

English 255
Transformations of the West in the Twentieth Century

Blake Allmendinger

January 10

Introduction: The Post-Frontier

Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," in John Mack Faragher, ed., *Rereading Frederick Jackson Turner*
Patricia Nelson Limerick, "What on Earth Is the New Western History?,"
and Elliott West, "A Longer, Grimmer, but More Interesting Story," in Limerick,
et al., *Trails: Toward a New Western History*
Forrest G. Robinson, "Clio Bereft of Caliope," in Robinson, ed., *The New Western History: The Territory Ahead*

January 17

The Formula Western: Mythologizing the Past

Owen Wister, *The Virginian*
Lee Clark Mitchell, *Westerns: Making the Man in Fiction and Film*, chapter 4
Jane Tompkins, *West of Everything*, chapter 7
William R. Handley, *Marriage, Violence, and the New Nation in the American Literary West*, chapter 3

January 24

The Modern(ist) West: History, Memory, and Literary Impressionism

Willa Cather, *My Ántonia*
Handley, chapter 5
Karen A. Hoffman, "Identity Crossings and the Autobiographical Act"
Catherine D. Holmes, "Jim Burden's Lost Worlds: Exile in *My Ántonia*"
Impressionist paintings, selected illustrations

January 31

The Social Protest Novel: The Search for Utopia in the Twentieth Century

John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*
Pare Lorentz, *The Plow That Broke the Plains*
Dorothea Lange, *American Exodus*
Timothy Egan, *The Worst Hard Way*, excerpts
Woody Guthrie, selected songs

February 7

What Is Western Literature? Fiction, Biography, and Autobiography

Wallace Stegner, *Angle of Repose*

Stegner, "Born a Square" and "History, Myth, and the Western Writer," in Stegner, *The Sound of Mountain Water*
Janet Floyd, "A Sympathetic Misunderstanding? Mary Hallock Foote's Mining West"
Elizabeth Cook-Lynne, "Why I Can't Read Wallace Stegner," in *Why I Can't Read Wallace Stegner*

February 14

The Urban West, Part One: The Geography of Noir

Raymond Chandler, *The Big Sleep*
Joan Didion, *Slouching Toward Bethlehem*, selected essays
Mike Davis, *City of Quartz*, chapter 1
Edward W. Soja, "The City: Los Angeles and Urban Theory at the End of the Twentieth Century"

February 21

The Urban West, Part Two: The Problem of Race

Chester Himes, *If He Hollers Let Him Go*
Quintard Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier*, excerpts
Sean McCann, *Gumshoe America*, excerpts
Richard Rodriguez, *Days of Obligation*, selected essays

February 28

The Urban West, Part Three: Multiculturalism, Postmodernism, and Urban Apocalypse

Budd Schulberg, *From the Ashes: Voices of Watts*
Quincy Troupe, *Watts Poets: A Book of New Poetry*
Anna Deavere Smith, *Twilight: Los Angeles*
Robert Gooding-Williams, ed., *Reading Rodney King, Reading Urban Uprising*, excerpts

March 7

The Return to the Frontier, Part One: The Revisionist Western

Cormac McCarthy, *Blood Meridian*
Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation*, excerpts
Other selected criticism to follow

March 14

Return to the Frontier, Part Two: The Gay and Lesbian West

Annie Proulx, "Brokeback Mountain"
Moisés Kaufman, *The Laramie Project*
Selected reviews

