

Hist 135: Comparative World History
Topic: Frontiers of Settlement
Syllabus

Fall 2011
MWF 9.55am-10.45am, Humanities 1651
Professor Miranda Johnson
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Overview of class

Whether you were born and grew up in the United States or not, you've probably encountered the 'myth of the frontier' in books, movies, computer games, in history classes at school, on the playground, or in talking with friends and family. By 'myth of the frontier', I mean the story about how the United States became a continental empire by expanding westwards. The myth is peopled by characters we know well: cowboys and Indians; big land speculators and small homesteaders; federal agents, local sheriffs, and vigilantes. These characters are national heroes or anti-heroes and they continue to serve as reference points and symbols for the nation. We have been reminded of that very recently: the code-name given to the operation to find Osama bin Laden was 'Geronimo', after the nineteenth-century Apache leader; and the Navy SEALs who were sent to the walled compound in Abbotabad flew there in 'Blackhawk' helicopters.

The 'myth of the frontier', as we will find out in this course, is often historically inaccurate and glosses over more than it reveals about the actual colonization of the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa—all places where that myth has had particular purchase. But it does sustain a sense of what it means to belong to the nation in those countries, politically and socially. We have to take the myth seriously, therefore, even if we might decide that we want to undo or complicate some of the assumptions that give it power. In this class, we will undertake to understand *why* the myth of the frontier has had such powerful impact in the making and memorializing of predominantly English-speaking settler societies. We will discover that there are, in fact, plural myths of the frontier and that these myths tell us something about what is distinct about nation-building in different regions and in different time periods. We will also seek to complicate those myths of the frontier by examining lesser-known stories about settler colonial expansion. To this end, we will focus in particular on the relations and interactions between Anglophone settlers and indigenous people as settler colonial states expanded through the nineteenth-century.

Readings

Text to purchase (available from University Bookstore)

Maggie Siggins, *Marie-Anne: The Extraordinary Life of Louis Riel's Grandmother*, Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2009
ISBN: 9780771080302

Course pack (available from the Humanities Copy Center, 1650 Humanities Building)

- Belich, James. "Colonizations." In *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Angloworld, 1783-1939*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009, pp.177-218.
- Bleszynski, Nick. "Rebel with a cause?" In *Shoot Straight, You Bastards*. Milsons Point NSW: Random House, 2002, pp.367-377.
- Gump, J O. "A Spirit of Resistance: Sioux, Xhosa, and Maori Responses to Western Dominance, 1840-1920." *Pacific Historical Review*, 66, no. 1 (1997): 21-52.
- Hamalainen, Pekka. "The Empire of the Plains," and "Collapse." In *The Comanche Empire*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008, pp.141-180; 321-341.
- Hirst, John. "Flogging and Work," and "The Economy and Penal Principles." In *Freedom on the Fatal Shore: Australia's First Colony*. Melbourne, Vic: Black Ink Books, 2008, pp. 50-61 and 76-98.
- Irvine, R. F. and O. T. J. Alpers. "The Public Works Policy and the Abolition of the Provinces." In *The Progress of New Zealand in the Century*. Toronto, Philadelphia, London, Edinburgh: The Linscott Publishing Company and W. & R. Chambers, Ltd, 1902, pp.278-290.
- "John Wayne receives a Congressional Gold Medal, 1979" and "The Duke: 'More than Just a Hero,' 1979." In Claude A. Milner II, Anne M. Butler, David Rich Lewis, eds. *Major Problems in the History of the American West*. Boston, MA: Wadsworth, 1997, pp. 526-9.
- Johnson, Susan. "Domestic Life in the Diggings," and "Bulls, Bears and Dancing Boys." In *Roaring Camp: The Social World of the California Gold Rush*. New York, London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2000, pp. 99-183.
- Karsten, Peter. "Cows in the Corn, Pigs in the Garden, and 'The Problem of Social Costs': 'High' and 'Low' Legal Cultures of the British Diaspora Lands in the 17th, 18th, and 19th Centuries." *Law and Society Review*, 32, 1, (1998): 63-92.
- Levine, Philippa. "Settling the 'New World'" and "After America." In *The British Empire: Sunrise to Sunset*. Harlow: Pearson/Longman, 2007, pp. 31-60.
- Parewhanake, Rei "The Land." In Curnow, Jennifer, Ngapare Hopa and Jane McRae, eds. *He Pitopito Korero no te Perehi Maori: Readings from the Maori-Language Press*. Auckland: University of Auckland Press, 2006, pp. 78-81.
- Paterson, Andrew Barton. "The Wild Colonial Boy," and "Immigration." In Paterson, *Old Bush Songs*. Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1905.
<http://purl.library.usyd.edu.au/setis/id/v00030> [accessed August 15 2011]
- Penny, Barbara R. "Australia's Reaction to the Boer War: A Study in Colonial Imperialism." *Journal of British Studies*, 7, 1 (November 1967): 97-130.
- Rhodes, Cecil. "Confession of Faith [1877]." <http://pages.uoregon.edu/kimball/Rhodes-Confession.htm> [accessed August 15 2011]
- "Saukamappee (Cree) recalls the arrival of horses, guns and smallpox to the Northern Plains, 1787." In Hamalainen, Pekka, and Benjamin H. Johnson, eds. *Major Problems in the History of North American Borderlands*. Boston, MA: Wadsworth, 2012, pp.135-8.

- Slotkin, Richard. "Buffalo Bill's 'Wild West and the Mythologization of American Empire.'" In Kaplan, Amy and Donald E. Pease, eds. *Cultures of United States Imperialism*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993, pp.164-181.
- Thompson, Leonard. "Diamonds, gold and British Imperialism." In *A History of South Africa (3rd edition)*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000, p.110-153.
- Tse Chong-Chee, "Letters to Tsi Chow-Choo." In Kowalewski, Michael ed. *Gold Rush: A Literary Exploration*. Berkeley California: Heyday Books, 1997, pp. 268-271.
- Turner, Frederick Jackson. "The Significance of the Frontier in American History." In Turner. *The Frontier in American History*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962 (f.p. 1920), pp. 1-38.
- van den Berg, A. M. "Journal of the War [South Africa 1900]." In Daymond, M. J., Dorothy Driver, et. al. *Women Writing Africa: The Southern Region, volume 1*. New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 2003, pp.139-144.
- White, Richard. "Outlaw Gangs of the Middle Border: American Social Bandits." *Western Historical Quarterly*, 12 (October 1981): 387-408.

Structure of class and learning goals

This class is a transnational history class. That means that the class goes *beyond* national borders to seek answers to the questions that we have posed (*why* is the myth of the frontier so important, in national terms? what does that myth leave out or gloss over?). The regions whose histories we will touch upon include North America (primarily, the United States and Canada); Southern Africa (primarily what is now South Africa); and the South Pacific (primarily Australia and New Zealand). These places are distinct but they are also connected because of the migration patterns of English-speaking colonists who settled the 'frontiers' on mass in the nineteenth-century.

The class is organized thematically and somewhat chronologically. We begin with an examination of two significant myths of the frontier, the notion of 'manifest destiny' and the idea of the 'fatal shore'. We then go on to examine how stories of the frontier can be told in different terms and, indeed, have been experienced in ways that neither the narratives of manifest destiny nor the fatal shore allow for. Topics to be covered include: the fur trade in Canada as a 'contact zone'; indigenous empires; wars of colonization; settlements and homesteading; gold rushes and resource exploitation. We conclude the class by thinking more directly about why the myth of the frontier is so important to the settler nations we have discussed in earlier parts of the class.

This class will *not* make you an expert in the histories of the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand or South Africa. Nor do I expect you to have much prior knowledge of these places. What I hope you will learn in this class is how to connect the historical experiences and narratives of peoples you might not usually think of as linked; and how to think *critically* about those connections. To this end, the key word, or rather key activity, for doing well in the class will be: question! As you will see from the schedule below, I will be lecturing twice a week, on Mondays and Wednesdays. Those lectures will be interactive: I expect you to question me and each other during the period of the lecture. That is the way that we will all learn the most from each other and develop a shared pool of knowledge. Friday sessions will be devoted to small group activities, writing workshops, and a number of class visits on and off campus.

Assignments and grading

Assessment for this class is broken down into a series of short and varied assignments. You may feel more comfortable with some assignments more than others; that's ok just try your best and ask me and other students in the class if you don't understand something. As you will see from the schedule and the table of assignments and due dates below, there is one group assignment,

three writing assignments, a primary source assignment an oral presentation, and finally a take-home exam. I will provide more details about each of the assignments and a grading rubric a week or so before it is due. This information will be posted on the Learn@UW site under ‘course information’.

You must let me know *before class* if you cannot attend and provide evidence for non-attendance. I may ask you to provide me with written answers for that week’s reading in lieu of attendance in class. Attendance and participation in class counts for 10% of your grade. That could mean the difference between an A or an AB; a B or a BC.

Assignment	Due date	Percentage of total grade
Attendance and participation:	Ongoing	10%
Small-group assignment	Friday September 16th	10%
1 st writing assignment	Friday September 30th	10%
2 nd writing assignment	Monday October 17th	15%
3 rd writing assignment	Monday November 7th	15%
Oral presentation and written summary	Monday-Friday Nov 28 th -Dec 2nd	20%
Take-home exam	Friday December 16th	20%

Other resources and issues

A fellow from the Writing Center will come and talk to us about what the center has to offer students. They will also co-teach a class on essay writing. I encourage you all to make use of this wonderful resource on campus where you can get individualized feedback on your writing: <http://www.writing.wisc.edu/>

We will talk about correct referencing and style issues in class. You can find more information and help through Madcat: <http://researchguides.library.wisc.edu/citing>

Disability guidelines for course accommodations may be found at the UW McBurney Disability Resource Center site: <http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu/>.

Student codes of conduct may be found here: <http://students.wisc.edu/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html#points>

Schedule

Week one

Friday September 2nd: Introduction to the class

Week two

Reading: 'John Wayne receives a Congressional Gold Medal, 1979' and 'The Duke: "More than Just a Hero," 1979

Monday September 5th: NO CLASS: Labor Day

Wednesday September 7th: Introductory lecture

Friday September 9th: Finding North America, Southern Africa, and the South Pacific (small group activity using online encyclopedias and other e-resources)

Week three: Frontier regions: a brief history

Reading: Levine, 'Settling the "New World"' and 'After America'

Monday September 12th: Lecture

Wednesday September 14th: Lecture

Friday September 16th: Lecture/group work

Small-group assignment: produce a select list of useful websites and e-resources for the region/country your group is assigned. You should note on the list the name of the website; the sponsoring organization; the URL; and why you think it is useful. How do you know whether the information collected and conveyed on the site is reliable and trustworthy? You might like to point out specific categories of information that the website covers, links to primary sources, image collections, and other matters of interest to the class. Are there areas or categories that the website does not cover that you think it should? Due Friday September 16th 5pm.

Week four: The frontier as 'manifest destiny'?

Reading: Turner, 'The significance of the frontier in American history'
Rhodes, 'Confession of Faith'

Monday September 19th: Lecture

Wednesday September 21st: Lecture

Friday September 23rd: Paraphrasing Turner (small group activity)

Week five: Or the frontier as 'fatal environment'?

Reading: 'The Wild Colonial Boy' and 'Immigration'

Hirst, *Freedom on the Fatal Shore*

See also:

<http://australia.gov.au/about-australia/australian-story/early-austn-bushrangers>

Monday September 26th: Lecture

Wednesday September 28th: Lecture

Friday September 30th: Peer-review writing workshop

First writing assignment (10%): in one paragraph (maximum 250 words), explain the CENTRAL difference between the concept of ‘manifest destiny’ as described by Frederick Jackson Turner, and the notion of the ‘fatal shore’ as discussed in lectures and the readings for week five. Due Friday September 30th, 5pm.

Week six: Contact zones and borderlands: a case study of the fur trade

Reading: Siggins, Marie-Anne, parts 1 and 2 (pp. 3-184)

Monday October 3rd: Lecture

Wednesday October 5th: Lecture

Friday October 7th: Lecture

Week seven: The fur-trade continued

Reading: Siggins continued, part 3 and epilogue (pp. 185-264)

Monday October 10th: Lecture

Wednesday October 12th: Museum session

Friday October 14th: Second peer-review writing workshop

Second writing assignment (15%): using one of the artefacts we find in the Wisconsin Historical Museum’s fur trade exhibit, and drawing on the story of Marie-Anne as well as information you have gleaned from the e-resources we analyzed in weeks two and three, write an imaginative account of the life of that artefact in the fur trade, 2 pages maximum. Due Monday October 17th, 5pm

Week eight: Frontiers of settlement

Reading: Belich, *Replenishing the Earth*

Irvine and Alpers, ‘The Public Works Policy and the Abolition of the Provinces’

History of immigration in New Zealand, text and documents available at:

<http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/history-of-immigration>

Monday October 17th: Lecture

Wednesday October 19th: Lecture

Friday October 21st: Small-group discussion

Week nine: The rise of indigenous empires: an alternative frontier history

Reading: Hamalainen, 'The Empire of the Plains'
Saukamappee

Monday October 24th: Lecture

Wednesday October 26th: Lecture

Friday October 28th: Skills workshop with writing fellow from the Writing Center

Week ten: Wars of colonization and the fall of indigenous empires

Reading: Hamalainen, 'Collapse'
Gump, 'A Spirit of Resistance'
Parewhanake, 'The Land'

Monday October 31st: Lecture

Wednesday November 2nd: Lecture

Friday November 4th: Third peer-review writing workshop

Third writing assignment (15%): 2 page essay, topic TBA. Due Monday November 7th, 5pm.

Week eleven: Law and (dis)order on the frontier

Reading: Karsten, 'Cows in the corn'
White, 'Outlaw gangs'

Monday November 7th: Lecture

Wednesday November 9th: Lecture

Friday November 11th: Visit to the Wisconsin Historical Society

Week twelve: Unsettled frontiers: gold rushes

Reading: Johnson, 'Domestic Life in the Diggings' and 'Bulls, Bears and Dancing Boys'
'Letters to Tsi Chow-Choo'

Monday November 14th: Lecture

Wednesday November 16th: Lecture

Friday November 18th: NO CLASS: research time at library: find an interesting primary source that you would like to present to the class.

Week thirteen: Diamonds, empire and war

Reading: Thompson, 'Diamonds, gold and British Imperialism'
Van den Berg, 'Journal of the War'

Monday November 21st: Lecture

Wednesday November 23rd: NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING

Friday November 25th: NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING

Week fourteen: Oral presentations

Fourth assignment (20%): oral presentations of primary sources to classmates and one page summary to be handed in to professor after class

Monday November 28th: Oral presentations

Wednesday November 30th: Oral presentations

Friday December 2nd: Oral presentations

Week fifteen: Empire and Frontier Nationalism

Reading: Penny, 'Australia's Reaction to the Boer War'
Bleszynski, 'Rebel with a cause?'
Find recent discussion of possibility of a pardon for Breaker Morant in South African and Australian media sources

Monday December 5th: Lecture

Wednesday December 7th: Watch *Breaker Morant*

Friday December 9th: Watch *Breaker Morant*

Week sixteen: Myths of the frontier

Reading: Slotkin, 'Buffalo Bill's "Wild West"'

Monday December 12th: Discussion of film in terms of class themes and questions

Wednesday December 14th: Wrap-up

Take-home exam (20%): essay question to be provided in-class on Monday December 12th. Due Friday 16th at 5pm.