

CARLETON UNIVERSITY  
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

**The U.S. West & Its Borderlands**  
**HIST 3904A (Fall 2014)**

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Class Time: Tuesday & Thursday, 1:05 pm—2:25 pm  
Location: A720 Loeb Building

Hollywood has long been in love with the West and its history. Not only have western landscapes provided a striking canvas for telling American stories on film, stories from the western past have become thoroughly imprinted on American popular culture. The mythic visions of the past embedded in film, or in novels, theme parks, or in other cultural forms, have been critical in shaping the public perception of western history.

This course will examine how the imagined Wests in film and popular culture stack up against the experiences of western peoples and places across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the process, we will try to push beyond the mythic images that typically inform our view of the West in order to understand why such images came about and what they hide from view. Although our inquiries will range across the trans-Mississippi West, we will pay particular attention to the historical events and interactions that occurred at the edges of U.S. territorial claims. By focusing on these borderlands, we will see how the significance or understanding of key events and experiences shifts when viewed from the perspective of the Mexican North or the Canadian West. In just this way, our explorations will allow us to consider the interplay between myth and history and to assess how a trans-border perspective on the U.S. West opens a new window on the western past. This new view will highlight both the shared experiences that existed across the North American West and those that set the U.S. West apart.

**Learning Outcomes:**

The goals for this course are as follows:

1. To explore the West's place in the broader history of the United States; to understand the role of myth in shaping understandings of western history; and to focus attention on the borderland communities of the West and the trans-national dimensions of their history.

By the end of the term, you should be able to:

- Identify a key moment or theme in U.S. history and explain how the significance or understanding of that moment changes when narrated from the perspective of the U.S. West or its borderlands.
- Identify a key myth about western history, describe its origins, and explain how that myth oversimplifies aspects of the western past.
- Evaluate current debates about migration and the enforcement of international borders in light of the histories of migration and border crossing in the West.

2. To enrich your understanding of how historians assess the past.

By the end of the term, you should be able to:

- Identify, contextualize, and assess primary sources about the nineteenth-century West and evaluate how authors have used these sources to construct their arguments.
- Identify a key historiographical debate in the field of western history, describe its significance, and explain how it has changed over time.

**Course Format:**

The course will blend both lectures and in-class discussions, and film screenings. It will draw on the varied tools and techniques of social, political, environmental, and cultural history and on the region's rich cinematic history. The course will be supported by the cuLearn Course Management System. You must activate your cuLearn account by going to the following page: <https://www.carleton.ca/culearn/>. Course readings, grades, and additional resources will be available on the cuLearn site, and any course announcements will be made through the system.

**Required Readings:**

The following readings are required for all students. They are available for purchase at Octopus Books (116 Third Avenue, at Bank Street) and are on reserve at the library.

Hine, Robert V., and John Mack Faragher. *Frontiers: A Short History of the American West*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008.

Jacoby, Karl. *Shadows at Dawn: A Borderlands Massacre and the Violence of History*. New York: Penguin, 2008.

(\*\*Please note that the e-book or Kindle editions of this book are not recommended for this course\*\*)

Regan, Margaret. *The Death of Josseline: Immigration Stories from the Arizona Borderlands*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2010.

Additional readings are available through Ares, the library's on-line reserve system.

**Course Requirements and Assignments:**

The grades for the term will be assessed as follows:

1. Participation (15%)

This course requires faithful attendance and active participation in our in-class discussions. This requires that you come to class, first, with the assigned readings completed, and second, with a willingness to share your comments and questions about them. The quality, not quantity, of your participation is what matters most. Effective participation also means that you listen respectfully to your classmates' contributions. The classroom should be a safe environment in which we can express differing opinions and learn from one another. Finally, a portion of your participation grade will also be determined by informal, in-class writing assignments or quizzes. If you have any concerns about classroom participation, please see me.

2. Film & Article Blog (20%)

You will be asked to create a blog in which you assess the four films we will be watching during the semester in relation to materials you have encountered in other parts of the course. A detailed assignment description is attached to this syllabus.

### 3. Review Assignments (40%)

You will be asked to complete two review assignments. The first asks you to read and assess Karl Jacoby's *Shadows at Dawn* and to consider his use of primary sources. For the second, you are required to read Margaret Regan's *The Death of Josseline* and to write a blog entry that reviews the book. The two assignments are due on October 7 and December 4 respectively. Detailed assignment descriptions are attached to this syllabus.

### 4. Final Exam (25%)

This will consist of a two-hour exam during the December exam period (December 10-21). It will ask you to respond to essay and/or short-answer questions. The Registrar's Office will determine the date and time of the exam.

**You must complete all of the above components in order to pass this course.**

#### Late Policies

Unless otherwise noted, late assignments will be penalized 3% per day (weekends will count as one day). Exceptions will be made for documented medical or other emergencies.

Please turn in late assignments to the essay drop box located outside the History Department main office (Paterson 400). Please ensure that you include both your name/student number and my name on the essay.

### Tentative Calendar and Assignments

<b>Week 1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>
Sept. 4	Which Way West?: Making Sense of a Region's Past
<b>Week 2</b>	
Sept. 9	The Conquest and Colonization of the West to 1850
Readings:	<i>Frontiers</i> , Introduction, Chs. 4, 5
Sept. 11	Manifest Destiny: Slavery, Sectionalism, and the West
<b>Week 3</b>	
Sept. 16	From Civil War to Indian Wars
Readings:	<i>Frontiers</i> , Chs. 6, 7
Sept. 18	Westward Expansion, Federal Style
Readings:	<i>Frontiers</i> , Chs. 9, 10
<b>Week 4</b>	
Sept. 23	Shadows at Dawn: Discussion & Workshop
Readings:	Jacoby, <i>Shadows at Dawn</i> , Introduction & Part I, pp. 1-180

Sept. 25 Migration and the Politics of Inclusion & Exclusion  
Readings: *Frontiers*, Chs. 8, 11, 12

**Week 5**

Sept. 30 Contesting the Range: Politics & Protests on the Plains  
Readings: Jacoby, *Shadows at Dawn*, Parts II, III, Epilogue, pp. 181-278

Oct. 2 Shaping the Federal Landscape

**Week 6**

Oct. 7 Western Labour  
*Book Review I due*

Oct. 9 Life on the Border I: The Trans-Pacific West

**Week 7**

Oct. 14 Life on the Border II: Making the Forty-Ninth Parallel  
Documentary screening (in-class): *The Lynching of Louie Sam*

Oct. 16 Life on the Border III: The Mexico-U.S. Borderlands  
*Film Journal Post I due*

**Week 8**

Oct. 21 Dust Bowl Decade: The West and the New Deal  
Evening Screening (?): *The Grapes of Wrath* (dir., John Ford, 1940)

Oct. 23 World War II & its Aftermath  
*Film Journal Post II due*

*Reading Week -- No Classes*

**Week 9**

Nov. 4 California Dreams  
Evening Screening (?): *Chinatown* (dir., Roman Polanski, 1974)  
Readings: *Frontiers*, Ch. 13

Nov. 6 Urban Frontiers  
*Film Journal Post III due*

**Week 10**

Nov. 11 Hollywood's Wild West  
Documentary screening (in-class): *Reel Injun*  
Readings: *Frontiers*, Chs. 14, 15, 16

Nov. 13 The Atomic West  
*Film Journal Post IV due*

**Week 11**

Nov. 18 Power and Protest I: American Indian Resurgence

Nov. 20 Power and Protest II: From Civil Rights to Black Power

**Week 12**

Nov. 25 Sunbelt Rising

Readings: Regan, *Death of Josseline*, pp. ix-104

Nov. 27 Sagebrush Rebels & Culture Warriors

**Week 12**

Dec. 2 From Borders to Walls: Discussion with Margaret Regan

Readings: Regan, *Death of Josseline*, pp.105-224.

Dec. 4 Lives on the Line: Western Pasts, Western Futures  
***Book Review II due***

## Film & Article Blog

**Goals:** This assignment is meant to offer a space for reflection on the feature films and documentaries that we will be watching over the course of the semester and a forum for the shared consideration of these films. It is also meant to prompt reflection on the connections between these films and other parts of the course.

**Guidelines:** You must write four (4) on-line postings in which you consider the historical significance of the feature films and documentaries that we will watch during the semester. These entries are meant to provide a forum for discussing your thoughts about the films or for raising questions about what you've seen. They should also reflect on the relationship between the films and the other materials you have encountered in course lectures, readings, and discussions, including the articles that have been paired with them. The film & article pairings are as follows:

*The Lynching of Louie Sam* (dir. David McIlwraith, 2005) + Vaillant, "The Lynching of Louie Sam." **(due: October 16)**

*The Grapes of Wrath* (dir. John Ford, 1940) + Gregory, "Dust Bowl Legacies: The Okie Impact on California, 1939-1989." **(due: October 23)**

*Chinatown* (dir. Roman Polanski, 1974) + Avila, "Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight: Film Noir, Disneyland, and the Cold War (Sub)Urban Imaginary." **(due: November 6)**

*Reel Injuns* (dir. Neal Diamond, 2009) **(due: November 13)**

All readings are available through Ares, on the cuLearn coursepage. We will watch *The Lynching of Louie Sam* and *Reel Injuns* (or portions thereof) in class, but you are responsible for watching *The Grapes of Wrath* and *Chinatown* on your own time—so please plan accordingly. If there is interest, I will schedule evening screenings of the two feature films on campus.

Your posts may take a variety of forms, so long as you provide a substantive assessment of the films (and articles). The posts may be informal, but they should pay attention to basic rules of grammar and style. Each should be the equivalent of 1-2 pages in length (typed, single-spaced) and should be posted by 6:00 am on the date noted in the syllabus. Late responses will not be assessed.

Specific instructions regarding the creation of your blogs will be provided later in the semester.

**Criteria:** This assignment is worth 20% of your grade for the term. I will evaluate it according to the following criteria:

- **Originality:** Your posts should speak to the historical significance of the film and make interesting connections between the film, the article, and/or other parts of the course.
- **Analysis:** Your posts should include a substantive and insightful assessment of the film and article. Your claims should be grounded in solid evidence.
- **Style and Structure:** Your writing should be clear and your grammar sound. You should edit and proofread your essay carefully. You must give credit where credit is due (in the form of in-text citations).

## Book Review Assignment: *Shadows at Dawn*

**Goals:** This assignment is meant to give you practice evaluating scholarly arguments and presenting your assessments in a clear, accurate, and concise manner. It is also meant to prompt a close consideration of how historians use primary sources.

**Guidelines:** This assignment has two parts. The first asks you to draft a concise review of the book. Your review should observe the following guidelines: First, you should open your essay with an introductory paragraph that introduces Jacoby's book to the reader and that presents your argument. It should tell the reader what you thought of the book and should offer your assessment of how Jacoby uses primary sources to make his argument. It should also contain a clear (and concise!) outline of how your essay will unfold.

Second, you should engage in a focused review of the book. You must do the following:

- In Paragraph A, you should identify the author's thesis. Also consider: Why has Jacoby written this book? What message does he want to convey? Why does that message matter?
- In Paragraph B, you should summarize the book's contents. Consider: How does Jacoby organize and present his argument? What kind of information do his chapters contain? What evidence does he use to support his argument?
- In Paragraphs C & D, you should assess the book's strengths and weaknesses. Consider: What aspects of Jacoby's argument(s) are most persuasive? Why? Where does it fall short? Is there something missing from the argument?

It is essential that you follow this format. Although the lengths of your paragraphs will vary, this section of your essay should be no longer than three or three and a half (3-3 ½) pages in length.

You should then select **one** (1) of the following primary sources that Jacoby uses to craft his study and then assess how he uses this document in formulating his argument:

1. Tohono O'odham Calendar Stick, 1938
2. Juan Elías Depredation Claim, 1893
3. Court case: The United States vs. Sidney R. DeLong et al., 1871

The documents can be found here: <http://www.brown.edu/Research/Aravaipa/documents.html> (link also posted on cuLearn).

After you have read the document closely, ask yourself: What kind of document is this? Who created it? Why? For what audience? What does the document reveal? What does it hide? You should then find the specific section in the book where Jacoby cites the document and read it closely. Consider: How does Jacoby use the document in his study? What broader interpretive point is the document meant to serve? Do you agree with Jacoby's interpretation? Why or why not? Your answers to these questions should help you formulate your overarching argument for your review. Your essay should be seven (7) double-spaced pages in length (with one-inch margins and twelve point type). It is due (in hard copy) on **October 7**.

**Criteria:** This assignment is worth 20% of your grade for the term. I will evaluate it according to the following criteria:

- **Originality:** Your essay should offer fresh insights about Jacoby's book and make interesting observations about the way that Jacoby interprets and incorporates primary source materials.
- **Analysis:** Your essay should include insightful, logical analysis of the book and its arguments. Your claims should be grounded in solid evidence.
- **Style and Structure:** Your essay should be well organized. Your writing should be clear and your grammar sound. You should edit and proofread your essay carefully and you should use the citation formats prescribed by the *Chicago Manual of Style*.

## Op-Ed Assignment: *The Death of Josseline*

**Goals:** This assignment has three related goals: to give you further practice assessing book-length studies; to have you assess the continuities and change in the history of border enforcement along the U.S.-Mexico border; and to allow you to formulate your thoughts clearly and concisely in the shape of an op-ed article.

**Guidelines:** This assignment asks you to carry out a focused review of Margaret Regan's *The Death of Josseline* that brings the book into dialogue with a journal article on a related theme. You will be asked to select one of the journal articles noted below that describe different aspects of the history of border enforcement along the U.S.-Mexico border. These authors investigate different times and places, but their works intersect in different ways with some of the topics that Regan addresses in her book. This assignment asks you to assess what we can learn by telling these stories alongside one another. That is, what can history tell us about the current state of affairs along the U.S.-Mexico border?

Your review of Regan's books should form the basis for the essay. In a handful of paragraphs, you should identify Regan's thesis or central argument, as well as the goals of her study. You should briefly summarize the book's contents and assess the book's strengths and weaknesses. You will then need to read **one** (1) of the following articles:

1. Grace Peña Delgado, "Border Control and Sexual Policing: White Slavery and Prostitution along the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands, 1903–1910."
2. Rachel St. John, "Divided Ranges: Trans-Border Ranches & the Creation of National Spaces along the western Mexico-U.S. Border."
3. Kelly Lytle Hernández, "Crimes and Consequences of Illegal Immigration: A Cross-Border Examination of Operation Wetback, 1943-1954."

Links to these articles can be found on Ares.

You should summarize and assess the article you've selected, then bring Regan's book (or the relevant sections thereof) into productive dialogue with that article. Ask yourself: How do the circumstances Regan describes in her book compare with those described in the article? In what ways are they similar or different? How do you account for those similarities and differences? What do we gain by placing these issues in these deeper historical contexts? While making these comparisons, please be mindful of both the different historical contexts that the authors describe and the differences in genre (i.e., that Regan's book differs in both scope and intent from the works noted above). Also, you should also feel free to incorporate aspects of our in-class conversation with Margaret Regan and other components of the course as well.

Instead of writing a seven-page review essay, you will need to condense your thoughts and present them in the form of an on-line blog/opinion essay of approximately 1,500 words (or the equivalent of 4 double-spaced pages, with one-inch margins and twelve point type). You must post your essays to your blog by 6:00 am on **December 4**. A hard-copy is also due in class that day.

Your essays will be considered for inclusion in *Making History Matter*, an on-line undergraduate publication that allows undergraduate students to publish critical analyses of "historical interpretations in the media, popular culture, politics and other realms of the public sphere."

**Criteria:** This assignment is worth 20% of your grade for the term. I will evaluate it according to the following criteria:

- **Originality:** Your essay should offer fresh insights about Regan's book and make interesting connections between the book the journal article you selected.



- Analysis: Your essay should include insightful, logical analysis of the book and a sound comparison of the book and article. It should provide an interesting assessment of the historical context for issues addressed in Regan's book. Your claims should be grounded in solid evidence.
- Style and Structure: Your essay should be well organized. Your writing should be clear and persuasive and your grammar sound. You should edit and proofread your essay carefully.