

## The American West

**Class times:** 5:30-7:30 MTWH

**Classroom:** Frandsen Humanities 109

**Instructor:** George Brooks  
**email:** [gbrooks@unr.edu](mailto:gbrooks@unr.edu)

**Office Location:** Frandsen Humanities 24 (downstairs)  
**Office Hours:** TW 3:00 PM-5:30 PM & by appointment

Please feel free to discuss your progress in the course or ask any questions you may have.

### Required Texts:

*The Curious Researcher* (MLA updated 6th edition). Bruce Ballenger. Longman, 2009.

*The American West as Living Space*. Wallace Stegner. University of Michigan Press. 1988.

### Other Required Materials:

A spiral notebook for homework, in-class note-taking, drafting, and journal assignments (8.5" x 11").

A simple folder, to save loose writing assignments in.

Regular access to internet and printer (on campus or otherwise) for additional reading assignments **and** something to store your documents on electronically (disc, jump/usb drive, etc.)

### Course Description:

Welcome! This course looks broadly at the American West as a social, cultural, economic, political, geographical, historical, and ecological region. We will be practicing research and writing through an exploration of the West, and through a variety of assigned readings and class discussions. Students will then have the opportunity to pursue a course of study of specific interest to them. Student research topics may be related closely to the themes from readings and discussions, or they may apply understandings and skills gained from these readings and discussions to a related topic of their choice.

## COURSE POLICIES

### Class Conduct & Honesty Code:

We are together in this course for only five weeks, so class time is very valuable. It is critical that students consider themselves partners in creating and maintaining a respectful and supportive learning community through their speech and conduct. Please avoid causing any disruption to the class. This includes arriving late, leaving early, chatting during instruction or discussion, dealing with cell phones, earphones or other electronics. **Remember to turn cell phones off.** If your electronic device becomes a distraction, you may be asked to leave, which constitutes an absence.

The University also maintains a very strict honesty code. Plagiarism, cheating or academic dishonesty of any form is not tolerated and will result in serious consequences for students engaging therein. *At the very least*, you will get an F (*zero credit*) for a plagiarized assignment, and will also likely fail the course and may be subject to disciplinary action. The papers you write for this course are to be your original work for each given assignment. Do not turn in work for which you have already received credit in another class. If you have questions regarding what constitutes plagiarism, consult your *The Curious Researcher* pages 121-124. If you still have questions, talk to me.

More details regarding UNR policies are available online: <http://www.unr.edu/stsv/acdispol.html>.

### Late Work:

Assignments are to be turned in on time (the beginning of class on the due date unless stated otherwise). There is a good reason for this: class activities often involve peer responses to student work and you need to have your work to participate. Furthermore, the rapid pace of this intensive five-week term also makes the acceptance of late work even more impractical. However, late work may be accepted for a full letter grade deduction (beginning with the day after) for each day following the due date.

**ADA:** Students with documented medical, psychological, learning or other disabilities desiring accommodations, academic adjustments or auxiliary aids may contact the **Disability Resource Center** (Thomson Building, Suite 101) at (775) 784-6000. Please also feel free to speak with me to discuss any of these needs for this course.

## GRADING

### *Attendance, Preparation, and Participation 15%*

The nature of this course requires students to contribute thoughtfully to class activities and discussions so attendance and participation are *essential*. Plan to attend class, and any one-on-one conferences, prepared with questions and comments that will contribute to a collaborative learning experience. This will require each student to read the assigned text and complete writing assignments *before* coming to class. Attendance is taken daily. **If you are consistently late or frequently absent (more than 3 times) your final grade may be lowered a half letter for each additional absence.** (2 tardies also equal an absence.) In other words, come to class, come on time, stay for the duration. Remember, there is no distinction here between an “excused” or “unexcused” absence. If you are going to miss class for any reason, it’s in your best interest to make arrangements *beforehand*. It’s also a good idea to get several other students’ phone numbers/emails so you can find out what you miss. I cannot summarize an entire class-worth of discussion after the fact for students who miss, and in class quizzes and exercises cannot be made up.

### *Written Work & Oral Presentations 85 %*

You will be required to complete five written assignments and at least one oral presentation over the course of the semester. The objective and genre of the written work will vary from one to the other and more specific guidelines for each paper will be issued as we begin each unit. Although you will find a detailed breakdown of the point value for each of these assignments below, it may actually prove more helpful for you to think about your research process as cumulative and holistic, wherein your later work can build upon the strength and quality of your earlier assignments.

### **The course schedule covers, in chronological order:**

Rhetorical analysis	10 %
Annotated bibliography	10 %
Research proposal	10 %
Brief research presentation	10 %
Research essay	30 %
Alternative genre revision	15 %

Rough due dates for these assignments are found on your course schedule and subject to change as the semester progresses.

### **English 102 Course Outcomes; students will:**

- Continue and improve the writing practices learned in 101: prewriting, composing, revising, responding, editing, attending to language and style, and writing with audience and purpose in mind;
- Engage in critical reading and interpretation of a wide range of texts;
- Be able to summarize, analyze, synthesize, evaluate, and apply what they read—both orally and in writing;
- Use writing as a means of understanding, organizing, and communicating what they read;
- Frame complex research questions or problems;
- Demonstrate awareness of their own beliefs, concepts, and biases;
- Be able to produce a coherent, well-supported argument that shows critical thinking and careful consideration of alternative viewpoints;
- Recognize, evaluate, and use a variety of information sources: expert people, publications of information agencies, popular and specialized periodicals, professional journals, books, and electronic resources;
- Conduct research that shows evidence of the ability to synthesize, use fairly, and credit the ideas of others using the appropriate citation style;
- Write coherently, drawing from diverse sources, assimilating information and ideas and producing work that represents the student’s position on the material.

## COURSE SCHEDULE (subject to change & revision over the course of the semester)

<u>Week 1</u>	June 6	course introduction, syllabus, schedule, questions? &c. research (experience & expectations) and introductions, contact exchange philosophical discussion on <i>why we research</i> . HW: reading assignment: course syllabus and – Ballenger 1-60 (Ch 1) for Tuesday
	June 7	discussion/activity/group quiz on Chapter 1: curiosity, process, reading & research cooperatives HW: Stegner reading, all: "Preface," "Living Dry," & "Striking the Rock," "Variations on a Theme by Crèvecoeur," bibliography <i>final date to receive a full refund if dropping individual classes or withdrawing</i>
	June 8	Discussion of Stegner, Introduce rhetorical analysis. discussion and modeling of rhetorical analysis. HW: Ballenger 61-113 (Chapter 2)
	June 9	discussion/activity on Chapter 2: strategy, technique, critical reading/thinking HW: Readings on Reserve (High Country News/Radio West?) – TBA Rhetorical Analysis, rough drafts due Monday <i>June 7— final date to receive a 50% refund if dropping (a "W" will appear on your transcripts)</i>
<u>Week 2</u>	June 13	workshop rhetorical analysis, first draft due. class discussion/activity: public policy & rhetoric. Assigned readings on e-reserve, TBA
	June 14	<b>final draft rhetorical analysis due</b> , collect. Introduce annotated bibliographies HW for Wednesday: read Ballenger 115-167 (Chapter 3) source evaluation/selection: modeling & examples
	June 15	class discussion/activity: focusing research HW for Friday - Assigned readings TBA. formulating questions, interrogating sources: modeling, examples & class activity
	June 16	<b>individual conferencing</b> <i>Final date to drop class and receive a 'W'</i>

<b><u>Week 3</u></b>	June 20	<b>annotated bibliography due</b> , collect. Discuss findings, sources, research cooperative. survey/overview of current events, relevant applications, research directions. divided and assigned readings TBA
	June 21	<b>library tour</b>
	June 22	workshop research proposals, interrogating topics of interest <b>Film screening</b>
	June 23	<b>research proposal due</b> via email <b>Film screening</b>
<b><u>Week 4</u></b>	June 27	workshop & discussion on films: (The Same River Twice, Chinatown, No Country for Old Men, &c. . . .)
	June 28	<b>brief student research presentations</b>
	June 29	current applications readings TBA research cooperative, review & discussion of source submissions (preview several) HW: Ballenger 169-219 (Chapter 4) and assigned readings TBA
	June 30	discussion of Chapter 4 & assigned readings. Rough drafts of final paper due for workshoping, peer feedback
<b><u>Week 5</u></b>	July 4	<b>Independence Day — no class meeting</b>
	July 5	review, quiz (& bingo?) on MLA style, conventions, formatting audience, balancing content, research/inquiry vs. argument have read Ballenger 221-256 (Chapter 5)
	July 6	<b>research paper due, final draft</b> any <b>final presentations</b>
	July 7	<b>alternative genre revisions due</b> , final class meeting time

### selected links of interest for the course

UNR Library/KC MLA style citation examples:

<http://knowledgecenter.unr.edu/help/manage/documents/MLAcitationsamples-2009.pdf>

UNR Library/KC research tutorials: <http://knowledgecenter.unr.edu/help/tutorials.aspx>

The Online Writing Lab at Purdue: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>

KUER's Radio West: [http://www.publicbroadcasting.net/kuer/news.newsmain?action=section&SECTION\\_ID=184](http://www.publicbroadcasting.net/kuer/news.newsmain?action=section&SECTION_ID=184)

High Country News: <http://www.hcn.org/>    The Sacramento Bee: <http://www.sacbee.com/>

Reno Gazette Journal: <http://www.rgj.com/>    Reno News & Reviews: <http://www.newsreview.com/reno/home>

Center of the American West: <http://centerwest.org/>

**Course readings**, available electronically, will include selections from the following:

*Arab/American: Landscape, Culture, and Cuisine in Two Great Deserts*, Gary Paul Nabhan. U of Arizona P, 2008.

*Basin and Range*, John McPhee. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1986.

*Blue Desert*. Charles Bowden. U of Arizona P, 1988.

*Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, Gloria Anzaldúa. Aunt Lute, 2007.

*City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles*, Mike Davis. Vintage, 1992.

*High Country News* articles from Wayne Hare:

“Here’s a new way to think about Black History” <http://www.hcn.org/wotr/17506>

“Natural diversity” <http://www.hcn.org/issues/350/17115>

& from Rachel Waldholz: “Greening a city and pushing other colors out”

<http://www.hcn.org/issues/43.9/greening-a-city-and-pushing-other-colors-out>

*Imperial San Francisco: Urban Power, Earthly Ruin*, Gray Brechin. U of California P, 2006.

*Literary Nevada: Writings from the Silver State*, Cheryll Glotfelty, ed. U of Nevada P, 2008.

Including selections from: Emma Sepulveda, Hunter S. Thompson, William Fox, William Kittredge, Michael Cohen, Sammy Davis Jr. & Terry Tempest Williams.

*The American West as Living Space*. Wallace Stegner. University of Michigan Press. 1988.

*The Desert Smells Like Rain*, Gary Paul Nabhan. North Point Press, 1982.

*The Solace of Open Spaces*, Gretel Ehrlich. Penguin, 1986.

“The Wrath of Grapes Boycott Speech,” Cesar Chavez. 1986.

*Water in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century West*, Char Miller, ed. Oregon State UP, 2009.

*Wilderness and the American Mind*, Roderick Nash. Yale UP, 2001.

**Films** available on course reserve:

*Chinatown* (1974), Polanski

*Dogtown and Z-Boys* (2001), Peralta

*No Country for Old Men* (2008), Cohen & Cohen

*Rango* (2011), Verbinski

*The Same River Twice* (2003), Moss