“Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.”  William Butler Yeats

Instructor: Dr. Ken Untiedt, Professor, Department of English and Creative Writing
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Office Hours: M and W 10:00-12:00, T and Th 8:15-9:15 and 11:00-12:00, or by appointment

Schedule:
This class is Section 001, and it meets Monday and Wednesday from 1:00 to 2:15 in LAN 102.

Telephone Partners:
Name 1: Phone: Email:
Name 2: Phone: Email:

Course Description: Advanced study of principal regional literatures of America. The focus may be specifically on Texas authors and works, Southwestern or Southern writers, the Western as a genre, Great Plains literature, the literature of the Northwest, or other related topics. May be repeated when topic changes. Prerequisite: ENG 381 and nine additional semester hours of English.

English Program Learning Outcomes:
- Students will demonstrate the ability to read complex texts, closely and accurately;
- Students will demonstrate the ability to comprehend both traditional and contemporary schools/methods of critical theory and apply them to literary texts to generate relevant interpretations;
- Students will demonstrate knowledge of literary history in regard to particular periods of World, British, and American literature;
- Students will demonstrate the ability to effectively conduct literary research; and,
- Students will demonstrate the ability to write clear, grammatically correct prose for a variety of purposes in regards to literary analysis.

General Education Core Curriculum Objectives/Outcomes for Communication:
This is not a general education core curriculum course and no specific exemplary educational outcomes are addressed in this course.

Student Learning Outcomes:
The Western as a genre is relatively new, originating in this country less than two hundred years ago. It has, however, been extremely influential—in literature, film and television, music, art, fashion, and countless other areas of modern culture. People from around the world are still fascinated by the era of the “Old West,” when cowboys battled Indians on the wild frontier and massive cattle drives spanned hundreds of miles. In this course you will study texts that record the development of the American West. In doing so, you will discover the influences and reasons for the evolution of the genre itself. The Western has been called America’s “national literature,” but is that a valid statement? Why has this brief period of time in our nation’s history been revered for so long? When and how did the Western begin? How has it changed? Where is it going? Who are the people responsible for its creation? Who sustained it and made it popular? Who, if anyone, legitimized it as an art form? We will examine these questions in order to determine the significance of the Western in the history of American literature.
Required Texts:
- James Fenimore Cooper *The Deerslayer*
- Brown, Bill, ed. *Reading the West*
- Owen Wister *The Virginian*
- Willa Cather *O Pioneers!*
- Walter Van Tilburg Clark *The Ox-Bow Incident*
- Louis L’Amour *Hondo*
- E. L. Doctorow *Welcome to Hard Times*
- Robert Flynn *North to Yesterday*
- Larry McMurtry *Lonesome Dove*
- Clay Reynolds *Agatite*
- Elmer Kelton *The Man Who Rode Midnight*
- Cormac McCarthy *All the Pretty Horses*

Course Requirements:
This is a reading- and writing-intensive course. You will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of the assigned texts through your own critical analysis, expressed by discussion of specific topics (individually and in groups) and in insightful essays about your reactions to the texts, authors, and movements. Specific instructions and examples for each of these assignments will be provided early in the course. *All papers must adhere to correct MLA format, using 12 point font in Times New Roman.* Papers will be graded for critical analysis and rhetorical soundness, as well as grammar and mechanics, according to the rubric provided.

You will write twelve Response Papers (no more than two pages each) on topics of your choosing. These papers will focus on authors, themes, or movements we have covered, using assigned texts as references and support. Your two lowest grades on Response Papers will be dropped. You will write one research paper (8-10 pages), which includes criticism from secondary sources in addition to the primary texts. The final paper (the Core Capstone Essay) is expected to be analytical, interpretive, and articulate. You are encouraged to expand one of your Response Papers (or combine more than one) into the Core Capstone Essay, although the topic must be developed significantly in scope and content. You will also write an Abstract for the Core Capstone Essay and an Annotated Bibliography.

Your grade will be directly reflective of the amount of effort you exhibit. I have established a high standard for excellence in this course, and I expect you to meet that in order to excel academically. Your final grade in this course is entirely up to you. However, you must take the assignments seriously—they are intended to challenge you.

Writing Enhanced Course Guidelines:
This course is designated as Writing Enhanced. Therefore, the following criteria must be met:
- Each student will write a minimum of 3000 words or 10 pages throughout the semester
- The course will include instruction in discipline-based writing among its objectives
- Each student will be required to revise and re-submit at least one assignment during the term
- Out-of-class writing assignments will count for a minimum of 20% of the course grade

Course Policies:
Attendance and Behavior: You are expected to be on time, thus minimizing disruptions, repeated instructions, and missed assignments. Being tardy five times counts as one absence. *You may be counted absent even if you attend class, if you: do not bring your textbook or other required assignments, or are otherwise disruptive to the classroom environment.* After three unexcused absences, five percent of your final grade (50 points) will be deducted for each additional absence. Absences will be excused at my discretion (with adequate documentation), according to the University Policy and Procedures Manual. If you are absent, you are responsible for determining what you missed (preferably, from your phone partners). If you miss an excessive amount of classes—or fail to turn in assignments—I may refer you to the Early Alert Program, which provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance available to help SFA students succeed. For specific information regarding attendance and excused absences, see policy 6.7.
I will not allow any disruptive behavior to interfere with my ability to teach or conduct class, or with the ability of your classmates to learn from the instructional program. Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated, and if you interfere with the learning environment I will insist that you leave the class; you will also be subject to judicial, academic, or other penalties. I have full discretion over what is considered unacceptable or inappropriate behavior, but a simple rule of thumb is to use common sense about language, attire, and showing respect and courtesy to others. At the very least, turn off cell phones and other electronic devices during the scheduled class time. If you repeatedly use your cell phone or other electronic devices improperly during class time, I will take the device until after the class. For further reference, see the Student Code of Conduct, policy 10.4.

**Deadlines:** Students are highly encouraged to turn in all assignments on time, and failure to do so may result in a slight grade reduction. However, if the Response Papers are turned in after the due date, they can receive no higher than 70%. It is essential that you complete all reading assignments on time. This course is progressive in nature; do not fall behind early.

**Academic Integrity:** Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. In part, the following is taken from the University Policy and Procedures Manual (online), Section 4.1:

Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways, including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. *Cheating* includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. *Plagiarism* is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one’s own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one’s paper without giving the author due credit.

[Documented proof of cheating or plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course.]

**Grammar and Mechanics:** This is a college English course, and your work must evidence college-level work. If I discover five (5) or more simple, unique, sentence-level grammatical and/or mechanical errors on a single page of any formal written assignment, I will draw a line across the paper and stop grading for such errors, and give the assignment a 50%. I will continue to read the assignment so that I can offer comments on content, organization, or basic structure, and I will return it to you with the opportunity to revise the work for an averaged grade.

An example is a 50 the first time (for an assignment worth 100 points), and a 90 for the revised work; the combined total is 140, and the averaged grade would be a 70. **However, if you revise the paper and I still must “draw the line,” I will lower the grade to a zero.** You will be given only two opportunities to revise work of that quality. Any subsequent assignments with five or more errors on a page will simply receive 50% with no opportunity for revision. You will not be allowed to revise the Core Capstone Essay.

**Difficulties:** If you need critical advice on the writing assignments, or if you are having severe difficulty keeping up with the reading schedule, please contact me as soon as possible. I will provide individual tutoring (for this course) during my office hours to any student who asks for assistance. I am very understanding (and more considerate than most people assume), but you must make your individual concerns known to me.
Grade Determination:

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<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation in Informed Discussion</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ten Response Papers (20 points each)</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam I</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Core Capstone Essay Abstract</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Core Capstone Essay</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam II (the final exam)</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1000</strong></td>
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Grading Rubric

These are the standards for an A:

*Conception and Thesis*: The main point is clearly stated, and it contains some new, perhaps surprising element, some angle that is uncommonly thoughtful and insightful. The writer is not simply restating other people’s ideas; he or she presents more critical analysis and commentary than an average intelligent person might. The explicit and implicit assumptions of the topic are exposed and challenged. If research is included, the sources have not merely been cited—they have been analyzed, using what supports the argument, and acknowledging and addressing what challenges it.

*Organization*: The organization flows smoothly. Opposition to the argument is addressed and worked through at the beginning, and the rest of the time is spent building a strong case, supported with evidence that moves from weaker points to stronger ones.

*Style*: The argument is not only clearly stated and supported well, but it is done in an impressive way. The language used is sophisticated but not unnecessarily showy. The presentation style matches the content of the paper, perhaps through a sustained metaphor, or a particularly apt example that is carried through the entire paper.

*Format*: The paper adheres to the standard format for that type of document (memo, business letter, proposal, etc.). If visuals are incorporated, they enhance the text and look professional. Documentation of sources adheres to some recognizable style guide (MLA, APA, Chicago, or an equivalent).

*Grammar and Mechanics*: The paper is relatively clean and free (3 or fewer) of grammatical and mechanical errors.

These are the standards for a B:

*Conception and Thesis*: The idea is better than average and is still clearly stated, but the writer may have overlooked, or not acknowledged or challenged the assumptions that inform it.

*Organization*: The organization is strong, but the signaling might be a bit clunky—there may be a lot of directional phrases used to force transition points (“As I said earlier...” “Firstly, secondly, thirdly...”).

*Style*: It’s clean and readable, there is a consistent sense of voice, and there aren’t any places where a reader has to go back and reread a sentence just to understand its structure.

*Format*: The paper adheres to the basic standards for that type of document. If visuals are incorporated, they are used for filler only, or do not look professional. There may be minor errors or inconsistencies in documentation mechanics.

*Grammar and Mechanics*: There are very few (5 or fewer) errors.

These are the standards for a C:

*Conception and Thesis*: The main idea for the paper shows that the writer understands the topic and has thought about it, but the argument is either overly simplistic or one that is commonly stated. The main point may be clearly stated and defended with appropriate evidence, but the analysis is not very deep.

*Organization*: The paper uses a simple “5 Paragraph Essay” approach, perhaps even having only five paragraphs—an introduction, three supporting points, and a conclusion which merely restates the
introduction. Transitions between paragraphs are competently handled but do not “flow.”

*Style:* The style is simple, and there may be some word choice errors, especially where the writer uses “big” words incorrectly because he or she is trying to sound more impressive than necessary.

*Format:* Rules for that particular type of document are not closely followed: page numbers are missing or incorrect, margins are inconsistent, font size is too small or difficult to read, etc. Visuals look “cheap” or are badly integrated into the text. Sources are documented inconsistently or unclearly.

*Grammar and Mechanics:* The paper contains several distracting grammatical or mechanical errors, but they are repetitive (multiple comma splices) or are uncommon errors of a more complicated nature (and have not yet been discussed during the course).

These are the standards for a D:

*Conception and Thesis:* The main point of the paper is not clear at all, and very little evidence is used to support any kind of argument.

*Organization:* The focus shifts from one point to another, with little transition in between.

*Style:* The paper reads like a casual chat with friends, rather than a smart, academic paper.

*Format:* The document format is recognizable but clearly not correct. Visuals are not included when necessary, or they are not clear or otherwise inappropriate for the document. Documentation of sources does not adhere to a recognizable style guide.

*Grammar and Mechanics:* The paper contains multiple grammatical and mechanical errors (over 10), with consistent problems in sentence structure. There is little evidence of proofreading.

These are the standards for an F:

The writer fails to adequately fulfill the minimum requirements of the assignment: research or page requirements are not met, format is not correct, sources are inadequately documented, etc.

*Conception and Thesis:* No clear idea governs the words on the page.

*Organization:* No plan is evident, much less achieved.

*Style:* The paper contains many inappropriate or incorrect word choices, and does not read like a college-level paper.

*Format:* The basic format for that type of document is unrecognizable. There is no correct documentation of sources.

*Grammar and Mechanics:* There are multiple grammatical and mechanical errors on each page, as well as consistent problems in sentence structure. There is apparently no attempt at proofreading.

**Withheld Grades:** The following information on Withheld Grades is taken from the University Policy and Procedures Manual (online), Section 5.5:

At the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic unit head, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F, except as allowed through policy [i.e., Active Military Service (6.14)]. If students register for the same course in future semesters, the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

**Statement Regarding Students with Disabilities:**
To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to [http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/](http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/).
Schedule:

All reading assignments are to be done prior to the class date indicated. Consider the topic for your assigned group, and be prepared to lead classroom discussion with intelligent commentary on assigned class periods. As you read each work, try to identify additional underlying themes or a unique analyses you can present to add to class discussion. What creative techniques are being used? What makes the novel succeed or fail as a literary work? Also, consider how you might incorporate authors, themes, movements, or characters in your Response Papers and the Core Capstone Essay. Response Papers for each novel are due on the date we begin discussion for that work. Exams and major assignments are in **bold**.

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<th>Week 1</th>
<th>08-27</th>
<th>Introduction to course; review of Syllabus</th>
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<td>08-29</td>
<td>Relevance of the Western as a genre</td>
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<td>Week 2</td>
<td>09-03</td>
<td>Overview of the history of the Western and its study</td>
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<td>Background of American literature and literary movements</td>
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<td>In the beginning; James Fenimore Cooper’s <em>The Deerslayer</em></td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
<td>09-10</td>
<td><em>The Deerslayer</em></td>
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<td>09-13</td>
<td><em>The Deerslayer Response Paper due</em></td>
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<td><em>The Deerslayer</em></td>
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<td>09-17</td>
<td>Dime Novels</td>
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<td>Bill Brown’s <em>Reading the West</em></td>
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<td><em>Reading the West Response Paper due</em></td>
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<td>09-19</td>
<td><em>Reading the West</em></td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>09-24</td>
<td>A Western renaissance</td>
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<td>Owen Wister’s <em>The Virginian</em></td>
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<td><em>The Virginian Response Paper due</em></td>
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<td>09-26</td>
<td><em>The Virginian</em></td>
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<td>Group 4, 1, 2</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
<td>10-01</td>
<td>A female perspective</td>
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<td>Willa Cather’s <em>O Pioneers!</em></td>
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<td><em>O Pioneers!</em> Response Paper due</td>
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<td>10-03</td>
<td><em>O Pioneers!</em></td>
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<td>Group 1, 2, 3</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>10-08</td>
<td>Justice in the West</td>
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<td>Walter Van Tilburg Clark’s <em>The Ox-Bow Incident</em></td>
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<td><em>The Ox-Bow Incident Response Paper due</em></td>
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<td><em>The Ox-Bow Incident</em></td>
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<td>Group 2, 3, 4</td>
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| Week 8 | 10-15 | The pulps  
Louis L’Amour’s *Hondo*  
*Hondo* Response Paper due |
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<td>10-17</td>
<td><strong>Exam I</strong></td>
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| Week 9 | 10-22 | Western realism  
E. L. Doctorow’s *Welcome to Hard Times*  
*Welcome to Hard Times* Response Paper due |
|       | 10-24 | *Welcome to Hard Times*  
Core Capstone Essay Abstract due |
| Week 10 | 10-29 | The Trail Drive (a parody)  
Robert Flynn’s *North to Yesterday*  
*North to Yesterday* Response Paper due |
|       | 10-31 | *North to Yesterday*  
Group 1, 2, 3 |
| Week 11 | 11-05 | The Western epic  
Larry McMurtry’s *Lonesome Dove*  
*Lonesome Dove* Response Paper due |
|       | 11-07 | *Lonesome Dove*  
Group 2, 3, 4 |
| Week 12 | 11-12 | The modern Western  
Clay Reynolds’ *Agatite*  
*Agatite* Response Paper due |
|       | 11-14 | *Agatite*  
Popularity and recognition  
Annotated Bibliography due |
| Week 13 | 11-19 | No classes: University holiday  
No classes: University holiday |
| Week 14 | 11-26 | Elmer Kelton’s *The Man Who Rode Midnight*  
*The Man Who Rode Midnight* Response Paper due |
|       | 11-28 | *The Man Who Rode Midnight*  
Group 4, 1, 2 |
| Week 15 | 12-03 | Literary Westerns  
Cormac McCarthy’s *All the Pretty Horses*  
*All the Pretty Horses* Response Paper due |
|       | 12-05 | *All the Pretty Horses*  
Exam review  
Wrap-up  
Core Capstone Essay due |