

**ENGLISH 256 / HISTORY 202H**  
**EXPANSION AND ENVIRONMENT IN WESTERN U.S. HISTORY AND LITERATURE**  
**WINTER 2011**  
**PROVISIONAL SYLLABUS**

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M 3:10-6pm  
4202 Social Sciences

The expansion of empires and nations constitutes one of the most compelling themes in North American history. This team-taught interdisciplinary seminar considers widely varying examples of expansion at the intersection of environmental history and environmental literature. Using the disciplinary tools available to both historians and literary scholars, we will explore the means by which expanding indigenous, colonial, and postcolonial cultures have reshaped nature in ways intended and not, fought with one another over the morality and prerogatives of doing so, and represented these processes for themselves and others. Our area of interest will be North America and the Pacific.

Please note: this seminar is listed under two different departments, English 256 (CRN 43941) and History 202H (CRN 27634). Students should sign up for whichever version works best with the requirements of their particular program. For English graduate students, the course may fulfill either the early or later national requirement, depending on the subject of the final paper.

**Required Texts (Available at the Campus Bookstore and online)**

- Mary Austin, *The Ford* (1917; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997) **ISBN-10:** 0520207572; **ISBN-13:** 978-0520207578
- Ned Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land* (Cambridge; Harvard UP, 2008) **ISBN-10:** 0674027205; **ISBN-13:** 978-0674027206
- Robert Campbell, *In Darkest Alaska* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008) **ISBN-10:** 081222048X; **ISBN-13:** 978-0812220483
- William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (NY: W. W. Norton, 1992) **ISBN-10:** 0393308731; **ISBN-13:** 978-0393308730
- Mike Davis, *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (1989; NY: Verso, 2006) **ISBN-10:** 1844675688; **ISBN-13:** 978-1844675688
- Stephen Hackel, *Children of Coyote, Missionaries of St. Francis* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2005) **ISBN-10:** 0807856541; **ISBN-13:** 978-0807856543
- Pekka Hamalainen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2008) **ISBN-10:** 0300151179; **ISBN-13:** 978-0300151176
- Helen Hunt Jackson, *Ramona* (1881; NY: Broadview, 2008) **ISBN-10:** 1551117207; **ISBN-13:** 978-1551117201
- Kelly Lytle-Hernandez, *Migra! A History of the U.S. Border Patrol* (Berkeley: UC Press, 2010) **ISBN-10:** 0520266412; **ISBN-13:** 978-0520266414
- Ken Kesey, *Sometimes a Great Notion* (1964; NY: Penguin, 2006) **ISBN-10:** 0143039865; **ISBN-13:** 978-0143039860
- Ruben Martinez, *Crossing Over: A Mexican Family on the Migrant Trail* (NY: Picador, 2002) **ISBN-10:** 0312421230; **ISBN-13:** 9780312421236
- Cormac McCarthy, *Blood Meridian; or the Evening Redness in the West* (1985; NY: Vintage, 1992) **ISBN-10:** 0679728759; **ISBN-13:** 978-0679728757
- Frank Norris, *The Pit: A Story of Chicago* (1903; NY: Penguin, 1994) **ISBN-10:** 0140187588; **ISBN-13:** 978-0140187588
- Rob Nixon, *Dreambirds* (NY: Picador, 2001) **ISBN-10:** 0312270127; **ISBN-13:** 978-0312270124
- D. J. Waldie, *Holy Land: A Suburban Memoir* (NY: W. W. Norton, 2002) **ISBN-10:** 0393327280; **ISBN-13:** 978-0393327281
- Donald Worster, *Rivers of Empire: Water, Aridity, and the Growth of the American West* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1992) **ISBN-10:** 0195078063

**Recommended:**

- The Oxford History of the American West* (NY: Oxford UP, 1996) **ISBN-10:** 0195112121; **ISBN-13:** 978-0195112122
- Richard White, *It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own* (Norman: U of Oklahoma Press, 1993) **ISBN-10:** 0806125675; **ISBN-13:** 978-0806125671
- Patricia Limerick, *Legacies of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (NY: W. W. Norton, 1987) **ISBN-10:** 0393304973; **ISBN-13:** 978-0393304978

**Requirements**

Participation 50%  
Final Paper 50%

**NOTE:** This syllabus and all other course handouts will be posted on ENL256/HIS202H's SmartSite webpage. Important reading links, images, etexts, writing guides, class policies, and FAQs will also be posted there. Make it a habit to check the site on a regular basis.

## Readings

[\* = in the Resources folder on the ENL 256 SmartSite, by author's last name. For **books**, please note the specific pages recommended. Texts listed in optimal reading order.]

### Week 1 (Jan. 3) Thinking West: Empires, Expansion, and Violence

- \*Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" (1893)\*
- \*William Cronon, "Revisiting the Vanishing Frontier: The Legacy of Frederick Jackson Turner," *Western Historical Quarterly* 18(2) April 1987: 157-76.
- \*William Cronon, George Miles, Jay Gitlin, "Becoming West: Toward a New Meaning for Western History," *Under an Open Sky: Rethinking America's Western Past* (1992)3-27.
- \*Richard White, "Trashing the Trails," from Limerick, Milner, Rankin, eds., *Trails: Toward a New Western History* (1991) 26-39.
- Ned Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West* (Cambridge: Harvard UP 2006) 1-45; 119-293.**
- \*Thomas J. Lyon, "The Literary West", from Milner et al, *The Oxford History of the American West* (NY: Oxford UP, 1994) 707-741.
- \*Martin Bucco, "The Development of Western Literary Criticism," from Taylor et al, *A Literary History of the American West* (Fort Worth: TCUP, 1987) 1283–1316.

### Week 2 (Jan. 10) Natives, Empires, and Native Empires

**Pekka Hamalainen, *Comanche Empire* (1-67, 141-238, 292-361)**

**Cormac McCarthy, *Blood Meridian***

- \*Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron, "From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in between in North American History" *American Historical Review*, 104 (3) Jun., 1999, pp. 814-841. (JSTOR)

[recommended: forum responses to Adelman and Aron in *AHR*, Vol. 104, No. 4, Oct., 1999, pp. 1221–1239.  
[recommended film: *The Searchers* (Ford)]

### Week 3 (Jan. 17) Border Romance

**Hackel, *Children of Coyote***

**Helen Hunt Jackson, *Ramona***

### Week 4 (Jan. 24) The Plains

**William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis***

**Frank Norris, *The Pit***

- \*Dan Flores, "Bison Ecology and Bison Diplomacy Redux: Another Look at the Southern Plains from 1800 to 1850"
- \*From W. P. Webb, *The Great Plains* (1931)

### Week 5 (Jan. 31) Hydraulic Civilization

**Worster, *Rivers of Empire***

**Mary Austin, *The Ford***

## **Week 6 (Feb. 7) Contemporary Borderlands**

**Kelly Lytle-Hernandez, *Migra! A History of the U.S. Border Patrol***

**Ruben Martinez, *Crossing Over***

\*From William Vollmann, *Imperial*

\*Chris Sellers, "Thoreau's Body: Toward an Embodied Environmental History," *Environmental History* 4(4) (October, 1999): 486 – 514.

\*"Toxic Bodies/Toxic Environments: An Interdisciplinary Forum," *Environmental History* 13 (4) 2008 13(4): 629-703. (available on-line through Shields Library)

## **Week 7 (Feb. 14) Suburbia**

**Mike Davis, *City of Quartz***

**DJ Waldie, *Holy Land***

\*From Lawrence Culver, *The Frontier of Leisure*

## **Week 8 (Feb. 21) Working Landscapes**

**Kosek, *Understories: The Political Life of Forests in Northern New Mexico***

**Kesey, *Sometimes a Great Notion***

\*White, "Are You an Environmentalist or Do You Work for a Living? "

\*Gunther Peck, "The Nature of Labor: Fault Lines and Common Ground in Environmental and Labor History," *Environmental History* 11(2) (April, 2006): 212-238.

## **Week 9 (Feb. 28) Northern Frontiers**

**Rob Campbell, *Darkest Alaska***

\*William Cronon, "Kennecott Journey," from *Under an Open Sky: Rethinking America's Western Past* (1992) 28 – 51.

## **Week 10 (March 7) Pacific Expansion**

\*From Ian Tyrell, *True Gardens of the Gods: Californian-Australian Environmental Reform, 1860–1930.*

\*Rob Nixon, *Dreambirds*