

The American West

AMSTUD 124A, ARTHIST 152, ENGLISH 124, HISTORY 151, POLISCI 124A

WAYS: WAY-AII; WAY-SI

(last updated: March 22, 2022)

Professors

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Office Hours

Bruce Cain	By appointment (email Marco at marcomtz@stanford.edu)
Shelley Fisher Fishkin	By appointment (email sfishkin@stanford.edu)
David Freyberg	Announced on Canvas after the first week (some in person, Y2E2 257, some via Zoom)
David Kennedy	By appointment

Course Objectives

This course integrates several disciplinary perspectives into a comprehensive examination of western North America—its history, physical geography, climate, institutions, politics, demography, economy, and continuing policy challenges, as well as its artistic and cultural expression of people in the region.

The course will examine how the West came to be ultimately viewed as distinctive. Students will understand how geology, topography, and climate—aridity in particular—have shaped the region's history, development and public policies. Aridity accounts in part for the fact that the federal government is the region's largest landlord, controlling more than 50 percent of the West's surface area. In addition, Western governance is complicated and distinctively shaped by its populist culture, direct democracy options, and highly fractured system of local jurisdictions. Direct democracy, for instance, enables more innovative programs to manage climate change and the environment, but the dispersion of jurisdictional responsibilities makes it harder to implement them.

Students will also examine transformations in the West's demography and its economy. The West has been the nation's most demographically dynamic region since World War II. Massive wartime and postwar internal migration has given way in recent decades to transnational migration, notably from Mexico and Asia. And the West is home to a majority of the nation's Native Americans. Migration, of course, closely tracks economic patterns. The transformation of the West from a natural resource extraction economy to a high-tech economy—with Silicon Valley its exemplar and locomotive—will be another course theme, as will the policy issues attending the prospects for the West's environmental, demographic, and economic future. Participating in vigorous analytical discussions and writing papers on western trends, students will be able to analyze westerners' behavior and western social organizations using data or primary source material.

The course will also examine the long tradition of rendering and expressing the West in art, film, and literature. In addition to analyzing poems, essays, short stories, and excerpts from longer works, the course will focus on paintings, photography, sculpture, and prints of the American West. The goal is for students to understand that these various accounts are not illustrations of the West but rather inventions that suited the ideological needs of particular moments. The portrayal of western peoples differed from one period to the next, and the same is true for borders, water, and the landscape itself. At the same time, the goal is to note how the works we study can—sometimes—introduce us to states of feeling not easily categorizable by recourse to social or ideological explanations.

Course requirements

Students are responsible for attending all lectures and sections for this course. Modules in Canvas will help you navigate your way through the course. All materials for the week will be released the Friday prior. These materials will include all the readings associated to a specific lecture and required viewing videos. Students are expected to attend all in-person course lectures, participate in section discussions, attend a special visit to the Anderson Collection, and complete the course readings in order to receive credit for this class. Students will also have written assignments to complete.

Readings

Readings are posted on Canvas modules and will be released as assigned. Many of our readings are made available through Stanford Libraries' restricted databases, electronic journals, or e-books. In order to access these readings, you must be connected to the Stanford network. If you are having trouble accessing these readings, you should test your connection by visiting <http://library.stanford.edu/using/connect-campus>.

Lectures and discussion sections

Class lectures will include 2 or 3 back-to-back lectures. Attendance at lecture is imperative to your participation in weekly discussion sections, as well as to your written assignments.

PLEASE NOTE: Discussion sections are only for students in the course. DCI and auditors will not be enrolled in discussion sections.

Weekly assignments: 3&1 responses

Students will submit on Canvas 3 bulleted observations (a couple of sentences each) about what you found insightful, interesting or disagreed with in the lectures and reading PLUS 1 question you would like answered or discussed in the section. This 3 & 1 assignment should be posted on Canvas for your TA's to collect by 5pm Pacific Time on Wednesday for that week's Thursday discussion section. This material will serve as the basis for discussion, so it is imperative that these questions be submitted on time. Completion of the 3&1 assignments and full participation in the weekly discussion sections is expected.

Two essay assignments

Students will complete one midterm paper (8-10 pages) due April 26th. The final paper (10-12 pages in length) will be due June 3rd. These essays will test your ability to synthesize the diverse interdisciplinary perspectives offered in this course into an understanding of the American West as a distinct region. More information about these assignments is forthcoming and will be posted on Canvas.

Event Attendance

Students are expected to attend two events and submit on Canvas a write up of the event.

Possible events:

April 26, 2022	Bill Lane Center virtual event , John Lesly on “Our Common Ground”
April 27, 2022, 4:30pm	Stanford Historical Society presents “Searsville Before Stanford: History and Archaeology in the Upper San Francisquito Watershed”
May 4, 2022, 2pm	Bill Lane Center virtual event, Author Mark Arax in conversation with Felicia Marcus about “A Dreamt Land-Chasing Water and Dust Across California”
May 6-8, 2022	Stanford Powwow
May 20, 2022	Bill Lane Center event, Professor Richard Nevle and Steven Nightingale in conversation with Nicole Ardoin

Grading Breakdown

Class Participation	30%
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3&1 responses to the lectures and readings• Contributions to section discussions	
Essay #1	30%
Essay #2	40%

Students with Documented Disabilities

Students who may need an academic accommodation based on a disability must initiate the request with the Office of Accessible Education (OAE), located at 563 Salvatierra Walk (723-1066, <http://oae.stanford.edu>). Professional staff will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend reasonable accommodations, and prepare an Accommodation Letter for faculty dated in the current quarter in which the request is being made. Students should contact the OAE ASAP since timely notice is needed to coordinate accommodations.

Distinguished Career Institute (DCI) students

We are glad to have DCI students in the American West course. Please note that DCI students should not attend weekly sections with the TAs and instead will have the opportunity to attend an optional one-time section led by the faculty.

Electronics policy

Electronics, including but not limited to laptops and mobile phones, are not permitted during lectures for this course. If you have a need for this, please speak with your TA. Please refer to OAE for information regarding assistive technology.

WEEK 1

March 29

INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

Course introduction

Professor Kennedy

Introduction to the Literature and Art of the West

Professor Fishkin

Introduction to the Geography of the West

Professor Freyberg

Competing Western Narratives

Professor Cain

March 31

THEME 1: SPACE AND TIME

Buffalo Bill, Cody, Frederick Jackson, Turner, and Mt. Rushmore

Professor Kennedy

Readings:

- Frederick Jackson Turner, “*The Significance of the Frontier in American History*” (1893)

Writing the West

Professor Fishkin

Readings:

- Twain, Mark. “Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog.” 1865.
- Twain, Mark. “Buck Fanshaw's Funeral.” *Roughing It (Chapter XLVII)*. American Publishing Company, 1872.
- Twain, Mark. “Fenimore Cooper’s Literary Offenses.” 1895.

- Dunbar, Paul Laurence. “Welcome Address, to the Western Association of Writers.” *Oak and Ivy*. Dayton: Press of United Brethren, 1892.
 - Wister, Owen. Chapters 1 and 2. *The Virginian: A Horseman of the Plains*. New York: The Macmillan company, 1904.
 - OPTIONAL: Katharine Lee Bates, “Pike’s Peak” (1904).
 - OPTIONAL: <https://campusnames.stanford.edu/pdf/Serra-Report.pdf>
 - OPTIONAL: *Roughing It*, Mark Twain
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WEEK 2

April 5

THEME 1: SPACE AND TIME

The West Enters American History

Professor Kennedy

Deep Time and the Creation of the American West

Professor Freyberg

Required Viewing:

- **"The West as America" exhibition at the Smithsonian, 1991**

Professor Nemerov

Readings:

- Stein, *Visualizing Content*
- **The Portrayal of the American West, 1830-1860**

Professor Nemerov

April 7

THEME 1: SPACE AND TIME

Open Space vs. Bordered Space in the West

Professor Fishkin

Readings:

- Anzaldúa, Gloria E. *Borderlands/La Frontera*. 4th ed. [1987]. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2012. Excerpts from preface to the first edition; excerpts from chapters 1, 2, and 7: pp. 19-20, 23-35, 41-45, 99-102, 112-113.
- OPTIONAL: Lynch Mobs Killed Latinos Across the West. The Fight to Remember These Atrocities is Just Starting.” *New York Times* 3/2/19
<https://nyti.ms/2VxZw1J>

Politics Over Time

Professor Cain

WEEK 3

April 12

THEME 1: SPACE AND TIME

The Spatial Consequences of Time: Western Natural Resources

Professor Freyberg

Mobility vs. Confinement in the West

Professor Fishkin

Readings:

- Inada, Lawson Fusao. "Prologue." *Legends from Camp: Poems*. Minneapolis: Coffee House Press, 1992. 1-2.
- Inada, Lawson Fusao. "Concentration Constellation." *Legends from Camp: Poems*. Minneapolis: Coffee House Press, 1992. 1-2.
- OPTIONAL: Tully, Jim. "A California Holiday." *The American Mercury*. January 1928. 22-29.
- OPTIONAL: Lai, Him Mark, Genny Lim, and Judy Yung. "The Detainment, Poems 12-33." *Island: Poetry and History of Chinese Immigrants on Angel Island, 1910 to 1940*. 1981. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991. Poems #12, 17, 21, 22, 31.

April 14

THEME 2: Peoples Then and Now

Sharing Resources: Native Americans, Reservations, and Water

Professor Freyberg

Required Viewing:

- Breakthrough: Bitter Water—Professor Karletta Chief

Native Americans

Professor Kennedy

Reading:

- Walker, Francis A. "The Indian Question." *J.R. Osgood and Company Boston* (1874)

WEEK 4

April 19

THEME 2: Peoples Then and Now

Immigration

Professor Kennedy

Reconstructing Chinese Railroad Workers' Lives

Professor Fishkin

- Kingston, Maxine Hong. "The Grandfather of the Sierra Nevada Mountains." *China Men*. [1980]. New York: Vintage Books and Random House Inc, 1989. pp. 128-130, 135-146.
- Chang, Gordon and Fishkin, Shelley Fisher. "The Chinese Helped Build America." *ForbesAsia* 12 May 2014.
- Browse the website of Chinese Railroad Workers in North America Project at Stanford University: <http://chineserailroadworkers.stanford.edu>

Required Viewing:

- A Conversation with Connie Young Yu and Shelley Fisher Fishkin

April 21

THEME 2: Peoples Then and Now

The Chinese in the West: Discrimination and Exclusion

Professor Fishkin

Readings:

- Twain, Mark. "Disgraceful Persecution of a Boy." [1870] *The Writings of Mark Twain, Volume XXIII*. New York: P. F. Collier & Son Company, 1917.
- Twain, Mark. "Goldsmith's Friend Abroad Again." *Galaxy Magazine*-1870-1871, Letters 1-4, 7.
 - <http://www.twainquotes.com/Galaxy/187010b.html>
 - <http://www.twainquotes.com/Galaxy/187101e.html>
- Stegner, Wallace. "The Chink." *Collected Stories of Wallace Stegner*. [1940]. New York: Random House/Penguin Books, 1990. 191-203.

Black California Writers

Professor Fishkin

Readings:

- Himes, Chester. "Zoot Riots are Race Riots." [1943]. *Black California*. Ed. Aparajita Nanda. Berkeley: Heyday, 2011. 70-73.
- Copeland, Brian. "In the Beginning." *Not a Genuine Black Man, Or, How I Claimed My Piece Ground in the Lily-White Suburbs*. New York: Hyperion, 2006. 19-26.
- Bradley, David. "Eulogy for Nigger." *Tri Quarterly*. Northwestern University, 15 July 2014.
- OPTIONAL: Carter, Jennie. Letter to the Editor of the San Francisco Elevator, 13 June 1869 and 4 July 1869. Jennie Carter: *A Black Journalist in the Early West*. Ed. Eric Gardner. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2010. 73-76.
- OPTIONAL: Coleman, Wanda. "L.A. Love City." [1996]. *Black California*. Ed. Aparajita Nanda. Berkeley: Heyday, 2011. 230-234.

Required Viewing:

- **The Port Chicago Disaster: Racial Injustice During World War II**

Professor Nemerov

Readings:

- Allen, Robert L. "The Port Chicago Disaster and Its Aftermath." *The Black Scholar*. 13 2-3 (Spring 1982) 2-29.

PLEASE NOTE Section attendance this week will be a required visit to the Anderson Collection to view Wendy Red Star's exhibit in preparation for her visit to class next week. Information regarding this will be communicated by the TA team on Canvas.

WEEK 5

April 26

THEME 2: Peoples Then and Now

FIRST ESSAY DUE (APRIL 26)

Native American Voices Remember Wounded Knee

Professor Fishkin

Readings:

- Black Elk, Nicholas. *Black Elk Speaks, Being the Life Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux As told through John G. Neihardt (Flaming Rainbow)*. [1921]. University of Nebraska Press, 1979, Chapters 21-25.
- Momaday, N. Scott. "December 29, 1890." *In The Presence of the Sun: Stories and Poems, 1961-1991*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992. 139.

- Welch, James. "The Man from Washington." 1971. *The Seattle Times* 20 October 2004.
- Rose, Wendy. "I Expected My Skin and My Blood to Ripen." *Bone Dance: New and Selected Poems 1965-1993*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1994. 18-19.

Artist Wendy Red Star in conversation with Professor Fishkin

April 28

THEME 3: Water, Energy, and Fire

Water: Too Little (Aridity and Drought)?

Professor Freyberg

John Wesley Powell and the Tyranny of Climate

Professor Kennedy

Readings:

- John Wesley Powell, *Report on the Lands of the Arid Region of the United States* (U.S. Geological Survey, 1879)

WEEK 6

May 3

THEME 3: Water, Energy, and Fire

Writing Aridity in the West

Professor Fishkin

Readings:

- Stegner, Wallace. "Thoughts in a Dry Land." *Where the Bluebird Sings to the Lemonade Springs: Living and Writing in the West*. New York: Random House, 1992. Pgs 45-56.
- Stegner, Wallace. "Living Dry." *Where the Bluebird Sings to the Lemonade Springs: Living and Writing in the West*. New York: Random House, 1992. Pgs 60-64, 68-75.
- Austin, Mary. "The Land of Little Rain" and "Water Trails of the Ceriso." *The Land of Little Rain*. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1903.
- Abbey, Edward. "Water." *Desert Solitaire: A Season in the Wilderness*. 1968. New York: Simon & Schuster/Touchstone Books, 1998. 112-127.
- OPTIONAL: Rivera, Tomás. "Los niños no se aguantaron / The Children Couldn't Wait." ...*Y No Se Lo Tragó La Tierra...And the Earth Did Not Swallow Him*. Houston: Arte Público Press, 1987. 7-9, 87-89.

36 Views of Lake Tahoe
Professor Fishkin

May 5

THEME 3: Water, Energy, and Fire

Water: Too Much (Floods)?
Professor Freyberg

Water Politics / Risky Business: Aridity, Wildfires and the West
Professor Cain

Readings:

- “Wildfire Trends in the US,” <https://www.sciline.org/evidence-blog/wildfires>
 - John T. Abatzoglou and A. Park Williams, “Impact of anthropogenic climate change on wildfire across western US forests” PNAS October 18, 2016 113 (42) 11770-11775; published ahead of print October 10, 2016
<https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1607171113>
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WEEK 7

May 10

THEME 4: Politics and Policy

How the West Was Won
Professor Kennedy

Managing Public Lands in the West/Tribal Governance and Federalism in the West
Professor Cain

Reading:

- Mary Ann King, Co-Management or Contracting -Agreements between Native American Tribes and the U.S. National Park Service Pursuant to the 1994 Tribal Self-Governance Act, 31 Harv. Envtl. L. Rev. pp 475-493 only

Required Viewing:

- **Native Americans, Treaties, Courts – Conversation with Professor Greg Ablavsky, Sarah Sadlier, Tanner Allread**

May 12

THEME 4: Politics and Policy

Populism and Direct Democracy in the West/Multiculturalism

Professor Cain

Dams and Fish: Politics and Policy on Western Rivers

Professor Freyberg

WEEK 8

May 17

THEME 4: Politics and Policy

Texas, California, and the Future of the West

Professor Kennedy and Professor Cain

Readings:

- Schrag, Peter, *California: America's High Stakes Experiment* (UC Press, 2008), Intro and Chapter 1

Required Viewing:

- **Conversation with Destin Jenkins**

May 19

THEME 5: Boom and Bust

Gold and Other Rushes

Professor Kennedy

Irrigation: Boom and Bust?

Professor Freyberg

WEEK 9

May 24

THEME 5: Boom and Bust

Writing the Gold Rush and the Silver Boom

Professor Fishkin

Readings:

- Dame Shirley. *The Shirley Letters from California Mines in 1851-52*. San Francisco: Thomas C. Russell, 2007. Letter the sixth (pp. 77-86), twelfth (pp. 163-176), fourteenth (pp. 191-204), fifteenth (pp. 205-222), and twenty-second (pp. 317-334).
- Twain, Mark. *Roughing It*. American Publishing Company, 1872. Chapters 26-30, 40-41.

The West's Changing Climate

Professor Freyberg

May 26

THEME 5: Boom and Bust

Transforming the Western Economy

Professor Cain

Reading:

- Cain, Bruce E., and Roger Noll. "Institutional Causes of California's Budget Problem." *California Journal of Politics and Policy* 2.3 (2010).
<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6xc7316c>.

Additional Lecture TBD

WEEK 10

May 31

THEME 5: Boom and Bust

Europe Discovers the West

Professor Fishkin

Reading

- May, Karl. Chapters I and II. *Winnetou*. New York, Cincinnati, and Chicago: Benziger Brothers, 1878. 7-26.

The Modern Western Economy

Professor Kennedy

Reading:

- Berlin, Leslie. "The History of Silicon Valley." Manuscript.

June 3

THEME 5: Boom and Bust

SECOND ESSAY DUE (JUNE 3)