This course explores depictions of the American West in film, in literature, and on television. It focuses on themes relevant to the West’s history, demographics, politics, and economics, and it examines processes of adaptation of the written word to the screen.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

Four page critical thematic essay  
20% of course grade

Compare and contrast John Ford’s *Stagecoach* and Ernest Haycox’s “Stage to Lordsburg” or Lynn Reynolds’ *Riders of the Purple Sage* and Zane Grey’s *Riders of the Purple Sage*.

Eight page critical thematic essay  
30% of course grade

Compare and contrast a film adaptation with its original source. Choose one of the following books: *Cadillac Desert; Covered Wagon; Crow Killer: The Saga of Liver-Eating Johnson; Letters of a Woman Homesteader; The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven; The Milagro Beanfield War; Oil; Sometimes A Great Notion; Trouble Shooter; The Banditti of the Plains*.

Final  
30% of course grade

This exam will be drawn from Professor Dunn’s lectures, required course readings, and films and clips screened in class.

Historical site assignment  
20% of course grade

Visit a site significant to the history of the American West (such as Promontory Point, Hole in the Rock, Independence Rock, and Donner Memorial State Park) and submit a 2-5 minute video report on your experience. You will show your video to the class.

**REQUIRED READINGS:**

*BOOKS (AVAILABLE AT THE U. BOOKSTORE):*

*Letters of a Woman Homesteader* (Elinore Pruitt Stewart, 1914)

*The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* (Sherman Alexie, 1994)

*Riders of the Purple Sage* (Zane Grey, 1912)

*HANDOUTS:*

*Cadillac Desert* (selections; Marc Reisner, 1993)

“Critical Writing for Film” (S.R. Dunn)

“Dangerous Mission” (Albert R. Lyman, 1962)

“Early Hollywood” (Kevin Brownlow, 1968)

*Great Basin Kingdom* (selections; Leonard Arrington, 1958)

“How to Watch a Film,” (Greg Lyons, 2003)

“How to Write the Great American Indian Novel” (Sherman Alexie, 1996)

*Hole in the Rock* (selections; David E. Miller, 1998)

*Mormon Country* (selections; Wallace Stegner, 1942)

“Putting the Cover on The Covered Wagon” (W.H. Hutchinson, 1978)

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

“Stage to Lordsburg” (Ernest Haycox, 1937)


“The Western” (Thomas Schatz, 1996)

“Why I Like The West,” (Wallace Stegner, 1950)

“Writers of the Purple Sage: Novelists and the American West” (William Bloodworth, 1996)

THE OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY ([http://www.oed.com](http://www.oed.com); access via your U of U account)

additional handouts as distributed in class

e-reserve readings as assigned in class
OPTIONAL TEXTS (on reserve at the Marriott Library):

The American West: The Invention of a Myth (David Hamilton Murdoch, 2001)
The Banditti of the Plains (A.S. Mercer, 1894)
Beyond the Hundredth Meridian: John Wesley Powell and the Second Opening of the West (Wallace Stegner, 1954)
Covered Wagon (Emerson Hough, 1922; e-text http://arthursclassicnovels.com/hough/cwag10.html#1_0_27)
Celluloid Indians: Native Americans and Film (Jacquelyn Kilpatrick, 1999)
Hole in the Rock (David E. Miller, 1998)
The Light of Western Stars (Zane Grey, 1914)
The Milagro Beanfield War (John Nichols, 1974)
Oil! (Upton Sinclair, 1927)
Owens Valley Revisited: a Reassessment of the West’s First Great Water Transfer (Gary D. Libecap, 2007)
The Rainbow Trail (Zane Grey, 1915)
Trouble Shooter (Ernest Haycox, 1936)
Sometimes A Great Notion (Ken Kesey, 1964)

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK I

THE WESTERN GENRE I
LECTURE: “Hollywood” Comes West; Conventions, Icons and Terrain of the Western

FILMS: The Great Train Robbery (Edwin S. Porter, 1903)
Stagecoach (John Ford, 1939)

REQUIRED READING:
“Early Hollywood” (handout; Kevin Brownlow, 1968)
“How to Watch a Film,” (Greg Lyons, 2003)
“Stage to Lordsburg” (handout; Ernest Haycox, 1937)
“Westbound: Feature Films and the American West”
(handout; John H. Lenihan, 1996)
“The Western” (Thomas Schatz, 1996)

WEEK II

THE WESTERN GENRE II
LECTURE: Images of Latter-day Saints in Westerns; Mormon Colonization of the West

FILM: Wagonmaster (John Ford, 1950)

REQUIRED READING:
“Dangerous Mission” (Albert R. Lyman, 1962)
Great Basin Kingdom
(selections/handout; Leonard Arrington, 1958)
Hole in the Rock (selections/handout; David E. Miller, 1998)
Mormon Country (selections/handout; Wallace Stegner, 1940)

WEEK III

THE WESTERN GENRE II
LECTURE: Western Literature and Film; Zane Grey

FILM: Riders of the Purple Sage (Lynn Reynolds, 1925)
NOTE: THE 9/6 CLASS MEETS AT THE POST THEATER.

REQUIRED READING:
Riders of the Purple Sage (Zane Grey, 1912)
“Writers of the Purple Sage: Novelists and the American West”
(handout; William Bloodworth, 1996)

Organist Blaine Gale will accompany Riders of the Purple Sage.
WEEK IV  “WESTWARD HO!” I
LECTURE: Westward Migration Pre-Transcontinental Railroad; Manifest Destiny
FILM: “A Stop Along the Trail” (Charles Kuralt, 1974)
FILM: *The Covered Wagon* (James Cruze, 1924)
REQUIRED READING: “Putting the Covered in *The Covered Wagon*”
(handout; W.H. Hutchinson, 1978)
“The Significance of the Frontier in American History”
(handout; Frederick Jackson Turner, 1893)

WEEK V  “WESTWARD HO!” II
LECTURE: The Transcontinental Railroad
FILM: *Union Pacific* (Cecil B. DeMille, 1939)

WEEK VI  HOMESTEADING
ESSAY #1 DUE BY CLASSTIME
LECTURE: Western Community and Self-Sufficiency
FILM: *Heartland* (Richard Pearce, 1979)
REQUIRED READING: *Letters of a Woman Homesteader* (Elinore P. Stewart, 1914)

WEEK VII  NATIVE AMERICANS I
LECTURE: Indians and Hollywood
FILM: *Run of the Arrow* (Samuel Fuller, 1957)

WEEK VIII  SPRING BREAK

WEEK IX  NATIVE AMERICANS II
LECTURE: Stories about Indians by Indians
FILM: *Smoke Signals* (Chris Eyre, 1998)
REQUIRED READING: “How to Write the Great American Indian Novel”
(handout; Sherman Alexie, 1996)
*The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* (Sherman Alexie, 1994)

WEEK X  THE AMERICAN SOUTHWEST AND MEXICO
LECTURE: *Aztlán and the American Southwest*
FILM: *Mi Familia* (Gregory Nava, 1995)

WEEK XI  WATER ISSUES I
LECTURE: Making the Desert Bloom; The Colorado River Basin
FILM: “The American Nile” (from *Cadillac Desert*, KTEH, 1997)
FILM: “Mulholland’s Dream” (from *Cadillac Desert*, KTEH, 1997)
REQUIRED READING: *Cadillac Desert* (selections/handout; Marc Reisner, 1993)
WEEK XII  WATER ISSUES II
LECTURE: LA and the “Rape” of the Owens Valley; Las Vegas and Snake Valley
FILM:  Chinatown (Roman Polanski, 1974)
FILM:  Chinatown (cont.)
REQUIRED READING: Cadillac Desert (selections/handout; Marc Reisner, 1993)

WEEK XIII  FARMING AND RANCHING
LECTURE: Family and Community vs. Development, Land Values, and Taxes
FILMS:  “Branded!” (Sam Dunn, 2013)
         The Milagro Beanfield War (Robert Redford, 1988)

WEEK XIV  Western Highways
FILMS:  SHORTS PROGRAMS, including Charles Kuralt’s “Cadillac Ranch,” Kevin Smith’s “Roadside Attractions” and much more!

WEEK XV  EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES
LECTURE: Southern California’s Oil Boom
FILM:  There Will Be Blood (Paul Thomas Anderson, 2007)

WEEK XVI  LOGGING  ESSAY #2 DUE BY CLASSTIME
LECTURE: History of Northwest Logging; Individualism and Collectivism
FILMS:  “Felling a Redwood Giant” (Wendell Dunn, 1960)
         Sometimes a Great Notion (Paul Newman, 1970)

WEEK XVI  FINAL EXAMINATION

If you seek special accommodations for your final, such as a different exam date, contact Professor Dunn at least one week before the exam. He is happy to work toward arranging alternate testing dates and times.

ADA Statement: The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for persons with disabilities. If you will need disabilities accommodations in this class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the instructor and to the Center for Disabilities Services, 162 Olpin Union Bldg., 581-5020 (V/TDD) to make arrangements for accommodations.