

SYLLABUS

History 2130: Nebraska and the West

Dr. Wolar

Fall, 2006

Th – 6-9 p.m.

Room 145

REQUIRED TEXTS:

James C. Olson and Ronald C. Naugle, History of Nebraska. Third Edition. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997).

Stephen R. Jones, The Last Prairie: A Sandhills Journal. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2000).

RECOMMENDED TEXTS:

Erastus Flavel Beadle, Ham, Eggs, and Corn Cake: A Nebraska Territory Diary.

Ronald Becher, Massacre Along the Medicine Road: A Social History of the Indian War of 1864 in Nebraska Territory.

Robert E. Bonner, William F. Cody's Wyoming Empire: The Buffalo Bill Nobody Knows.

Thomas R. Buecker, Fort Robinson and the American West, 1874-1899.

Willa Cather, My Antonia.

Mark R. Ellis, Law and Order in Buffalo Bill's Country: Legal Culture and Community on the Great Plains, 1867-1910.

Bob Greene, Once Upon a Town: The Miracle of the North Platte Canteen.

R. Douglas Hurt, The Great Plains During World War II.

Paul A. Johnsgard, This Fragile Land: A Natural History of the Nebraska Sandhills; The Nature of Nebraska: Ecology and Biodiversity; and, Lewis and Clark on the Great Plains: A Natural History.

Lawrence H. Larsen and Barbara J. Cottrell, The Gate City: A History of Omaha.

Frederick C. Luebke, Nebraska: An Illustrated History.

Hannah McNally, Nebraska: Off the Beaten Path.

Jeffrey Ostler, Prairie Populism: The Fate of Agrarian Radicalism in Kansas, Nebraska, and Iowa, 1880-1892.

R. Eli Paul (ed.), The Nebraska Indian Wars Reader, 1865-1877.

Mari Sandoz, Old Jules.

August Scherneckau (edited by J.E. Potter and E. Robbins), Marching With the First Nebraska: A Civil War Diary.

Louis S. Warren, Buffalo Bill's America: William Cody and the Wild West Show.

David J. Wishart, An Unspeakable Sadness: The Dispossession of the Nebraska Indians; and, Encyclopedia of the Great Plains.

ON RESERVE:

Nebraska History, Spring 1999, Vol. 80, No. 1
“Change of Heartland”, National Geographic, May, 2004.
Francis Parkman, Jr., The Oregon Trail.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

A survey of Nebraska history as it relates to the development of the Great Plains and the American West that includes social, cultural, political, intellectual, economic, and geographical themes.

OBJECTIVE:

To critically analyze the geographical, political, social, economic, intellectual, and cultural issues attending the history of Nebraska since approximately the seventeenth century. It is recommended that the student will have earned at least three college level credits in American history as a prerequisite to this course.

OUTCOMES:

The student will be intellectually exposed to a variety of cultural values, institutions, and traditions within the context of Nebraska as a region. The student will demonstrate historical knowledge and critical thinking skills in preparation for transfer to a four-year college or university. Additionally, the student will acquire rudimentary library skills and apply effective writing skills in pursuance of the above-stated objectives.

READING SCHEDULE:

Week of August 21: Olson, pp.1-26; and, Nebraska History, “Where is Nebraska, Anyway?”, pp.3-12.

Week of August 28: Olson, pp. 27-52; and, Parkman, Chapter VI: “The Platte and the Desert”.

Week of September 4: Olson, pp. 53-77; Parkman, Chapter VII: "The Buffalo"; and, Jones, x-25.

Week of September 11: Olson, pp. 78-100; Parkman, Chapter VIII: "Taking French Leave"; and, Jones, 26-47.

Week of September 18: Olson, pp. 101-130; and, Jones, 48-76.

Week of September 25: Olson, pp. 131-155; and, Jones, 77-100.

Week of October 2: Olson, pp. 156-185; and, Jones, 101-123.

Week of October 9: Olson, pp. 186-210; and, Jones, 124-146.

Week of October 16: Olson, pp. 211-236; and, Jones, 147-168.

Week of October 23: Olson, pp. 237-261; and, Jones, 169-190.

Week of October 30: Olson, pp. 262-288; and, Jones, 191-221.

Week of November 6: Olson, pp. 289-316; and, Jones, 222-240.

Week of November 13: Olson, pp. 317-348.

Week of November 20: Olson, pp. 349-372.

Week of November 27: Olson, pp. 373-384.

Week of December 4: Open.

Week of December 11: Final Examination.

EXAMINATION/CRITICAL REVIEW SCHEDULE:

First Critical Book Summary: October 5

Midterm Examination: October 12

Second Critical Book Summary: November 16

Final Examination: December 14

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS:

The course will be conducted predominantly in a readings-based discussion format, with occasional lecturing by the instructor. Use will likely be made of computer-assisted materials, handouts, and maps.

EVALUATION:

The midterm examination is worth 20% of the course grade. Discussion participation is worth 20% of the course grade. The critical book summaries are worth 25% of the course grade. The final examination is worth 35% of the course grade.

The midterm examination, written in an examination blue book, will consist of identification of names/terms/places/interpretive perspectives in the form of short paragraphs that detail the historical significance of the identified items and/or a critical thinking exercise. The final examination, comprehensive in nature, will be written on examination "blue books" on sale at the campus bookstore.

The critical book summaries will consist of focused critical summaries of two scholarly monographs pertinent to the subject matter and chronology of this course. Appropriate books may be chosen from the suggested readings within the Olson/Naugle text. The instructor is also available to advise on an appropriate monograph for completion of this requirement. Prior approval of your book choice must be obtained from the instructor.

Students will receive an appropriate form to effectuate the critical book summaries. The forms will serve to focus the student's attention on pertinent critical issues germane to each book reviewed. Students should confine their summary reviews to the parameters of the model summary form, and the summary reviews should not be more than two single-spaced pages in length.

All critical book summaries are to be turned in during the class period of the appropriate deadline date, unless alternatively advised by the instructor.

The discussion participation evaluation will focus upon the ability of the student to take responsibility for leading the class discussion during the particular class sessions. The instructor will assign a scheduled class session to a student, who will be expected to carefully outline the salient issues/themes within the scheduled reading and generate class discussion accordingly. The instructor will share responsibility with the student by posing questions and raising issues for further discussion during each class session. It is assumed that all students will have completed the reading for each class session and be prepared to discuss the pertinent issues raised by such reading.

It is expected that the instructor will engage in limited lecturing and predominantly serve as a discussion facilitator. It is generally assumed that the student has earned at least three (3) college credits in American History prior to enrolling in this course.

Make-up examinations are NOT given, except under extraordinary circumstances and with the prior approval of the instructor.

All critical book summaries are to be turned in during the class period of the appropriate deadline date, unless alternatively advised by the instructor. Email submissions are acceptable, as long as the email submissions are forwarded no later than 9 p.m., C.S.T., on the appropriate deadline date. Critical book summaries may be mailed through the USPS, but must be postmarked no later than the appropriate deadline date. Late critical book summaries will NOT be accepted – no exceptions.

For evaluative purposes, the student is accountable for ALL assigned reading and ALL class preparations. Therefore, to maximize your potential in the course, you are strongly advised to regularly attend class.

All electronic recording devices are prohibited in class unless the instructor grants, upon good cause, prior consent for such use. Turn cell phones off during class.

For evaluative purposes, the following grade scale is applicable:

- A = 90-100
- B = 80-89
- C = 70-79
- D = 60-69
- F = 50-59

The instructor views the above grades as indicative of the following academic standard of achievement:

An “A” grade is an honor grade indicating excellence, and is equivalent to a consistently superior performance in the course. The issuance of an “A” grade reflects the instructor’s professional judgment that the student has mastered the essential facts, issues, and themes of the college-level history course and the interconnections between such facts, issues, and themes in proper chronological sequence.

A “B” grade is an honor grade equivalent to a competent performance that is less than the substantive mastery expected for an “A” grade, yet clearly above the average performance expected within the confines of a “C” grade. The issuance of a “B” grade reflects the instructor’s professional judgment that the student has a good, but not superior, grasp of the relevant facts, issues, and themes, as well as the interconnections between such facts, issues, and themes in proper chronological sequence.

A “C” grade is equivalent to an average or satisfactory performance in the course and professionally reflects an adequate comprehension of the essential facts, issues, and themes. The issuance of a “C” grade indicates that the student has exhibited sufficient ability to warrant entering sequential courses in the discipline of history.

A “D” grade is equivalent to a passing, but less than satisfactory, performance in the course and reflects no more than a minimal comprehension of the essential facts, issues, and themes, and no more than a minimal comprehension of the interconnections between such facts, issues, and themes. The issuance of a “D” grade indicates that the student is not likely to be successful in a higher level history course and would not meet prerequisite requirements.

An “F” grade is a failed performance that reflects neither a minimal comprehension of the essential facts, issues, and themes of the course, nor any viable comprehension of the interconnections between such facts, issues, and themes of a college-level history course.

WITHDRAW FROM CLASS PROCEDURE:

If the student fails to attend class, he/she must complete the withdrawal form with the Student Services office. A “W” will appear on the transcript. Students failing to formally withdraw from the course may receive an “F” as a letter grade on the permanent transcript.

PLAGIARISM:

Students are encouraged to review the latest MPCCA Student Handbook, re: plagiarism. Plagiarism occurs when a student secures the ideas and/or writings of another without attribution to the original author. Plagiarism jeopardizes the integrity of the scholarly experience and is not to be tolerated.

DISABILITIES:

Mid-Plains Community College is committed to providing a discrimination-free environment for its students with disabilities. Students with learning or physical disabilities are encouraged to request assistance from administrative staff at: 535-3710, 535-3637, or 345-8128.

OFFICE HOURS:

MWF / 10 a.m.

T/Th – 2:30 p.m.

Room 145A

308-535-3763

wolarg@mpcc.edu

<http://www.geocities.com/gwolar/>

If the above office hour is unsatisfactory, please arrange to meet me at another time. Leave a phone number or email address by which you can be reached. Alternatively, arrange to meet with me immediately prior to, or immediately subsequent to, class. If you are experiencing academic difficulty, do not hesitate to contact me as soon as it becomes apparent to you.

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