

The American West (HIST 4347)
Fall Semester 2026
Tuesday / Thursday 12:30-1:45 PM
Classroom: MADLA 207

Instructor: Dr. William Kiser
Office: Central Academic Building, Room 313F
E-Mail: william.kiser@tamusa.edu

OFFICE HOURS:
Tuesday & Thursday 11:00-12:00 or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

An examination of the history of the American West from pre-contact to the present.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To develop critical thinking skills through classroom discussion, extended-length reading and writing assignments, and essay exams.
2. To practice and improve analytical writing skills.
3. To understand the history of The Cold War within the context of political, social, and cultural change over time.

REQUIRED COURSE READINGS:

Robert M. Utley, *High Noon in Lincoln: Violence on the Western Frontier* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987). ANY EDITION

Kyle Longley, *The Morenci Marines: A Tale of Small Town American and the Vietnam War* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2013).

Additional article-length readings will be posted on Blackboard

COURSE TEXTBOOK:

Robert V. Hine & John Mack Faragher, *The American West: A New Interpretive History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000).

EXAMS

There will be two tests: one midterm exam and one final exam. The exams are given in essay format to allow you to demonstrate your understanding of historical topics and to provide your own interpretations of events and themes. You must bring a blank blue book to each exam. The questions will be based on lecture, class discussions, and supplementary readings.

BOOK EXAMS

You will be required to read two books (Utley and Longley, listed above) and take an essay exam on each one. These exams will be taken in class. Students are allowed to use handwritten notes (but not computer-generated notes) and a hard copy of the book (but not an e-book) during the exam. I will provide a prompt for each of these essay exams, so you will be using the readings to respond to a specific historical question.

ARTICLE QUIZZES

In the weekly schedule below, there are several journal articles assigned (these are posted on Blackboard). There will be a short in-class quiz over each of these articles.

CLASSROOM PARTICIPATION

Students must participate and engage in classroom discussion over the readings, as well as the lectures. As this is an upper-division course, both attendance AND participation are expected.

GRADING SCALE

Midterm Exam: 150 points

Final Exam: 150 points

Book Exams: 400 points (2 essays worth 200 points each)

Quizzes: 200 points (4 quizzes worth 50 points each)

Classroom Participation & Attendance: 100 points

TOTAL POINTS: 1000

A= 1000-900; B = 899-800; C =799-700; D = 699-600; F = 599 and below.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Attendance: Class attendance is mandatory and is part of your final grade. You will not be able to succeed in this course if you habitually miss class. Please be punctual – do not arrive late, and do not leave early. If you know that you will be late or must leave early, please inform me ahead of time. **If you arrive more than 10 minutes late to class, you will be marked absent for that entire period.**

Extra Credit: I do not offer extra credit.

Blackboard: This course has a Blackboard site, which is where your grades will be posted. Course announcements and supplementary readings will be posted to Blackboard as well.

Make-Up Exams: Make-up exams are only allowed for emergencies such as debilitating illness, a death in the immediate family, and religious or school functions. In any case, you must provide documentation of your absence in order to be allowed a make-up exam.

Classroom Etiquette: Please be respectful in the classroom. Do not get up and leave early, turn your cell phone to silent mode, and do not hold personal conversations during lecture or discussion. Laptops may only be used to take notes.

Communication: E-mail me at any time regarding questions or concerns that you might have. I do my best to respond to email within one day. You may also schedule an appointment to speak with me in my office outside of regular office hours. All correspondence between professors and students must occur via university email accounts. You must have a Jaguar email account ready and working. If it is not working, contact the help desk at sahelp@tamusa.edu or 210-784-4357.

Statement on Artificial Intelligence: All student work must be generated by the students themselves. Students should not have another person/entity do the writing or any other portion of an assignment for them. This includes hiring a person or a company to write assignments, as well as using artificial intelligence tools including but not limited to ChatGPT.

Support Services & Disclosures

Academic Accommodations for Individuals with Disabilities: Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to providing all students with reasonable access to learning opportunities and accommodations in accordance with The Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, Disability Support Services is located in the Central Academic Building, Suite 210. You can also contact us via phone at (210) 784-1335, visit us at the [website](#) or email us at dss@tamusa.edu. All students are encouraged to discuss their academic accommodation with Disability Support Services and their instructors as soon as possible.

Academic Learning Center: All currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio can utilize the Academic Learning Center for subject-area tutoring. The Academic Learning Center provides free course-based tutoring to all currently enrolled students at Texas

A&M University-San Antonio. Students wishing to work with a tutor can make appointments through the Brainfuse online tutoring platform. Brainfuse can be accessed in the *Tools* section of Blackboard. You can contact the Academic Learning Center by emailing tutoring@tamusa.edu, calling (210) 784-1307, or visiting the Central Academic Building, room 202. Online tutoring is also available for after hours and weekend assistance.

Jaguar Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center (WLDCC): The WLDCC provides support to graduate and undergraduate students in all three colleges as well as faculty and staff. Writing tutors work with students to develop reading skills, prepare oral presentations, and plan, draft, and revise their written assignments. Our language tutors support students enrolled in Spanish courses and students composing in Spanish for any assignment. Our digital studio tutors support students working on digital projects such as eportfolios, class presentations, or other digital multimedia projects. The WLDCC offers face-to-face, synchronous online, and asynchronous digital appointments. Students can schedule appointments with the WLDCC in JagWire under the Student Services tab. Click on “Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center” to make your appointment. Students wanting to work in realtime with a tutor can schedule an “Online Appointment.” Students wishing to receive asynchronous, written feedback from a tutor can schedule an “eTutoring” appointment. More information about what services we offer, how to make an appointment, and how to access your appointment can be found on our [website](#) . The WLDCC can also be reached by emailing wldcc@tamusa.edu.

Counseling/Mental Health Resources: As a college student, there may be times when personal stressors interfere with your academic performance and negatively impact your daily functioning. If you are experiencing emotional difficulties or mental health concerns, support is available to you through the Student Counseling Center (SCC). To schedule an appointment, visit our website, call 210-784-1331 or visit Madla 120 between the hours of 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM. All mental health services provided by the SCC are free and confidential (as the law allows). The Student Counseling Center provides brief individual and group therapy, crisis intervention, consultation, case management, and prevention services. *Crisis support is available 24/7/365 by calling the SCC at 210-784-1331 or through the TELUS student support App.* The TELUS Student Support App provides a variety of mental health resources to including 24/7/365 support for in the moment distress, crisis support, an anonymous peer-to-peer support network, mental health screenings, podcasts, and articles to improve your mental wellbeing.

Financial Aid and Verification of Attendance: According to the following federal regulation, 34 CFR 668.21: U.S. Department of Education (DoE) Title IV regulation, a student can only receive Title IV funds based on Title IV eligibility criteria which include class attendance. If Title IV funds are disbursed to ineligible students (including students who fail to begin attendance), the institution must return these funds to the U.S. DoE within 30 days of becoming aware that the student will not or has not begun attendance. Faculty will provide the Office of Financial Aid with an electronic notification if a student has not attended by the published Census Date (the first week of class). Any student receiving federal financial aid who does not attend prior to the published Census Date (the first week of class) will have their aid terminated and returned to the DoE. Please note that any student who stops attending at any time during the semester may also need to return a portion of their federal aid.

The Six-Drop Rule: Students are subject to the requirements of Senate Bill (SB) 1231 passed by the Texas Legislature in 2007. SB 1231 limits students to a maximum of six (6) non-punitive course drops (i.e., courses a student chooses to drop) during their undergraduate careers. A non-punitive drop does not affect the student's GPA. However, course drops that exceed the maximum allowed by SB 1231 will be treated as "F" grades and will impact the student's GPA.

Academic Misconduct: Students are expected to exhibit a high level of honesty and integrity in their pursuit of higher education. Students engaging in an act that violates the standards of academic integrity will find themselves facing academic and/or disciplinary sanctions. Academic misconduct is any act, or attempt, which gives an unfair advantage to the student. Additionally, any behavior specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus or class discussion may be considered as academic misconduct. For more information on academic misconduct policies and procedures please review the [Student Code of Conduct](#) or visit the resources available in the [OSRR website](#)

The complete academic calendar is available online:

<https://www.tamusa.edu/academics/academic-calendar/current-year/Fall-2026.html>

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

IMPORTANT DATES:

August 27: Quiz 1

September 24: Quiz 2

October 13: Quiz 3

October 22: Midterm Exam

October 29: Book Exam (Utley)

November 5: Quiz 4 (*Tombstone*)

December 1: Class Discussion with *Morenci Marines* author Dr. Kyle Longley

December 3: Book Exam (Longley)

December 10: Final Exam (Noon-1:50 PM)

Week 1: August 25, August 27

Tuesday: Course Introduction & Syllabus

Thursday: Discussion on the "Western Frontier" (**Quiz 1: Turner, Cronon, Worster**)

READINGS: Turner Thesis; Cronon, "Vanishing Frontier"; Worster "New West, True West" (Blackboard)

Week 2: September 1, September 3

Tuesday: Discussion on Manifest Destiny and Westward Expansion

Thursday: Prehistoric Cultures

Week 3: September 8, September 10

Tuesday: Imperialism & Colonialism
Thursday: The Spanish Colonial Frontier

READINGS: Textbook Chapter 1 “A New World Begins”

Week 4: September 15, September 17

Tuesday: The Western Frontier in the Early American Republic
Thursday: Indians & The Fur Trade

READINGS: Textbook Chapter 4 “The Land and its Markers”; Chapter 5 “The Fur Trade”

Week 5: September 22, September 24

Tuesday: The Debate on Native American Genocide
Thursday: Scalp Warfare (**Quiz 2: Kiser & Westermann**)

READINGS: Westermann, “Words and Wars of Conquest,” and Kiser, “The Business of Killing Indians” articles (Blackboard)

Week 6: September 29, October 1

Tuesday: Manifest Destiny, Slavery, & Sectional Politics
Thursday: Manifest Destiny, Slavery, & Sectional Politics

READINGS: Textbook Chapter 6 “From Texas to Oregon”

Week 7: October 6, October 8

Tuesday: The Mexican-American War
Thursday: Civil War in Texas

READINGS: Textbook Chapter 7 “War and Destiny”; Wooster “American Military Frontiers”

Week 8: October 13, October 15

Tuesday: Civil War in the Southwest Borderlands (**Quiz 3: Hamalainen**)
Thursday: Greater Reconstruction in the American West

READINGS: Hamalainen, “Reconstructing the Great Plains” (Blackboard)

Week 9: October 20, October 22

Tuesday: Exam Review
Thursday: Midterm Exam

Week 10: October 27, October 29

Tuesday: Frontier Indian Wars
Thursday: **Book Exam (Utley)**

Week 11: November 3, November 5

Tuesday: *Tombstone* Movie
Thursday: *Tombstone* Movie (**Quiz 4**)

Week 12: November 10, November 12

Tuesday: Range Wars & Vigilante Justice

Thursday: Lincoln County War

READINGS: Utley, *High Noon in Lincoln*

Week 13: November 17, November 19

Tuesday: Cowboys and Cattle Industry

Thursday: Mining & Natural Resources

READINGS: Textbook Chapter 8 “Mining Frontiers”; Chapter 10 “Open Range”

Week 14: November 24

Tuesday: Railroads and Frontier Capitalism / Myths of the West

Thursday: No Class (Thanksgiving)

READINGS: Textbook Chapter 9 “The Power of the Road”; Textbook Chapter 15 “Myth of the West”; Chapter 16, “The Frontier and West in our Time”

Week 15: December 1, December 3

Tuesday: Class Discussion with *Morenci Marines* author Dr. Kyle Longley

Thursday: **Book Exam (Longley)**

READINGS: Longley, *The Morenci Marines*

Week 16: Final Exam: Thursday, December 10th from Noon to 1:50 PM