

BLST 3020, 001  
Spring, 2000  
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## THE BLACK WEST

### I. SYNOPSIS.

This course is intended as a general survey introducing those who enroll to a social history of the black experience in the Trans Mississippi West. It covers the period beginning with the sixteenth century and comes forward to the present day.

### II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

#### A. Required Readings:

1. Quintard Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier*.
2. Nell Irwin Painter, *Exodusters*.
3. William H. Leckie, *The Buffalo Soldiers*.
4. Douglas Henry Daniels, *Pioneer Urbanites*.

B. Supplementary readings. These will be placed on reserve in Norlin Library. The primary intent of supplementary texts and amplify various of the course topics.

#### C. Methods of Instruction

1. Structurally, the course is a double helix. One branch of the helix is aimed at creating context because of the reality that nothing has meaning without context. The other branch addresses the ideas, events, people, organizations, and processes of the period. It aims at attempting to illustrate the extent to which truth is in the eye of the beholder--that it is very much a function of the belief systems we embrace and not some abstract that can be analyzed separate and distinct from what gives it life and meaning.

2. Operationally, the course is more a forum than a lecture. What this means is that you must prepare for each class session as it is relatively certain that you will have to perform in some substantive way at each meeting. Accordingly, you are required to take responsibility for the quality of your own education in that it is a participatory process--the instructor helps those who choose not to reduce themselves to passive information receptors. To learn you must question what you know, what you believe and, what you have previously taken on faith. You are also asked to do two other things. The first is evince discipline the only way you can master whatever talents you have. The second is make a commitment to excellence however you choose to define that word.

### III. TOPICAL OUTLINE

#### A. Introductory Remarks, Scope of the Course, etc.

#### B. Beginnings

1. Early explorers of the Trans-Mississippi West.
2. The Black-Spanish Heritage: Mexico, Texas, California,
3. The Fur Traders.

#### C. Early Middle Period, 1760-1865

1. Slavery and freedom on the frontier.
2. The "Trail of Tears": Blacks among the Five Civilized Tribes.
3. Black Participation in the Mexican War of 1846-1848.
4. Blacks on the Mining Frontier.
5. The Civil War in the West.
6. Black Women in the West.

#### D. Later Middle Period, 1866-1900

1. The Black Military Experience in the West.
2. The Black Presence in the western cattle industry.
3. Afroamericans and other peoples of color in the West.
4. The black lawman and outlaw in the scope of frontier justice.
5. The black homesteader (Exodusters) and urbanite in the West.
6. Churches, schools, and businesses: building a black community.
7. Government, politics and the struggle for social/democratic rights.

#### E. The Early 20th Century Black Urban West, 1901-1940

1. Continuing evolution of the black community in the West.
2. The changing character of black labor in the West.
3. World War I, the Depression, and all that jazz.
4. Black women in the West revisited.

#### F. World War II and the Transformation of the Black West, 1941-1960

1. Migration in a time of national need.
2. A Luta Continua: Civil Rights, public accommodations, etc.
3. Expansion and maturation: the barriers begin to come down.

#### G. Good Times, Bad Times and the Maturation of the Black West

1. Blacks in the West: their portrayal in western literature and film.

#### H. Summary and Projections

#### IV. MEASURES AND METHODS OF PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

There will be three measures of performance evaluation used in this course this term. Two are written, one is observational. The written items are worth seventy-five (75) percent of your final grade while the observational is worth twenty-five (25) percent of the same.

A. Select a person, place, topic, or issue covered in the topical outline. Respecting your selection, compile an annotated bibliography of not less than ten (10) nor more than fifteen (15) items. Each annotation should include, first, a synopsis of the selected item; second, what you believe the author's objective was in writing the piece; third, your assessment of whether the objective was realized; and, fourth, how valuable you believe the piece was in fleshing out a more complete history of the Trans Mississippi West. Your annotations should not exceed two hundred fifty (250) words each.

B. In not less than seven (7) nor more than ten (10) pages, utilizing your selection from item A above as a starting point, contrast what you have learned in this course with the popular culture image of the West as it has been presented in literature and in the visual media. What does this contrast tell you about the social construction of reality? What have you learned about yourself and your own time by examining these materials?

Item A is due in my box (30 Ketchum) not later than 1700, Friday, 10 March 2000. Item B is due in the same not later than 1700, Friday, 5 May 2000. **NOTE WELL, LATE SUBMISSIONS REQUIRE LATE FEES. THE LATE FEE IN THIS INSTANCE IS AUTOMATIC REDUCTION OF THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE GRADE DETERMINED BY THE QUALITY OF YOUR WORK BY ONE FULL LETTER.**

C. THE DAY MY EVALUATION OF YOUR WORK TAKES PRECEDENCE OVER THE PROCESSES OF ITS CREATION IN IMPORTANCE, YOU HAVE A PROBLEM. NOT ONLY IS GRADING NOT FAIR AND NOT OBJECTIVE, IT HAS VERY LITTLE TO DO WITH EDUCATION. PURELY AND SIMPLY, IT IS THE EXERCISE OF POWER THROUGH THE AUTHORITY OF THE TEACHER. ITS END IS PURPOSELY POLITICAL: TO LIMIT ACCESS TO A SMALLER AND MORE ELITE GROUP.

D. All work submitted must be an original copy. No reproductions (Xerox, mimeo, ditto, e.g.) will be accepted. Printer users: please remember to tear your sheets. Too, make sure you keep a copy of the work you submit--papers do get lost.

E. Because each of us has a different image of what a specific grade means, I offer herewith what the various letters mean for me.

1. "A." Easily evident mastery of the materials. A neat, solid, tightly organized presentation in which you make your case with authority.

2. "B." A solid work but unimaginative in character. Covers all the bases but rarely transcends the party-line to express new insights or understandings.

3. "C." Mediocre presentation. Follows the letter not the spirit of the assignment. Lacks substance, effort, care and concern.

4. "D." A weak and ineffectual presentation. A thoroughly disorganized endeavor from start to finish.

**F. GRADES SHALL BE DETERMINED ON THE BASIS OF HOW EFFECTIVELY YOU ADDRESS THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA.**

1. Appropriate evidence of a thorough review of the pertinent literature for your work. This will be shown through the compilation of a significant bibliography, where warranted, addressing the major and minor aspects of your project. 15 percent of paper grade.

2. Demonstrated understanding of your project, its supporting materials, and its relations. This will be reflected in the thought, detail, and examination of issues (indicators of rigor, discipline and skill) which appear in your paper. In short, how completely you have developed the character of your presentation. 35 percent of paper grade.

3. Effective transmission of the meanings you have made of your labors. This will be reflected in the organization of the work (form) and the manner (style) with which they are communicated. To achieve maximum impact and effectiveness, purpose, direction, focus, proper distribution of emphases and evidence to support your contentions must be clear; coherence and credibility are important here. 35 percent of paper grade.

4. Errors in composition. These include: neatness of final copy, spelling, syntax, grammar, typing and verb/subject agreements. 15 of paper grade.