

English 475/675
Literature of the American West
Fall 2003
TR 11-12:15

Professor Ann Ronald
Frandsen Humanities 215
office hours: TR 9:30 - 11 a.m.
and by appointment
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Cowboys and Indians and Damsels in Distress! Ever since the days of *The Virginian* and Zane Grey, western novelists have been struggling to break free from the formula. After watching film clips that perpetrate the primary myths of the Old West, we will read novels that romantically and realistically confound the myths, quarrel with them, even turn them upside down.

Books:

Abbey, Edward. *The Brave Cowboy*.
Cather, Willa. *A Lost Lady*.
Gloss, Molly. *The Jump-Off Creek*.
Kelton, Elmer. *The Man Who Rode Midnight*.
McCarthy, Cormac. *Blood Meridian*.
O'Brien, Dan. *The Contract Surgeon*.
Power, Susan. *The Grass Dancer*.
Smith, Diane. *Letters from Yellowstone*.
Welch, James. *The Death of Jim Loney*.

Syllabus:

8/26, 8/28: Introduction and Film: "Shane"

9/2, 9/4, 9/9: *Blood Meridian*

9/11, 9/16: *The Man Who Rode Midnight*

9/18, 9/23, 9/25: *The Brave Cowboy*

9/30: Exam

10/2: Film: “The Searchers”

10/7, 10/9, 10/14: *The Contract Surgeon*

10/16, 10/21, 10/23: *The Grass Dancer*

10/28, 11/4: *The Death of Jim Loney*

10/30: No class

11/6: Essay due; Films: “The Virginian” and “Riders of the Purple Sage”

11/11: Veterans’ Day: no class

11/13, 11/18: *A Lost Lady*

11/20, 11/25: *The Jump-Off Creek*

12/2, 12/4: *Letters from Yellowstone*

12/9: Review

12/11: Final exam; 7:30-9:30 a.m.

Class Requirements:

1. Finish reading each book by the time we begin talking about it in class. Plan ahead, so that you don’t fall behind.
2. On each date listed in bold print, be ready to write a one-page response to the book assigned that day. These nine exercises cannot be made up [I want to keep you up-to-date on your reading and to see how you respond to the books before we talk about them in class]. [30%]
3. Complete two exams, one dealing with cowboys and one dealing with damsels in distress. [20% each]
4. Write an essay that analyzes what we’ve been reading and discussing about Indians, plus what you’ve been learning and thinking on your own. A later handout will suggest topics and parameters. [20%]
5. Participate in class discussion. [10%]

Any student with a documented disability should contact me during the first week of the semester to discuss appropriate accommodations. I will be very happy to work with you to ensure equity in classroom experiences, outside assignments, and grading.