empires, American incorporation, and political and economic changes into the 20th century.

After 1850, we explore an era of consolidation and incorporation, when the U.S. surveyed a West that had only recently become American in name and worked to make it a West that was American in fact. One of the most diverse regions of the United States, the West is home to many peoples and many cultural groups. We will explore how people have made a living in the West, how they have formed communities, how they have struggled over resources and identities. From cowboys and miners to cannery workers and farmers, western people have very different stories to tell.

The West is also important as a mythic region and symbol. We will explore the significance of the “frontier” in popular culture and politics. Through documentaries, secondary monographs, and film, we will examine representations of the West and western people and analyze how these representations have changed over time.

Course Objectives

- 1) Students will be able to analyze the events that shaped the American West. Students will use primary documents, textbooks, monographs, and visual and cultural sources such as film, music, the visual arts, and material culture to address the themes of the course.
- 2) The student will work (reading, researching and responding to essay questions) to develop their historical skills.
- 3) The student will use critical and analytic thinking to deploy evidence in the development of a historical argument commensurate with the level of a 400-level course.

Lessons

Overview:

Each lesson may include the following components:

- Lesson objectives
- Reading assignment
- Important terms
- Introductory lecture
- Written assignment

Study Hints:

- Keep a copy of every lesson submitted.
- Complete all assigned readings.
- When writing essays, be sure you answer all questions presented.
- Set a schedule allowing for completion of the course one month prior to your desired deadline. (An Assignment Submission Log is provided for this purpose.)
- Web pages and URL links in the World Wide Web are continuously changing. Contact your instructor if you find a broken Web page or URL.

Exams

- You must wait for grades and comments on assignments before taking subsequent exams.
- For your instructor's exam guidelines, refer to the **Course Rules** in Canvas.

Refer to *Grading* for specific information on assignment/exam points and percentages.

Grading

The course grade will be based upon the following considerations:

| Lesson | Points | Percentage |
|-----------|--------|------------|
| Lesson 1 | 25 | 5% |
| Lesson 2 | 25 | 5% |
| Lesson 3 | 25 | 5% |
| Lesson 4 | 25 | 5% |
| Lesson 5 | 25 | 5% |
| Lesson 6 | 25 | 5% |
| Lesson 7 | 25 | 5% |
| Lesson 8 | 25 | 5% |
| Lesson 9 | 25 | 5% |
| Lesson 10 | 25 | 5% |
| Lesson 11 | 25 | 5% |
| Lesson 12 | 25 | 5% |
| Total | 300 | 60% |

| Exam | Points | Percentage |
|--------|--------|------------|
| Exam 1 | 100 | 20% |
| Exam 2 | 100 | 20% |
| Total | 200 | 40% |

A 500-450

B 449-400

C 399-350

D 349-300

F 299 and below

The final course grade is issued after all lessons and exams have been graded.

Acts of academic dishonesty, including cheating or plagiarism are considered a very serious transgression and may result in a grade of F for the course.

About the Course Developer

Your course developer is Kenneth Faunce, an Adjunct Professor of History and American Studies at the University of Idaho. He received his Ph.D. in History and Historical Archaeology from the University of Idaho in 2000. He has taught a variety of courses at the University of Idaho and Washington State University in History, American Studies, and Anthropology. Before coming to the University of Idaho, he worked for the federal government for several years as an archaeologist and historian.

Contacting Your Instructor

Instructor contact information is posted on your Canvas site under *Course Rules*.

Assignment Submission Log

Hine, Robert, John Mack Fargher, and Jon T. Coleman *The American West: A New Interpretive History*. Yale University Press, 2017 ISBN: 978-0300185171

Wagner, Tricia. *African-American Women of the Old West*. Two Dot Press 2007 ISBN: 978-0762739004

Nichols, Roger. *The American Indian: Past and Present*. University of Oklahoma Press, 2008. ISBN: 978-0806138565

| Lesson | Chapter/Reading | Written Assignment | Date Submitted | Grade Received |
|-----------------------------------|---|--------------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1 | Hine: Ch. 1 Wagner: The Open Hand Nichols: Ch. 1 | 2 Essays | | |
| 2 | Hine: Ch. 2 Wagner: A Force to Be Dealt With Nichols: Ch. 2 | 2 Essays | | |
| 3 | Hine: Ch. 3 Wagner: The Complete Instructor Nichols: Ch. 3 | 2 Essays | | |
| 4 | Hine: Ch. 4 Wagner: Home Sweet Home Nichols: Ch. 5 | 2 Essays | | |
| 5 | Hine: Ch. 5 Wagner: Free At Last Nichols: Ch. 10 | 2 Essays | | |
| 6 | Hine: Ch. 6 Wagner: The Voice of Reason Nichols: Ch. 11 | 2 Essays | | |
| It is time to take Exam 1. | | | | |
| 7 | Hine: Ch. 7 Nichols: Ch. 12 | 2 Essays | | |
| 8 | Hine: Ch.8 Nichols: Ch. 13 | 2 Essays | | |

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------|--|--|
| 9 | Hine: Ch. 9 Nichols: Ch. 17 | 2 Essays | | |
| 10 | Hine: Ch. 10 Nichols: Ch. 18 | 2 Essays | | |
| 11 | Hine: Ch. 11 Nichols: Ch. 21-22 | 2 Essays | | |
| 12 | Hine: Ch. 12 Nichols: Ch. 22 | 2 Essays | | |
| It is time to take Exam 2. | | | | |

Lesson 1 Native America

Lesson Objectives

- Understand the boundaries of the American West and its dimensions.
- Discuss the people of the American West and their connection to the land.
- Understand the role of Native peoples of the area.
- Explore the variety of Native cultures of the American West.

Reading Assignment

Hine: Ch. 1 "A New World Begins"

Wagner: "The Open Hand"

Nichols: Ch. 1 "How Indians Got Red"

Important Terms

| | |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| Hernan Cortez | Aztec |
| Cabeza de Vaca | New Spain |
| Bartolome de Las Casas | Columbian Exchange |
| Northwest Passage | Smallpox |

Introductory Lecture

There are a large number of Native American cultures across the American West. After 1492 European exploration and colonization of the Americas had a major impact how the Old and New Worlds perceived themselves. One of the first contacts occurred when Juan Ponce de León a Spanish conquistador landed in Florida in April 1513. He was later followed by Pánfilo de Narváez in 1528 and Hernando de Soto in 1539. The following European colonists rationalized their expansion of empire by stating they were saving a barbaric, pagan world with Christianity. The Spanish colonization of the Americas resulted in the forced conversions to Catholicism of the indigenous population in the areas they conquered. Catholicism absorbed and reflected indigenous beliefs during the colonial period, which changed religion in New Spain.

From the 16th through the 19th centuries, the population of Native Americans declined due to European epidemic diseases, violence and warfare. Also, displacement from their lands; internal warfare, enslavement, and intermarriage. American natives lacked immunity to new diseases brought from Europe, and with the rapid declines of some populations Native Americans sometimes re-organized to form new cultural groups, such the Mission Indians of Alta California. The exact numbers of Native Americans living in what became the United States before the arrival of the European is difficult to estimate. Estimates range from 7 million people to a high of 18 million. By 1800, the Native population of the United States had declined to approximately 600,000. Chicken pox and measles, rarely fatal among Europeans by this time, could be deadly to Native Americans. Smallpox epidemics often immediately followed European exploration and destroyed entire villages. Anywhere from 30% to 70% of Native populations died after first contact with Europeans. Within a 100 years after the arrival of the Spanish large disease epidemics depopulated large parts of the eastern United States in the 15th century. For example, a smallpox epidemic in 1618–1619, killed 90% of the Native Americans in the Massachusetts Bay area. By 1679 the lands of the western Iroquois were impacted, and it was carried by Mohawk and others on the western trading routes. The high rate of fatalities led to a breakdowns in Native American societies and disrupted the generational exchange of culture.

Trade routes, territories, and tribal confederations were all disrupted due to European contact. For example, in the mid-17th century the Iroquois and the [Hurons](#) fought the northern Algonquians, and their French allies in the Beaver Wars over the fur trade between. During the war the Iroquois destroyed several large tribal confederacies—including the Huron, Neutral, Erie, Susquehannock, and Shawnee, which made them dominant in the region. Between 1754 and 1763, several Native American tribes were involved in the French and Indian War (Seven Years' War). A larger number of tribes fought on the French side to stop British expansion. Those involved in the fur trade in the northern areas tended to ally with French forces. The British made fewer allies, but they were joined by some tribes in order to preserve their territories. This war changed tribal boundaries and impacted Native American groups across North America. Another major change was the Columbian Exchange. Animals, insects, and plants were carried from one continent to the other, both deliberately and by chance. Sheep, pigs, horses, and cattle were all Old World animals introduced to Native Americans who had never seen them before. In the 16th century, Spaniards and other Europeans brought horses to Mexico. Some horses escaped and began to breed and increase their numbers in the wild. Native Americans benefited from the reintroduction of horses, as they adopted the use of the animals, which changed their cultures in very substantial ways.

By the mid-18th century horses entered the Great Plains from the Southwest via trade with the Spanish and the expansion of herds of escaped animals. Also, guns entered the Plains due to the fur trade. Plains peoples quickly combined horses and guns to their advantage. Horses allowed mounted groups to keep pace with the region's large buffalo herds and thereby support themselves on the grasslands. Most hunters chose to use bows and arrows in the mounted hunt, since they were more accurate than early guns. However, as firearms became more accurate, they were quickly adopted. As tribes became more reliant on hunting with horses, they adjusted their lifestyle to match that of their primary food source, the buffalo. The largest bands or tribes on the plains came together only in late spring and summer. During the remainder of the year, the buffalo dispersed into smaller herds, and the nomadic tribes and bands followed suit. This seasonal round is illustrated by the Arikara, who planted crops in the spring, hunted during the summer, and returned to their villages in the autumn to harvest. They then moved to winter camps in wooded bottomlands, which provided shelter from winter storms. Dogs continued to be used as draft animals on the plains for short-distance tasks such as hauling water and firewood as horses were considered too valuable for these activities.

In the Southwest most peoples engaged in both farming and hunting and gathering; the degree to which each group relied upon domesticated or wild foods depended on the group's proximity to water. A number of domesticated resources included corn (maize), beans, squash, cotton, turkeys, and dogs. During the period of Spanish colonization, horses, burros, and sheep were added to the animals raised, and new varieties of beans, plus wheat, melons, apricots, peaches, and other crops were grown. Most groups dealt with the desert environment by occupying sites on waterways, which ranged from large permanent rivers such as the Colorado, through secondary streams, to washes or gullies that channeled seasonal rainfall but were dry most of the year. Precipitation was unpredictable and fell in just a few major rains each year, so many groups to rely on irrigation. While settlements along major waterways relied almost entirely on agriculture for food, groups with limited access to water used farming to supplement hunting and gathering, relying on wild foods during much of the year.

The traditional Northwest Coast economy was complex with an important distinction being the highly efficient use of natural resources. Aquatic resources were bountiful and included herring, oil-rich candlefish (eulachon), smelt, cod, halibut, mollusks, five species of salmon, and gray whales.

Generally the important species for preservation for winter stores were the pink and the chum salmon. Because these species ceased to feed for some time before entering fresh water, their flesh had less fat and when smoked and dried would keep for a long period of time. Other salmon species, such as sockeye, coho, and chinook or king salmon, were eaten immediately or dried and kept for a short period, but their high fat content caused the meat to spoil relatively quickly even when dried. In the spring other fish became available: herring came in to spawn in coves; candlefish entered certain rivers; and, farther south, smelt spawned on sandy beaches in summer. Native people also went to sea to hunt marine mammals and to fish for offshore species such as halibut. Water transport was highly important in the region for subsistence and as a way to effect trade between tribes and later with fur traders. All groups made efficient dugout canoes, which varied depending on the group or region. Watercraft were made for different purposes; for instance, large reinforced vessels were used to move people and cargo, while shorter, narrower craft were used for sea mammal hunting. After European explorers reached the West Coast in the 1770s, smallpox rapidly killed at least 30% of Northwest Coast Native Americans. For the next 80 to 100 years, smallpox and other diseases devastated native populations in the region. For examples, Puget Sound area populations, estimated as 37,000 people, were reduced to only 9,000 survivors by the time large numbers of settlers arrived in the mid-19th century. Spanish missions in California worked on converting native populations, which had an impact on native populations. Later after California ceased to be a Spanish colony the impact was greater.

The Plateau peoples resided in permanent villages during the winter, and a variety of semi-permanent camps for hunting and gathering the rest of the year. As soon as horses were introduced, some groups became more nomadic, using mobile camps as they crossed the Rocky Mountains in order to hunt buffalo on the Plains. A village was home to between a few hundred and a thousand people. Villages were located on waterways where fish were abundant during the winter. As European colonization of North America's Atlantic coast began, epidemic diseases and colonizers swept across the landscape. Indigenous communities in the path of colonization fled, displacing their neighbors and creating a kind of domino effect in which nearly every Northeast Indian tribe shifted location; eventually groups as far inland as present-day Minnesota and Ontario were displaced westward to the Plains. Those that eventually resettled on the Plains included the Santee, Yankton, and Teton Sioux and the Sauleaux, Cheyenne, Iowa, Oto, and Missouri.

Written Assignment

Before beginning the first written assignment, refer to the *Course Rules* in Canvas for your instructor's assignment requirements. If emailing assignments to your instructor, please copy the ISI office at indepst@uidaho.edu.

Assignment 1: Answer both questions using material from the text(s) to support your opinions and conclusions. Each question should be typed (if possible), double-spaced, and approximately two (2) pages in length. The assignment is worth 25 points.

1. How did the interactions between European explorers/conquerors and Native American groups create a New World? What was the impact of these interactions? What was the driving forces behind these interactions?
2. How did the native people of each cultural region tailor their economies and their social structures to the local environment? What impact did the Columbian Exchange have on the environment and landscape of North America?