

The University of Texas at El Paso

Department of English

**North by Southwest:
Cultures of Empire in the 19th-Century Western Borderlands**

English 5306 (American Literature, 1800-1865)

Wed., 6:00 – 8:50 p.m., Hudspeth 201

Fall 2010
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Office Hrs: M/W/F 9:00 – 10:30 a.m. & by appt.
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This course offers a literary survey of a wide body of texts that participated in the imaginative and epistemological construction of the western and southwestern borderlands in the United States in the nineteenth century, focusing on the era culminating in the U.S. War with Mexico (1846-48) and its aftermath. While American readerships tuned to western horizons read familiar literary genres such as novels, short stories, and poems, they also voraciously consumed scientific tracts, exploration narratives, accounts of military expeditions, histories, legends, and government documents. We will follow their example, considering various scenes and scenarios of American, Mexican, and Native American encounter as represented by a diverse array of writers.

A compelling dynamic of the literary topography of this period is the rich interplay between little-understood western geographies of the United States and Mexico and established centers of literary and knowledge production in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Washington, and Mexico City. Accordingly, we will explore the manner in which relays between works of fiction, travel narratives, and developing scientific practices of the eastern seaboard gave imaginative shape to United States imperial and mercantilist activity in the southwest. At the same time, we will consider how the exigencies of westward expansionism and the political, racial, and gendered ideologies of Manifest Destiny contributed to popular literary understandings of western landscapes, peoples, and possibilities. Topics and themes to be addressed include: theories of contact zones/borderlands/frontiers; Manifest Destiny and models of American nationalism; exploration and/as travel; the development of ethnological research methods; American Indians and the politics of removal; language; the inscription of national borders; the overlapping politics of race, gender, and class; sublime landscapes; sensationalism and popular culture; mischief, murders, massacres, and the origins of the Hollywood mythology of the American West.

Required Texts (available at the UTEP bookstore):

Brown, Bill. *Reading the West: An Anthology of Dime Westerns* (Bedford)
Cooper, James Fenimore. *The Last of the Mohicans* (Broadview)
Crockett, David. *Narrative of the Life of David Crockett...* (Michigan Historical Reprint Series)
De Zavala, Lorenzo. *Journey to the United States* (Arte Público)
Garrard, Lewis H. *Wah-To-Yah ;and the Taos Trail* (Oklahoma)
Magoffin, Susan Shelby. *The Diary of Susan Shelby Magoffin, 1846-47* (Yale)
McCarthy, Cormac. *Blood Meridian; Or, the Evening Redness in the West* (Vintage)

Ridge, John Rollin (Yellowbird). *Life and Adventures of Joaquín Murieta, The Celebrated California Bandit* (Western Frontier Library)

Ruiz de Burton, María Amparo. *Who Would Have Thought It?* (Penguin)

Streeby, Shelley and Jesse Alemán, eds. *Empire and the Literature of Sensation* (Rutgers)

A required course reader, containing the out-of-print work by Charles Wilkins Webber, *The Gold Mines of the Gila*, will be available at Paper Chase, 2900 N. Mesa, Suite H (in Miner's Village Shopping Center).

Schedule of Readings (to be completed by corresponding date). "(R)" indicates course reader.

| Lsn. | Date | Assignment |
|------|---------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Aug. 25 | Surveying a Neglected Archive: Politics, Transnationalism, and the Literary Canon Introductions. Texts: Mary Louise Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone"; Frederick Augustus Percy, <i>El Sabio Sembrador</i> (handouts) |
| 2 | Sep. 1 | Prototypical Encounters: Manhood, Literacy, and Extinction Texts: James Fenimore Cooper, <i>The Last of the Mohicans</i> (1826) (please also read pp. 405-412 [Heckewelder]; 424-433 reviews; 449-453 [on Jackson and Indian Removal]); Lora Romero, "Vanishing Americans: Gender, Empire, and New Historicism" (Blackboard) |
| 3 | Sep. 8 | Voice of Indian Dissent and the Plight of Romantic Feeling Text: Black Hawk, <i>Life of Black Hawk, or Mâ-ka-tai-me-she-kià-kiàk, Dictated by Himself</i> (1833); Lydia Maria Child, from "Letters from New York" (Letter XXXVI), "An Appeal for the Indians" (Blackboard); Mark Rifkin, "The Territoriality of Tradition: Tretaies, Hunting Grounds, and Prophecy in Black Hawk's Narrative" (Blackboard) |
| 4 | Sep. 15 | Crockett and the Alamo: Mythmaking and National Martyrdom David Crockett, <i>Life of David Crockett: comprising his early history; his bear hunting and other adventures; his services in the Creek war; his electioneering speeches and career in Congress... To which is added an account of his glorious death at the Alamo while fighting in defence of Texan independence</i> (1834; &c) |
| 5 | Sep. 22 | Texas, Mexican Republicanism, and the American Image Selections from Gen. Mier y Téran's journals, from the Comisión de Límites (1828) (Blackboard); José María Sánchez, "A Trip to Texas in 1828" (Blackboard); Lorenzo de Zavala, <i>Journey to the United States</i> |
| 6 | Sep. 29 | On the Taos Trail: Mercantilism, Mountain Men, and Cultural Exchange Lewis H. Garrard, <i>Wah-To-Yah; and the Taos Trail...</i> (1846); Sel. From George Frederick Ruxton, <i>Life in the West</i> (1846) (Blackboard) |
| 7 | Oct. 6 | Gender, Expansionism, and Trade Susan Shelby Magoffin, <i>Down the Santa Fe Trail and into Mexico</i> (1846-47); Amy Kaplan, "Manifest Domesticity" (Blackboard) |

- Oct. 8 **Tour of Magoffin Home (time tbd)**
- 8 Oct. 13 **Mexico and the Literature of Sensation**
 (from Streeby and Alemán) n.a., *The Female Warrior*; (1843) (1-20) Ned Buntline, *Magdalena, the Beautiful Mexican Maid* (1847) (21-106); George Lippard, *Bel of Prairie Eden* (1848) (107-200); Shelley Streeby, “George Lippard’s 1848: Empire, Amnesia, and the U.S.-Mexican War” (Blackboard)
- 9 Oct. 20 **Feverish Fiction: Charles Wilkins Webber and the Centralia Exploring Expedition**
 Charles Wilkins Webber, *The Gold Mines of the Gila* (reader); Sel. From Cora Montgomery (Jane McManus Storm Cazneau), “The Course of Civilization”; “The Great Nation of Futurity”; “Annexation” (Blackboard)
- Bibliography Entry #1 Due**
- 10 Oct. 27 **Mexican Vengeance: The Legend of Joaquin Murrieta**
 John Rollin Ridge, *Life and Adventures of Joaquín Murieta, The Celebrated California Bandit* (1854); Shelley Streeby, “Joaquín Murrieta and Popular Culture” (Blackboard)
- 11 Nov. 3 **Mexico and the Civil War**
 María Amparo Ruiz de Burton, *Who Would Have Thought It?* (1872)
- 12 Nov. 10 **Sovereignty and Sensationalism: The Fort Laramie Treaty, Greasy Grass, and the Black Hills**
 George Armstrong Custer, *Report of the Expedition to the Black Hills under Command of Brevet Maj. General G.A. Custer*, 43 Cong., 2 Sess., Sen. Exec. Doc. 32 (1874) (Blackboard); Edward J. Wheeler, *Deadwood Dick, the Prince of the Road; or, the Black Rider of the Black Hills (Reading the West, (1877) (in Bill Brown, ed., 269-358)*
- 13 Nov. 17 **Reversing the Conquering Gaze: Ethnology, War, and Advocacy**
 Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins, *Life Among the Piutes: Their Wrongs and Claims* (1883) (google books:
http://books.google.com/books?id=MoRGZY6tb6gC&printsec=frontcover&dq=sarah+winnemucca+hopkins+life+among+the+piutes&hl=en&ei=NrJ0TJmFAcH48Aa9ypWvBw&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CDEQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q&f=false); Danielle Tisinger, “Textual Performance and the Western Frontier in Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins’s *Life Among the Piutes: Their Wrongs and Claims*” (Blackboard)
- 14 Nov. 24 **Western Apotheosis: Reconstructions and Deconstructions**
 Cormac McCarthy, *Blood Meridian; Or, the Evening Redness in the West*
- Bibliography entry #2 due**
- 15 Dec. 1 **Last Day of Classes: Paper Presentations**

Course Requirements:

Class Participation (15%): Although I will offer short lectures frequently to provide historical and cultural context, this is primarily a discussion-based seminar. Your active and ongoing participation in the course is therefore essential to its overall success; all students are encouraged and expected to contribute to class on a regular basis. This requires that you come well-prepared for every class with observations, questions, and comments you have formulated in advance (a practice that will be assisted as a matter of course by the reading journal component; see below); this also means listening attentively to the comments of your fellow seminarians, and engaging their ideas in serious and productive ways. Please be advised that the reading assignments for this class are extensive, and will take you several hours to read; it is your responsibility to have read all assigned materials thoughtfully prior to class, so be sure to budget your time carefully.

Online Reading Journal and Responses (20 %, graded cumulatively): Each student will be required to post a one-page (roughly 250-300 words) reading journal entry each week under the “Discussion” section of our course Blackboard site. Entries must be posted by 3:00 p.m. every Wednesday, and should discuss material scheduled for that evening’s discussion. You are expected to offer an entry each week, except for the day on which you are scheduled to make your in-class presentation. Although somewhat informal, these entries are expected to consist of deliberative, thoughtful paragraphs that are free of grammatical error. Use the journal entries to articulate the questions and ideas you develop in the course of your reading, taking care to respond specifically to relevant passages from the text. In addition, each student will be required to post a minimum of four short **responses** to the online journal entries posted by others (two prior to midterm, two after). Good responses will strive to add further insight and elaboration to the original points made; responders should also feel free to offer dissenting or alternative readings in their posts—taking care. On this point I would emphasize, however, that responders should always maintain a tone of civility and respect for the writers and opinions to whom and to which they are responding. Responses will be due 48 hours after the due-dates of the original journal entries, i.e., by 2:00 p.m. on each Thursday.

Oral Presentations (10%): Each student will be required to make a 15-20-minute in-class presentation that focuses on a topic you deem significant in that week’s assigned primary textual reading. Rather than providing an overview of the text under consideration, presentations should strive to focus on specific topics and questions that are central to the texts themselves. Students are encouraged to make reference to relevant secondary sources (either those on the syllabus, or others you discover in the course of your research). Your principal task, though, is to draw attention to a few specific passages in the text(s) that you consider important, to contextualize and interpret those passages, and to offer a short argument about their meanings with respect to the text as a whole. Among other functions, the presentations are designed to promote productive class discussion. To this end, I ask that you include a short list of 2-3 questions for the class that follow from your remarks and which are designed to promote more extended inquiry at the conclusion of your allotted time. It is also required that you include a **handout** that delineates the major points addressed in your remarks, and spells out the specific questions/issues you have for the rest of us. Good presentations will elicit questions and comments from the class, and will enrich our evening’s discussion. Try to anticipate what might interest others as you prepare your work. (**N.b.**: In addition to the handout that includes your discussion questions, you must also provide a bibliographical entry for our “Literary Guidebook,” according to the following guidelines.)

Annotated Bibliography Project: “A Literary Guidebook to the 19th-Century Western Borderlands” (15%):

In addition to our weekly in-class readings, student will be required to produce a customized, annotated bibliography for three primary texts that are to be chosen from a list I will provide (one of these will be

the text for which you are doing an in-class presentation). Students will familiarize themselves with these texts; write a one-page summary of them that places them in a meaningful historical context, including publication history; and compile a two-part list of relevant secondary sources (contemporaneous reviews from the 19th Century; and modern works of literary and/or historical scholarship, to the extent the latter are available). These bibliographical entries will be due at two points over the course of the semester. Once they are all complete, I will compile these into a single document. This collectively-authored product, “A Literary Guidebook to the 19th-Century Southwest,” will provide a valuable scholarly resource for your own future investigations of the literary history of the north/southwest borderlands. It will also provide a valuable ongoing resource for our academic community. At the end of the semester, I will produce bound copies of our “Literary Guidebook” and present them to the following institutions: the Southwest and Border Studies Collection at the UTEP Library; the Border Heritage Center at the Main Branch of the El Paso Public Library; the Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez (UACJ) Colecciones Especiales; the EPCC Libraries; The Fort Bliss Museum and Study Center; the Magoffin House Historic Site; and the El Paso County Historical Society

Final Paper Project (40%): An article-length seminar paper of 15-20 pages will be due on Monday, December 6th. Students are encouraged to develop their topics early; a short prospectus will be due on November 10.

Attendance: You are expected to attend every session, on time. If you are absent more than twice (for non-medical or emergency reasons), you will either receive a “W” (if prior to the drop deadline of Oct. 29) or an “F” for the course (if after Oct. 29).

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is a form of academic fraud, and it is a serious offense. As a matter of University Policy, all cases of plagiarism will be forwarded to the Office of the Dean of Students for adjudication. If you are ever in doubt as to what constitutes plagiarism, please consult the *MLA Style Manual*, or come talk to me.