

University of Arkansas Fort Smith
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General Syllabus

HIST 41433 Southwest Frontier Seminar

Credit Hours: 3

Lecture Hours: 3

Laboratory Hours: 0

Prerequisite: HIST 21103 United States History I

Effective Catalog: 2019-2020

I. Course Information

A. Catalog Description

A seminar course concentrating on America's nineteenth century Southwest frontier. Discussions, field trips, reading, and writing assignments will explore and expand existing historical scholarship, with an emphasis on the geographical area of the Arkansas River and Red River Valleys during the period from 1803 – 1917.

B. Additional Information

Field trip study will take students over the same grounds in the region where significant historical events occurred.

II. Student Learning Outcomes

A. Subject Matter

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

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the geographic range of the Southwest region as it developed in American history
2. Identify key individuals who helped develop the American Southwest
3. Relate major historical events from the region in the context of shaping the entire American nation.
4. Discuss and evaluate the importance of ethnic minorities, Native Americans, and immigrants in opening the region.
5. Describe the opening of the American Southwest in the context of the Turner Thesis and other models of westward expansion.
6. Explain the international consequences of 19th century American expansion in the region.

B. University Learning Outcomes

This course enhances student abilities in the following areas:

Analytical Skills

Critical Thinking Skills

Students will analyze major issues related to the American expansion into the Southwest.

Communication Skills (written and oral)

Students will research historical topics using primary sources and write regional history in publishable form.

Global and Cultural Perspectives

Students will be exposed to a broad range of persons with varying ethnicity during Southwest expansion.

III. Major Course Topics

- A. The natural history and geography of the pre-historical southwestern part of the United States; defining and settling the Old Southwest; westward movement impulses.
- B. Native Americans and the coming of the Europeans to the southwest of the Mississippi. Osage imperialism; colonial Louisiana and the Spanish governors; Exploration of the SW Louisiana Purchase Territory; Freeman-Custis,* Zebulon Pike, Dunbar-Hunter; the 1808 Treaty of Fort Clark.
- C. The War of 1812 and the rifle companies on the Southwest Frontier; the Adams-Onis Treaty of 1818; establishment of Fort Smith; siege of Fort Smith; building of Fort Gibson.
- D. Louisiana, Missouri, and Arkansas Territories; the Natchez Trace; plots to detach the Southwest from U.S. suzerainty.
- E. American explorations and travel accounts prior to 1845: Thomas Nuttall,* Gregg, Audubon, Schoolcraft, Long, Bell, James, Irving, Seymour, Peale, Featherstonhaugh, Abert, and others.
- F. Indian removals from the southeastern United States and the conflict with the Osage tribe; painters and artists of the frontiers – George Catlin.
- G. Benjamin Bonneville; the Santa Fe Trail; Kit Carson, John C. Fremont.
- H. Slavery in the Southwest frontier; slave revolt at Webber Falls.
- I. Texas independence; Texas land pirates and Captain Philip St. George Cooke's 1843 escort; the Kiowa and the Comanche battles; the Southwest command of Zachary Taylor.
- J. The role of Fort Smith, Fort Gibson, and Fort Towson in the War with Mexico.
- K. The Marcy expeditions, the Dona Ana Road and the search for the source of the Red River; Fort Arbuckle; Whipple; Mollhausen; the Butterfield Stage Line.

- L. The Fort Smith Council of 1865; the Fort Smith federal court and deputy marshals; recent scholarship on the Parker Court era; Bass Reeves; selected novels and movies set in the Southwest.
- M. Adobe Walls; the Oklahoma land rush and the expanding Southwest frontier; work of Grant and Carolyn Foreman.
- N. Southwest farming and livestock; Jay Gould, timber and railroads; hardwood lumber and furniture industries; Ed Ballman; Fort Smith, the “Queen City of the Southwest.” Spindletop; founding of the Southwest Conference.