

**History 422/522 Pacific Northwest
Course Syllabus
WSU Vancouver Spring 2007
Tuesdays 6:00-8:45 pm MMC 219**

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Course Description

This course will survey the social, economic, political, environmental, and cultural history of what we call the Pacific Northwest, from prehistoric times to the present, with an emphasis on the 19th and 20th centuries. We will explore what makes the region distinctive and how its history mirrors the national experience. In addition to providing a general survey of the region's past, the course will focus on how historians interpret the past. We will learn the historian's craft by using historians' methods and tools to explore two particular questions: how has the Northwest shaped human activity, and how have people shaped (or tried to reshape) this place?

Class participants will pursue this theme in two principal ways: by studying how scholars have used evidence to reach their conclusions about Northwest history, and by actively locating and working with the primary sources that tell us something about the motives, actions, and thinking of people of the past. To do this we will read five assigned books that explore how individuals and communities have sought to re/shape the Pacific Northwest. To assist us, we will also rely on a geographical atlas and a variety of online primary sources. Today there are many excellent resources available on the World Wide Web, including the WSUV-created digital project, the Columbia River Basin Ethnic History Archive. This course will help you learn how to locate, navigate, and evaluate these sources.

Required Texts

Jackson and Kimerling, eds., *Atlas of the Pacific Northwest*

Ronald Lansing, *Juggernaut: The Whitman Massacre Trial, 1850*

George Aguilar, Sr., *When the River Ran Wild! Indian Traditions on the Mid-Columbia and the Warm Springs Reservation*

Nancy Langston, *Where Land and Water Meet: A Western Landscape Transformed*

Thomas Churchill, *Centralia Dead March*

Lauren Kessler, *Stubborn Twig: Three Generations in the Life of a Japanese American Family*

Carlos Schwantes, *The Pacific Northwest* (optional)

Class Procedures

The class will pursue the theme, “Shaping the Pacific Northwest,” through readings, lectures, films, guest speakers, in-class and online discussions, and extensive analysis of primary sources, the materials that provide historians with the raw “data” necessary for interpreting the past. The course is divided into three parts, and each part will focus on a particular chronological theme, related to our larger course theme. Each part builds on the previous part of the course to further develop your knowledge and skills.

All participants are expected to read with care assignments and come to class prepared to offer thoughtful comments, questions, and evaluations. Students will also be expected to use and participate in the class-created Blackboard Program <http://www.blackboard.wsu.edu/> and make weekly contributions to the online threaded discussion board. Since we meet just once a week, it is essential to come to every class and to participate every week in the online discussions. To enhance discussions, we will create an atmosphere of cooperation, respect, and open exchange.

Course Goals:

I am hoping that by the end of the semester you will have learned a lot about the region, in particular how different peoples have settled here and interacted over time, and about the many electronic resources available about the Pacific Northwest. The assignments are designed to help reinforce content knowledge and to refine your reading, thinking, and writing skills. In addition, you will become more familiar with the historian’s craft—how we sift through and interpret primary and secondary sources, formulate and defend arguments, and develop products explaining this history for others to read, see, visit, or hear.

In addition to these general goals, by the end of the semester you will learn how to:

- identify, assess, critique, clarify, and defend an historical argument;
- analyze historical documents, photographs, and oral history interviews;
- locate, navigate, and evaluate electronic resources about the Pacific Northwest;
- generate and critique different interpretations about the region’s history;
- develop or refine your ability to work independently and in groups.

Evaluations and Grading

The point of this course is to develop a general understanding of the history of the Pacific Northwest—especially about the lives of some Natives of and migrants to the region--and of how to use primary and secondary sources in interpreting the past. Therefore, your grade will be based on the evidence that you are succeeding in these goals through contributions to oral and written discussions and activities throughout the course. At various points in the course your work will be assessed by me, other students, and yourself. Furthermore, because the class is heavily dependent on discussion and

collaboration, you must post threaded discussions by the due date posted in the course schedule; otherwise, your work is late.

Final course grades will be based on preparation for and contributions to class discussions and the Blackboard program, an analytical paper, and a final exam, all of which will be described in greater detail in Blackboard.

Class Participation (45%) and attendance are critical and required since we meet just once a week. **Class and Bridge Discussions:** You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the week's reading assignment and to make regular, weekly contributions (at least 12, at least one full paragraph each) to various threaded discussions on the Blackboard Program (both posting an original comment and responding to another). You will also write a short summary of a class discussion (1-2 pp), and, for extra credit or as a substitution, a response to an outside speaker/event relating to course themes (2 pp).

Analytical paper (25%) discussing an assigned question related to readings and materials from parts 1 and 2. Paper must be doublespaced, wordprocessed, 4-5 pages, and **due no later than Mar 20**.

Take-home final exam (30%) will focus primarily on part 3 and incorporate other materials from the course to address the theme of how people have (re)shaped the environment and how the Pacific Northwest region shaped human activity. Everything we do this semester—our readings, class discussions, lectures and films, online research and activities, and online threaded discussions—will help prepare you for thinking and writing about the assigned question(s).

Ground Rules for Discussions on Blackboard

<http://www.blackboard.wsu.edu/>

We want to encourage constructive, useful, and respectful interactions. Do share your observations, perspectives, insights, questions, and critiques, as this kind of sharing results in a critical and substantive dialogue that greatly enhances the learning potential of the entire class. Don't hesitate to disagree with one another, to investigate different or unorthodox perspectives, and to experiment with or tweak an idea. This is a collaborative class: we will all work together to decide what is a "quality" historical argument. In these important ways, everyone's weekly entries and final projects will be the products of multiple minds and efforts.

It is important to make substantive posts when responding to your fellow classmates. This means you are invited, and should feel safe, to question and analyze deeply the positions you, your fellow students, the readings, (and I) take. Through the investigation of assumptions and values, of context, and evidence, everyone can develop a more substantial understanding of the historical issues we will explore. Open discussion requires that we all work together to ensure that we separate the ideas being expressed from the person expressing them. What we are here to critique and to explore are the

ideas, not the personalities behind them. Remember: a feeling of safety is basic for any collaborative dialogue. Be open to other's thoughts and viewpoints.

I will be the facilitator of this process and will be assessing your contributions to discussions. From time to time I will contribute to the discussion by adding my own thoughts, raising additional issues to think about, or I might even deliberately take a position contrary to your own in an attempt to challenge you to look deeply into a position. But for the most part, the discussions will be your responsibility. Your grades will be assigned based on the quality of your work, not on whether I happen to agree or disagree with your perspectives. I want you to think independently and work out your own interpretations.

Expectations for Original Posts and Responses in Threaded Discussions

Critical engagement in threaded discussions is essential to the quality and meaningfulness of your learning experience in this course. Your peers and your instructor will use the following criteria and the evaluation criteria described in each assignment to assess your work and progress in the course. Plan to interact in the learning space at least once a week.

What is an original post?

An original post is a post that is written to start a discussion or a thread. Most of the time an original post is written in response to the prompt in the discussion instructions for the assignment. You may initiate a discussion (original post) at anytime after a post is assigned.

A good original post will:

- Address the requirements of the assignment. Make sure that you discuss all the points asked for in the threaded discussion prompt.
- Compare your post against the evaluation criteria for the assignment and ask yourself if your post is doing a thorough or an incomplete job. The evaluation criteria can be found in the workspace information for each activity.
- Acknowledge and consider other points of view (when appropriate). You should try to show that you recognize that there are other points of view on the topic under discussion.
- Present solid evidence, either drawn from the assigned reading, or, when appropriate, other sources, to support your points. The post will distinguish between fact and opinion and will acknowledge value judgments.
- Be made in a timely manner. Since the idea in a threaded discussion is to be able to discuss your ideas and refine them, you should try to make your original post well before the deadline for the activity so that others can respond to it and you can respond to them.
- Invite responses to it—with the expectation that you will respond to those responses. Since original posts should, ideally, be the start of a dialogue, rather than the last word in it, you should try to find ways to invite others to respond to what you've written. You may ask others to help clarify points you're still unsure

about or invite suggestions or other views, or bring up interesting questions related to the discussion.

What is a response post?

A response post is one that is written in response to another participant's post. Each activity in this course requires you to respond to at least one other student's original post.

Good Responses Will:

- Be made in a timely manner. Since the idea is that everyone in the discussion will refine his/her ideas through the dialogue that develops, you should try to respond well before the activity ends so that the dialogue has time to develop.
- Demonstrate a willingness to listen to and consider other viewpoints.
- Ask questions and for further clarification on points that are not clear to you. Asking questions can also help people clarify their own thoughts on the topic.
- Refer to information from other posts in the discussion. If you try to tie together information and viewpoints from other participants, you will help clarify the group consensus on the topic—to both yourself and others.
- State disagreements politely, but clearly, and challenge peers to a deeper exploration of key concepts, issues, and skills.
- Apply the criteria for the activity to the post to which it is responding and to itself. (for example, if he/she hasn't included required supporting evidence, you may call their attention to the omission and suggest where they may look for this data or offer some of your own).
- Not always be made to the same person. Try to spread your responses around to different people with different viewpoints over the duration of the course.
- Be complete. Say more than "Good job" or "I agree." Explain why it's a good job and why you agree; you should also try to help each other improve by making suggestions based on the discussion prompts and expectations listed here.

Course Schedule

Part 1, Weeks 1-5:

Themes: Encounters, Interactions, and Boundaries, 1700-1880s

Jan 9	Introductions; What and Where is the Pacific Northwest?
Jan 16	The Native Northwest; European Empires and Explorations (LB 224 7:45-9:00) (read <i>Atlas</i> , pp 1-24)
Jan 23	Commerce and Contact LB 224 (discuss Aguilar, pp vii-22; skim Aguilar)
Jan 30	Securing and Settling Oregon (Discuss <i>Juggernaut</i>)
Feb 6	History as Mystery: Who Killed William Robinson? LB 224

Part 2, Weeks 6-10:

Themes: Political Economy, Migrations, and Community Building, 1880s-1940

- Feb 13** Land of Plenty: Railroads, Markets, Farmers, and Enterprises
(discuss Langston, pp 1-62)
- Feb 20** Immigrants, Families, and New Lives in the Northwest
Films: Turbans; Work is Our Joy
LB
- Feb 27** 224Wageworkers and Industrial conflicts
Film: The Wobblies
(discuss *Centralia Dead March*)
LB 224
- Mar 6** Building Communities
Film clips: American Cowboys; Finding Home in Chinatown
LB 224
- Mar 13** **spring break**
- Mar 20** Peculiar Politics
(Paper due)

Part 3, Weeks 12-15:

Themes: Modern Developments, Dilemmas, and Identities, 1940-2000

- Mar 27** Depression and World War II
Film: Family Gathering
(discuss *Stubborn Twig*)
- Apr 3** Northwest Bounty and Migrant Agricultural Workers
LB 224 (discuss Langston, pp 63-116)
- Apr 10** Troubled Waters: The Columbia, Indians, Dams, and Fish
Films: Columbia: America's Greatest Power Stream; River People
LB 224 (discuss Aguilar's book)
- Apr 17** Troubled Lands
(discuss Langston, 117-170)
- Apr 24** Tech, Tourism, Grunge, and Espresso: The New Northwest
(skim *Atlas*)
- May 3** **Final exam due**