



Syllabus Design to Teach about the American West through an International Lens

Capstone Proposal by Tamar McKee
Fall 2024





Find your way **West with Us**



Opportunity

Every semester, the Center of the American West offers the course “CAMW 2001: The American West” as both a GenEd option for undergraduate students as well as a requirement for students pursuing the Center’s certificate in Western American Studies.

This course has traditionally attracted the same set of students predominantly interested in recreation in the West - with the occasional international student (by broad definition, not necessarily on a visa).



Support and Inclusion for CAMW 2001

CONTENT:

- This course will place foundational emphasis on the multicultural and global aspects of life in the western United States by embracing stories and resources from multiple vantage points and languages - of which students will be encouraged to contribute and reflect upon their own cultural origins.



Support and Inclusion for CAMW 2001

PEDAGOGY:

- This course will be informed by the trifecta of
 - Scaffolding
 - Interaction
 - Noticing
- Attention will be placed on developing assignments that build skills found in natural and social sciences, humanities and the arts.
- Such assignments will be guided and graded using rubrics that are clearly written and informed by the principles of Universal Design.



Scope & Scale

For International Students

While students who study at CU Boulder as International students on visas find their way to CAMW 2001 randomly and not in great frequency, this capstone project is informed by needs and techniques that work especially for these students. In striving to support international students this project believes that ALL students can be reached and that by such inclusivity this course can achieve more JEDAI practice and impact.

For ALL Students

CAMW 2001 usually fields 24-28 undergraduate students in their freshman or sophomore years, with the occasional junior or senior to complete GedEd requirements. A small (but hopefully growing) percentage of students in this course go on to pursue a certificate in Western American Studies. At whatever level students engage with this course, it is the aim of this project is to not only expand their worldview about a U.S. region but to come away with clear skill sets that will benefit them going forward.

Stakeholders



Instructor

As I will be the instructor of this course, it is up to me to stay aligned with content and pedagogical approaches that support students, including imparting skill-based knowledge in an effective way.



Center Director

The success and impact of this course is guided by the input and support given by the faculty director of the Center of the American West (CAW).



Guest Visits

CAMW 2001 gained notoriety at CU for the opportunities it provided to meet and interact with guests who could speak directly to topics and issues explored in class.




University Support

Be it from the Registrar, the Academic Programs Coordinator at the CAW, the Center for Teaching and Learning, this course depends on foundational admin & curriculum support.

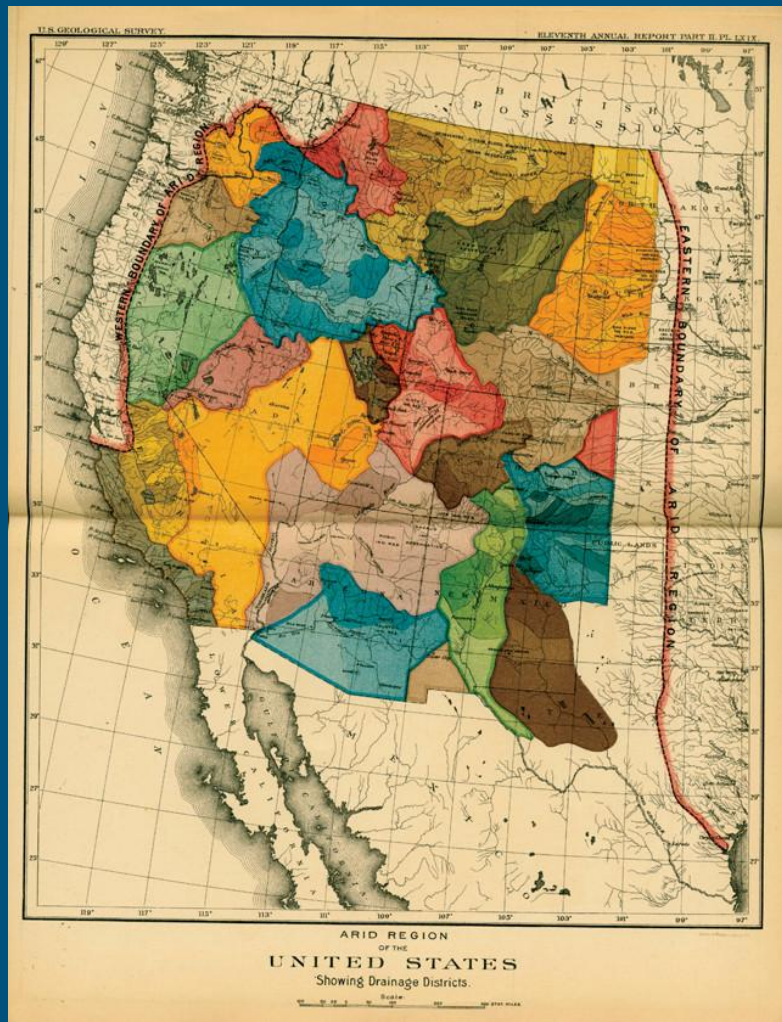
Preliminary Example of Syllabus approach:

1. **Nature & Land**: Begin with consideration of the many environments of the American West and where else on the planet we can find similar conditions.
 - a. GOAL: Students will ground in the importance of environmental factors when considering important aspects of a global region AS WELL AS be able to grasp how such factors change over time and are thus subject to historic bias.
2. **Indigenous Life**: Run in tandem with the above, emphasis will be placed on understanding the multicultural dimensions of indigenous life in what came to be called the American West as well as how land was experienced and stewarded prior to European colonial incursion.
 - a. GOAL: to understand the complexity and embeddedness of indigenous life in this region AS WELL AS to think critically about forthcoming Western conflation of indigenous human life as a part of “uncivilized” nature.

A close-up portrait of an elderly woman with short, white hair and white-rimmed glasses. She is wearing a blue shawl and colorful beaded jewelry. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

"The greatest challenge for
a true human being is to
think with both heart and mind."

~Dr. Henrietta Mann



Preliminary Example of Syllabus approach:

1. **Columbian Exchange**: students will now see how irrevocably environment and indigenous life in the region changed in the advent of European colonization. Here we can begin a reflection on international cultures vis a vis colonization and immigration and entanglement with indigenous human and greater-than-human life.
 - a. GOAL: to grasp the complexity of cultural-and-then-some exchange in the face of regional exploration and colonization utilizing multi-lingual historical primary sources as much as possible.
2. **U.S. Expansionism**: rather than seeing this as a march westward and a solidification of American nationalism, students will explore the friction, ambiguities, and cooperative moments set-forth by this historical period.



Mexican American Racial Uncertainties and the Multiracial Roots of Colorblindness

December 5th | 5:30pm
Hale 230 / Zoom

In its 1972 Keyes decision, the U.S. Supreme Court ordered that Denver desegregate its public schools. Denver's African American and Mexican American communities, however, pursued disparate goals and sought different ends, both during this landmark case and in the decades that followed. Please join University of Utah historian **Danielle R. Olden** to learn more in a talk that draws upon her prizewinning 2022 book, *Racial Uncertainties*, which will also be available for purchase and signing by the author.



Danielle R. Olden



Presented by
Center of the American West
CU Department of
History
Latin American and Latino
Studies Center
CU Department of
Ethnic Studies

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Horses and the Human Story:

A Global Perspective



8:30am Welcome Remarks

8:35am *ἵπτα* of Tibet: Tracing the Evolution of Horses on the Tibetan Plateau from Prayer to Protest – **Tamar McKee**, Center of the American West

9:00am *The Heavenly, the Royal, and the Patriotic: The Changing Symbolism of Horses in Chinese Art* – **Stephanie Su**, Art and Art History

9:30-9:45am Coffee Break

9:45am *The Mounted Warrior: Contextualizing Human Osteological 'Riding' Markers* – **Lauren Hosek**, Department of Anthropology

10:15am *Odin the Horse Master: the Mythic Evidence of a Nordic Horse Cult and its Social Implications* – **Mathias Nordwig**, Nordic Program, Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures

10:45-11:00am Coffee Break

11:00am *Equids in the Old Oyo Empire, West Africa* – **Olumide Ojediran**, Department of Anthropology

11:30am *Animal Suffering, Anti-Cruelty Activism, and Equine Ventriiloquism During the Great Horse Flu of 1872-1873* – **Thomas Andrews**, Center of the American West

12:00pm Seminar, *The Strongest Riders in the World: Ancient Horsemanship as Modern Sport in Central Asia* – **Will Grant**, author of *The Last Ride of the Pony Express*

1-2:30pm Lunch on Your Own

2:30pm Panel Discussion with All Symposium Participants, Q&A

4pm Discussant: *Horses and the Human Story, from the Eurasian Steppes to the Great Plains* – **William Taylor**, CU Museum, author of *Hoof Beats: How Horses Shaped Human History*, book signing

5:30pm Dinner on Your Own

7:30pm Keynote Lecture, *Hoof Beats and the Humans in the Saddle: History, Culture, and Epistemology in a Distant Land* – **Akin Ogundiran**, Northwestern University

Friday, December 6 CU Museum Paleontology Hall

Around the world, relationships between people and horses have had a tremendous impact on the human story, forever changing ways of life from transport to communication, subsistence, and belief. Drawing together leading scholars and thinkers from around the world to share perspectives on the human-horse story, this symposium celebrates the release of the 2024 Eugene M. Kayden Book Prize Award-winning book, *Hoof Beats: How Horses Shaped Human History*.



Made possible by the Kayden Book Award, College of Arts & Sciences and the Center for Asian Studies



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free and open to the public

Preliminary Example of Syllabus approach:

1. **21st Century West**: this will be an exploration of how the region negotiates not only the two international borders of Mexico & Canada but also ongoing international issues of immigration, federal government representation vs. state's rights, resource extraction and distribution, and climate change.
 - a. GOAL: to show how environmental and historical legacies continue to shape the region or have faded from prominence and why. Students will scaffold from the previous explorations to craft their own capstone project informed by Universal Design.

Perspective-Skills this course aims to impart:

- 1) To understand environmental issues as cultural ones by seeing the role human ideas and technology play in ecological knowledge.
 - a) Modalities: graphic, written, and oracular conveyance of ideas and experiences through a critical thinking and storytelling lens.
- 2) To encounter Indigenous life both in historical and contemporary contexts and identify sovereignty in the face of domination and struggle.
 - a) Modality: creative and analytical analysis of artifacts and art.
- 3) To see the “American West” as an arbitrary, academic concept that collects very consequential issues that resonate regionally, nationally, and internationally.
 - a) Modality: archival and ethnographic research and analysis.

No data will be collected for this course

However, this course will receive FCQ evaluations from students and I plan to ask ~3 questions* to assess specifics related to this microcredit course, such as:

- 1) Pedagogy: how effective was scaffolding, interaction and noticing?
- 2) Skills: how much competency do students feel with the various skills they were introduced to and taught in this course?
- 3) Rubrics: how helpful were these in defining the course of action in completing assignments and understanding their subsequent evaluation?

**Note: the above questions will be re-written in a more IS-friendly manner*