

**HIST 5301-W01**  
**American West Historiography**  
Sul Ross State University—Alpine, TX  
Spring 2022  
Web-Based Delivery



Outlaw Belle Starr (1848 - 1889) after her arrest by Deputy U.S. Marshal Charles Barnhill (right), in 1886. Starr's story was widely publicized at the time by the National Police Gazette, who dubbed her the "Bandit Queen."

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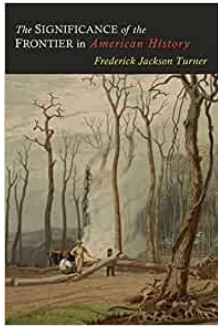
**Office Hours:** M&W 11 to 12 or by appointment.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

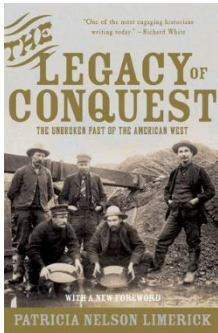
What is the American West? How do we define it? As one of the most diverse regions of the United States, the West is home to many peoples, processes, industries, and cultural groups, making a single characterization of the region almost impossible. The American West is both a physical region and a particular historic process that contains a geographic and even mythical culture. Chronologically, then, this course is very broad in scope. We will explore Native America, European exploration, contests of empires, American incorporation, and political and economic changes well into the twentieth century. We will also examine the West as home to many different peoples and learn how they made a living, how they formed communities, and how they struggled over resources and identities. We will explore the significance of “the frontier” in popular culture and in politics. Students completing this course will learn how representations of the West and its people have changed over time, and they will hone skills essential to the historian’s craft—reading, writing, and historical interpretation.

*Note: As an online graduate class, this course will largely involve reading important historiographical texts. It will not be lecture driven; instead, students are responsible for learning and engaging with the material largely on their own. The professor will be available to provide feedback and guided insights.*

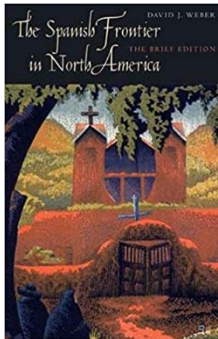
**REQUIRED TEXTS:**



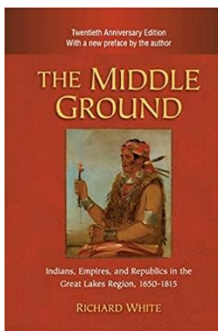
Turner, Fredrick Jackson T. “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” American Historical Association, 1893. *Note: Available online via Blackboard.*



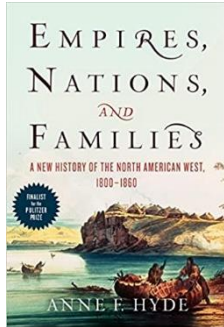
Limerick, Patricia Nelson. *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1987.



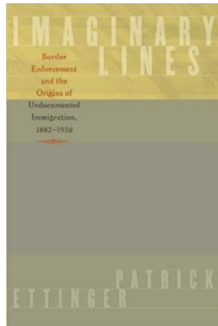
Weber, David J. *The Spanish Frontier in North America: The Brief Edition*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009.



White, Richard. *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815*. Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 2011.



Hyde, Anne F. *Empires, Nations, and Families: A New History of the North American West, 1800-1860*. New York: HarperCollins Publisher, 2011.



Ettinger, Patrick. *Imaginary Lines: Border Enforcement and the Origins of Undocumented Immigration, 1882-1930*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009.



Rothman, Hal K. *Devil's Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth-Century American West*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998.

### **RECOMMENDED TEXT:**

- Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writing Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011. ISBN 978-0-226-82336-2. *Note: Necessary for any blossoming historian.*

### **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

The graduating student in history will be able to:

1. The history student will demonstrate historical research skills in a logically-organized, written paper that is mechanically correct and supported by relevant documentation of historical content.
2. The history student will demonstrate the ability to write about topics in historiography and how those topics are interpreted.

3. The history student will demonstrate knowledge of American History, World History, and Non-American History.

The Student Learning Outcomes will be measured by the administration of daily quizzes, exams, book reviews, research papers, and group presentations.

### **GOALS OF THIS COURSE:**

Students who have successfully completed History 3310 will have acquired the following competencies:

1. Understand the major historiographical trends in western history.
2. Define primary and secondary sources and be able to discriminate the difference between them.
3. Identify and define a monograph's thesis.
4. Compare and contrast multiple points of view and historical interpretations.
5. Write effectively, logically, and persuasively about topics and individuals in American history with proper citations.
6. Determine and evaluate how historians locate, gather, organize, analyze, interpret, and report information using various methodologies.
7. Understand the role that historians play in contemporary society, both as academics and as public historians.

### **COURSE POLICIES:**

1. **Contacting the Instructor:** The instructor's email is the preferred method of contact. Students should use the phone number only for emergency situations. A student phone message will normally not be returned due to the problem of "phone tag."

All email messages to the instructor should include your name, your class section number, and a simple message stating the reason you are contacting the instructor. During the week, emails will normally be answered within 24 hours. Emails that arrive late Friday afternoon, Saturday, or Sunday most likely will not receive a reply until Monday, but you may send an email at any time. Questions such as "What did we cover in class?" will normally not be answered.

2. **Make-Up Policy:** I will give make-up assignments only in extreme cases. Make-up assignments are allowed only in cases of documented, unavoidable events that prevent submission of the assignments. Students who are unable to attend the regular session must notify the professor by email or phone within 48 hours and provide documentation of their emergency. Students who do not give such notification and provide written documentation will not be allowed to make-up the assignment.

3. **Late assignments:** Late assignments incur a 10-point penalty for every 24-hour period that passes from the due date and time until the instructor receives the assignment.
4. **Your Responsibilities:** Each student has individual responsibilities that go beyond simply showing up for class and reading the assigned books.
  - a. **Mutual courtesy and respect:** Courtesy and respect for others are essential elements of the academic culture. The academic environment welcomes a difference of opinion, discourse, and debate within a civil environment, and we will all engage in mutual courtesy and respect for one another. To that end, address comments to the entire class rather than to adjacent students, and remember the Golden Rule—treat others as you would like to be treated.
  - b. **Adherence to technology policies:** In this twenty-first-century world, I recognize that many students use technology in their learning endeavors, and I welcome the use of it in the classroom for educational purposes only. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. See below.
  - c. **Academic calendar and course information:** Students also have a responsibility to be familiar with the key dates on the academic calendar (such as deadlines for dropping the course and the first and last days of class) in addition to course-specific information (such as exam dates and all other course requirements as outlined in the syllabus).
5. **Academic Misconduct:** Any act that violates the academic integrity of the institution is considered academic misconduct. Violation of college, state, or federal standards with regard to plagiarism, cheating, or falsification of official records will not be tolerated. Students violating such standards will be subject to discipline as outlined in the Student Handbook. Anyone caught engaging in academic misconduct in an exam or assignment will automatically receive an “F.” Specific examples of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to:
  - a. **Cheating:** Copying from another student’s test paper, laboratory report, other report, or computer files and listings; Using, during any academic exercise, material and/or devices not authorized by the person in charge of the test; Collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test or laboratory without permission; Knowingly using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in its entirety or in part, the contents of a test or other assignment unauthorized for release; Substituting for another student or permitting another student to substitute for oneself.
  - b. **Plagiarism:** The appropriation, theft, purchase or obtaining by any means another’s work, and the unacknowledged submission or incorporation of that work as one’s own offered for credit. Appropriation includes the quoting or paraphrasing of another’s work without giving credit therefore.

- c. **Collusion:** The unauthorized collaboration with another in preparing work offered for credit.
6. **Disclaimer:** This syllabus with its schedule is an expectation of class topics, learning activities, and anticipated student learning. However, the instructor reserves the right to make changes in this schedule that would result in enhanced or more effective learning on the part of the students.

**ASSIGNMENTS:**

1. **Introductory Essay:** In the first day of class, come with a short essay telling me a little about who you are and where you are from. What are your general historical interests? Specifically, I would like the essay to address a little bit about your experiences with history courses in the past. You can draw from your experiences in elementary school, middle school, high school, or college. I encourage your honesty and welcome your input on what you found most rewarding or most discouraging with your experiences in history courses to date. This will count toward your participation grade. Please limit the essay to one to two pages.
2. **Book Reviews/ Reflections:** As a graduate seminar, you will be required to read six books/ articles over the course of the semester. These book reviews/reflections must be no more or no less than three pages. A handout will be provided for tips on how to write a successful book review as well as specific questions outlined for each book for you to consider. You will also be required to submit the paper through SafeAssign on Blackboard to check for plagiarism. I expect you to write in complete sentences with proper grammar and use citations where appropriate.
3. **Two Virtual Meetings:** Twice this semester, we will meet as a class via Blackboard Collaborative to discuss the books and hear your ideas. The times will be determined as I learn what will work best with everyone’s schedule.
4. **Interpretive Historiographical Essay:** The final assignment for this course is a twelve-to-fifteen-page paper: an interpretive essay on the six books referred to above that will also draw on ONE book of your choosing (making a total of seven books under evaluation).

This is an interpretive essay. What does this mean? It is a creative exercise that allows you to explore the history of American West from a variety of vantage points. This is not a book-by-book review; instead, it is more of a meditative account of themes, methodologies, and ways of thinking about the American West. Your creativity is encouraged, but perhaps you might discuss how we try to understand the interaction of cultures, economics, politics, or nation-building. You might consider how relationships defined (or did not define) the American West. What role did local individuals play in the development of the American West? What about national and private interests? You must incorporate all of our diverse readings, but in the words of one of my former professors, “*this is the art of the historian*”—to make **connections** between ostensibly diverse events

and aspects of the human experience and to **link** ideas, ideology, and culture to labor, technology, the environment, and politics. I know—this is a challenge. But! You can do it!

I encourage you to take notes as you read each book. This way, you minimize the amount of work you must do at the end of the semester. Also, keep a keen eye as you read each book about themes or topics that might strike your interests.

**GRADES:**

Students can earn a possible 1,000 points by the end of this course.

Final grades will be determined as follows:

Book Reviews (7 @ 100 pts.)	700 pts.
Meetings (2 @ 50 pts.)	100 pts.
<u>Final (200 pts).</u>	<u>200 pts.</u>
Total Possible	1000 pts.

Grade Breakdown:

1,000 to 900 pts.	A
899 to 800 pts.	B
799 to 700 pts.	C
699 to 600 pts.	D
599 <	F

A Range = Outstanding. All assignments are turned in on time and reflect thoughtful and analytical thinking with a thorough understanding of historical events and trends.

B Range = All assignments are turned in on time and are above average but are not outstanding work. They demonstrate an understanding of historical events, but the analytical thinking is weaker than that for an “A.”

C Range = Average. Assignments indicate an average understanding of historical events. Work tends to be narrative rather than analytical. There is need for improvement.

D Range = Below average. Writing is mostly narrative. There is no analysis and narrowly answers the question assigned. Assignments are incomplete.

F Range = Fail. Assignments are not turned in or are late without the instructor’s approval. They are substantially below average and fail to answer the questions. Plagiarizing, of course, will result in disciplinary action.

**Students with Disabilities:**

Sul Ross State University is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is the student’s responsibility to initiate a request for accessibility

services. Students seeking accessibility services must contact Mary Schwartz, M. Ed., L.P.C, in Counseling and Accessibility Services, Ferguson Hall, Room 112. The mailing address is P.O. Box C-122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas 79832. Telephone: 432-837-8691. Email: [mschwartz@sulross.edu](mailto:mschwartz@sulross.edu)

Adequate time must be allowed to arrange accommodations. Accommodations are not retroactive; therefore, students should contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible in the academic term for which they are seeking accommodations. Each eligible student is responsible for presenting relevant, verifiable, professional documentation and/or assessment reports.

### **SRSU Distance Education Statement**

Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, such as library resources, online databases, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website. Students should correspond using Sul Ross email accounts and submit online assignments through Blackboard, which requires secure login. Students enrolled in distance education courses at Sul Ross are expected to adhere to all policies pertaining to academic honesty and appropriate student conduct, as described in the student handbook. Students in web-based courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software, according to the needs and requirements of the course, as outlined on the SRSU website.

### **Classroom Climate of Respect**

This class will foster free expression, critical investigation, and the open discussion of ideas. This means that all of us must help create and sustain an atmosphere of tolerance, civility, and respect for the viewpoints of others. Similarly, we must all learn how to probe, oppose and disagree without resorting to tactics of intimidation, harassment, or personal attack. No one is entitled to harass, belittle, or discriminate against another on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, age, gender, national origin, or sexual preference. Still we will not be silenced by the difficulty of fruitfully discussing politically sensitive issues.

### **Diversity Statement**

I aim to create a learning environment for my students that supports a diversity of thoughts, perspectives and experiences, and honors your identities (including race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ability, socioeconomic class, age, nationality, etc.). I also understand that the crisis of COVID, economic disparity, and health concerns, or even unexpected life events could impact the conditions necessary for you to succeed. My commitment is to be there for you and help you meet the learning objectives of this course. I do this to demonstrate my commitment to you and to the mission of Sul Ross State University to create an inclusive environment and care for the whole student as part of the Sul Ross Familia. If you feel like your performance in the class is being impacted by your experiences outside of class, please don't hesitate to come and talk with me. I want to be a resource for you.

### **Library Information**

The Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library in Alpine offers FREE resources and services to the entire SRSU community. Access and borrow books, articles, and more by visiting the library's



website, [library.sulross.edu](http://library.sulross.edu). Off-campus access requires logging in with your LoboID and password. Librarians are a tremendous resource for your coursework and can be reached in person, by email ([srsulibrary@sulross.edu](mailto:srsulibrary@sulross.edu)), or phone (432-837-8123).

**\*\*NOTICE TO STUDENTS\*\***: At certain times this semester, we will be discussing historical events that may be disturbing to some students. If you suspect that specific material is likely to be emotionally challenging for you, I am happy to discuss any concerns you may have before the subject comes up in class. Likewise, if you ever wish to discuss your personal reactions to course material with me individually afterwards, I welcome such discussions as an appropriate part of our classwork. Please remember I do not expect or require students to hold the same opinions as one another (or as me) about controversial topics.

## **SEMESTER SCHEDULE**

*Note: Students will have prior notification of any necessary changes in the semester schedule.*

### **Week 1: Jan. 10 to Jan. 7**

DUE Saturday (1/8): Introductory Essay & Syllabus Quiz

### **Week 2: Jan. 17 to Jan. 21**

DUE Saturday (1/15): Turner's "The Significance of Frontier in American History" Reflection

### **Week 3: Jan. 24 to Jan. 28**

DUE Saturday (1/29): Limerick's *The Legacy of Conquest* Book Review

### **Week 4: Jan. 31 to Feb. 4**

DUE Saturday (2/5): Compare & Contrast Turner vs. Limerick (or "Old" vs. "New" Western History) Reflection

### **Week 5: Feb. 7 to Feb. 11**

DUE Saturday (2/12): Weber's *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (Brief Edition) Book Review

### **Week 6: Feb. 14 to Feb. 18**

Start Reading White's *The Middle Ground*

### **Week 7: Feb. 21 to Feb. 25**

DUE Saturday (2/26): White's *The Middle Ground* Book Review

### **Week 8: Feb. 28 to Mar. 4**

Start Reading Hyde's *Empire, Nations, and Families* (It's Long!)

### **Week 9: Mar. 7 to Mar. 11—SPRING BREAK**

**Week 10: Mar. 14 to Mar. 18**

DUE Monday (3/14): Hyde's *Empire, Nations, and Families* Book Review  
FIRST CLASS MEETING TBD

**Week 11: Mar. 21 to Mar. 25**

Start Reading Ettinger's *Imaginary Lines*

**Week 12: Mar. 28 to Apr. 1**

DUE Saturday (4/2): Ettinger's *Imaginary Lines* Book Review

**Week 13: Apr. 4 to Apr. 8**

**FIND A BOOK AND READ ON YOUR OWN**

**Week 14: Apr. 11 to Apr. 15**

DUE: SECOND CLASS MEETING TBD

**Week 15: Apr. 18 to Apr. 22**

WORK WEEK

**FINAL PAPER DUE: Wednesday, April 27 by Midnight**