Cowboys and Indians and Damsels in Distress! Ever since the days of *The Virginian* and Zane Grey, western novelists have been struggling to break free from the formula. After watching film clips that perpetrate the primary myths of the Old West, we will read novels that romantically and realistically confound the myths, quarrel with them, even turn them upside down.

**Books:**

Cather, Willa. *A Lost Lady*.
Gloss, Molly. *The Jump-Off Creek*.
McCarthy, Cormac. *Blood Meridian*.
Smith, Diane. *Letters from Yellowstone*.
Welch, James. *The Death of Jim Loney*.

**Syllabus:**

8/26, 8/28: Introduction and Film: “Shane”

9/2, 9/4, 9/9: *Blood Meridian*

9/11, 9/16: *The Man Who Rode Midnight*

9/18, 9/23, 9/25: *The Brave Cowboy*

9/30: Exam
10/2: Film: “The Searchers”

10/7, 10/9, 10/14: The Contract Surgeon

10/16, 10/21, 10/23: The Grass Dancer

10/28, 11/4: The Death of Jim Loney

10/30: No class

11/6: Essay due; Films: “The Virginian” and “Riders of the Purple Sage”

11/11: Veterans’ Day: no class

11/13, 11/18: A Lost Lady

11/20, 11/25: The Jump-Off Creek

12/2, 12/4: Letters from Yellowstone

12/9: Review

12/11: Final exam; 7:30-9:30 a.m.

**Class Requirements:**

1. Finish reading each book by the time we begin talking about it in class. Plan ahead, so that you don’t fall behind.

2. On each date listed in bold print, be ready to write a one-page response to the book assigned that day. These nine exercises cannot be made up [I want to keep you up-to-date on your reading and to see how you respond to the books before we talk about them in class]. [30%]

3. Complete two exams, one dealing with cowboys and one dealing with damsels in distress. [20% each]

4. Write an essay that analyzes what we’ve been reading and discussing about Indians, plus what you’ve been learning and thinking on your own. A later handout will suggest topics and parameters. [20%]

5. Participate in class discussion. [10%]

Any student with a documented disability should contact me during the first week of the semester to discuss appropriate accommodations. I will be very happy to work with you to ensure equity in classroom experiences, outside assignments, and grading.