

University of Arkansas - Fort Smith
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General Syllabus

HIST 41133 The American West: Trans-Mississippi

Credit Hours: 3
Hours: 0

Lecture Hours: 3

Laboratory

Effective Catalog: 2019-2020

I. Course Information

A. Catalog Description

Study of westward expansion of the U. S., including penetration into the Trans-Mississippi River West after the Lewis and Clark expedition. Also examines the culture, social, political, and economic development of the indigenous Indians of the northern and southern plains.

II. Student Learning Outcomes

A. Subject Matter

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Exhibit mastery of essential factual material about the history of westward expansion in the United States during the period from 1803 through the 20th Century.
2. Analyze American history, society, and culture in the United States during the period of Westward Expansion, identifying, discussing, and comparing recurrent and variable concepts and themes.
3. Define the concept of the frontier.
4. Evaluate the impact of expansion on ethnic groups, both those displaced by American expansion and those who sought opportunity in the new settlements.
5. Describe the economic relationship between the American West and the established population centers of the eastern U.S.
6. Evaluate the role of technology, especially railroads, in increasing westward expansion.

7. Use tools of historical analysis recovering, researching, and writing about the history of American expansion beyond the Mississippi River.
8. Explain the complexity of both change and continuity over time in American society and culture.
9. Evaluate the influence of historical interpretation and historiographical schools of thought, including their sociological elements, as they relate to the history of American Westward Expansion.

B. University Learning Outcomes

This course enhances student abilities in the following areas:

Global and Cultural Perspectives

Students will examine how the process of Westward Expansion changed American society and culture, as well as to determine the contributions of Americans involved in that process to modern American society.

Communication Skills (written and oral)

Students will use the essay format for written presentation of research projects and for exams. Students will participate in class discussions relating to history of the Trans-Mississippi West to enhance their ability to answer essay exam questions.

Analytical Skills

Critical Thinking Skills

Students will synthesize materials from various sources to complete research projects and construct answers to essay examination questions.

III. Major Course Topics

- A. The Geography of the West
- B. Lewis and Clark and the Exploration of the Trans-Mississippi West
- C. Mountain Men and the Fur Trade
- D. Plains Indian Culture
- E. Immigration to the Pacific Coast: On to Oregon, The Gold Rush and California
- F. The Plains Indian Wars
- G. The Open Range Cattle Industry
- H. Homesteaders and the Settling of the Plains
- I. The Modern West