HONR 292B – Manifest America: Knowing the Roots of Modern America by Looking West

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Office: Clark B359
Office Hours: M/W 11:30-1:30, and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION
The course is formulated around the study of an American identity that emerged with the articulation of Manifest Destiny in the 1840s. The ideology of Manifest Destiny, though not entirely new to Americans in that period, came to work as a justification for American expansion into the North American West largely because it facilitated the sense of exceptionalism that excused the costs of such expansion. In exploring the impact that it had and its influence on American history, we will connect Manifest Destiny to some of the more dramatic and formative events in US history, including the overland migration, the era of the gold rush, the Mexican-American War, and even the Civil War. In looking at how these issues of freedom, democracy, and opportunity play out in the American West and in the nascent American empire, we will look at the construction of race and the racialization of non-white people in the Americas, the promotion of American masculinity at home and abroad, and the balancing of American ideals and self-interest. We can then make broad connections with both the context and the legacies of this period by considering how much these themes remain part of an identity supported by many Americans today.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this course, a successful student will be able to:
1. Analyze how the arts and humanities enhance and express ways of knowing.
2. Apply and integrate ways of knowing in the arts and humanities to contemporary issues and topics.
3. Creatively engage and integrate the arts and humanities to express one's own understanding and experience.
4. Explore and appreciate how knowledge is produced, constructed, expressed, and contested among different disciplines in the sciences and humanities.
5. Reflect on the limits of knowing, how knowledge changes, and the social, historical, political, and cultural influences that shape ways of knowing as expressed in the arts and humanities.
6. Articulate the value and purpose of ways of knowing in and through the arts and humanities.
7. Describe issues of ownership, identity, and power as they relate to the processes of knowledge production in and across the arts and humanities.
8. Critically assess interdisciplinary connections and interdependent overlaps between ways of knowing in the arts and humanities and the natural and social sciences.
REQUIRED TEXTS:

COURSE SCHEDULE: TOPICS, READINGS, AND OTHER MATERIALS

Weeks 1 through 5 – The Nature and Values of Knowing

Week 1: What is Knowing?
Wallace Stevens, “Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird”
Thomas Nagel, “What is it Like to be a Bat?”
Gerry Callahan, “Chimera”

Week 2: How Do We Know and What Are the Challenges of Knowing?
Words that Change the World – Radiolab Presentation (http://www.radiolab.org/story/91728-words-that-change-the-world/)

Discussion Group 1

Week 3: What Do We Know and How Is It Expressed?
Karl Popper and Imre Lakatos on scientific knowing
Choose one: Emily Martin, “The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles”; Emily Martin, “Visions of the Immune System” from Flexible Bodies; or Susan Sontag, Illness as Metaphor excerpt.

Discussion Group 2

Week 4: Who Owns Ways of Knowing?
Eli Clare, Exile and Stones excerpt.
Optional: Michael Foucault, “Two Lectures” from Power/Knowledge

Discussion Group 3

Week 5: What are the Purposes of Knowing?
Richard Feynman, “The Value of Science”
Martha Nussbaum, Not for Profit, Chapter II
Ray Bradbury, “The Flying Machine”
Discussion Group 4
Assignment: Paper 1

**Weeks 6 through 12 – Integration of Knowing (Case Studies)**

**Week 6: What is Manifest Destiny?**
Daniel Burge, “Manifest Mirth: The Humorous Critique of Manifest Destiny, 1846-1858”
Discussion Group 2

**Week 7: Getting to Know the American West**
Darren Dobson, “Manifest Destiny and the Environmental Impacts of Westward Expansion”
Discussion Group 3
Assignment: Rough Paper Topic

**Week 8: Moving West**
Sarah Keyes, “Western Adventurers and Male Nurses: Indians, Cholera, and Masculinity in Overland Trail Narratives”
Discussion Group 4

**Week 9: Spring Break**

**Week 10: Taking the West**
Amy Greenberg, *A Wicked War*, Part 4 and Epilogue
Discussion Group 1
Assignment: Paper 2

**Week 10: Looking Abroad**
Bonnie Miller, *From Liberation to Conquest*, Introduction and CH 1
Robert May, “Young American Males and Filibustering in the Age of Manifest Destiny: The United States Army as a Cultural Mirror”
Discussion Group 3
Assignment: Refined Paper Topic and Sources

**Week 11: Exporting America**
Bonnie Miller, *From Liberation to Conquest*, CH 2-3
Courtney Fullilove, “Gift and Gunboat: Meanings of Exchange in the Perry Expedition”
Discussion Group 4

**Week 12: Defending Liberty**
Bonnie Miller, *From Liberation to Conquest*, CH 4-5
ASSIGNMENTS

Class Participation
Attendance is mandatory. Your participation grade will be determined in part by your regular engagement with the material as well as your ability to contribute to the discussions in class. This can be graded on improvement, meaning that a steady growth in your contributions – especially in the quality of those contributions – will be considered.

Discussion assignments
Each student will be responsible for helping lead discussion this semester. You will contribute a variety of discussion items – sometimes these will be questions about the reading or comments about how certain readings fit together – over the entire course. This means that someone will be required to submit the discussion thread nearly each week that we meet. These will be evaluated according to the depth of analysis, demonstration of critical thinking, and your professionalism in working with your classmates.

Oral Presentation
Students give an extemporaneous persuasive speech 7-8 minutes in length. The purpose of the speech is to inform, not persuade. You must complete a full-sentence outline in advance of your speech. This is a key component of the course. Your evaluation will include your grasp of the material, your ability to explain your findings clearly and convincingly, and your presentation skills.

You will have several benchmark assignments over the semester so that you can make consistent progress on this assignment. You will start with a research question before building sources, refining the topic, identifying key sources, and then putting all of it together in planning for the speech. This should help you plan well in advance of the speech to ensure it is done well.
Peer Evaluation is another component of this assignment. Each student is evaluated by two other students. This will help the speaker and the reviewers better understand the material and the process of presenting it. This will also afford each of the students to feel like his/her contribution to the group will positively affect another students’ experience and performance. You will prepare constructive comments for the speaker and respectfully offer your praise and your suggestions for improvement.

**Essays**
Students will write 1000-word essays on topics related to each of the two main books read for this course. The questions for these assignments will be given in advance and you will be required to both analyze the text and connect it to broader themes from the course. You will be required to make an argument in response to the question, and your evaluation will be based on your knowledge of the material and your ability to use evidence to support your view. You will also write a shorter (750-word) essay on the Knowing section of the course as a way for you to engage with the various sources and develop your thoughts on that content.

**Research Paper**
You will submit a research paper (8-10 pages) that goes into additional depth regarding the subject of your oral presentation. This will represent the culmination of the semester and will be your final project. You should anticipate using most of the research you already completed for you oral presentation but this will be designed to get you to present it in a different way. You will explain your research techniques, your findings in depth, and explicate how the project informed your thinking about empire and imperial history.

**EVALUATION SYSTEM**

The requirements that will be used to evaluate student learning are:
1. Two writing projects (20% of grade).
2. Short writing project (10%) based on the Knowing section of the course.
3. Oral communication assignment (15% of grade)
4. Analytical research writing project (8-10 pages plus bibliography; 15% of grade).
5. Participation (40% of grade).

**GRADING**

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing projects (3)</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analytical research paper (1)</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Speech (1)</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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Grade distribution (plus/minus grades may be used):

- 90-100%   A
- 80-89%    B
- 70-79%    C
- <60%      F
- 60-69%    D
### Honors Competencies and Skills for Honors Students (“PICC” feedback)

The CSU University Honors Program has prioritized four general competencies skills that should be addressed in each honors course. These skills include (1) **Professionalism, interpersonal skills, and emotional intelligence**; (2) **Interdisciplinary learning integrated with global and/or cultural viewpoints**; (3) **Critical thinking**; and (4) **Creativity and problem solving**. This is a two-stage process. First students complete a self-evaluation of these skills at the beginning of the semester. At the end of the semester instructors will provide feedback for each student, based on assignments and activities. The feedback is part of the University Honors Program; it is for advising purposes only and is confidential. It is not part of a student’s grades or academic record. A standardized rubric is used to provide feedback for growth in these areas and to measure the Honors Programs progress in helping students to develop these skills through their academic career. The feedback categories and activities/assignments used to measure progress in HONR 292 are listed below and noted in the assignment descriptions.

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<th>Skill Category (PICC)</th>
<th>Relevant Course Activities &amp; Assignments</th>
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| **1. Professionalism, interpersonal skills, & emotional intelligence:** Acts ethically & positively to foster a supportive instructional or work environment. Has the emotional intelligence (ability to perceive, evaluate, & manage emotions) & interpersonal skills to work effectively with others. | • Class participation & conduct  
  • Discussion question assignments  
  • Formal speech |
| **2. Interdisciplinary learning integrated with global & cultural viewpoints:** Integrates diverse knowledge, perspectives, &/or skills into arguments &/or strategies; is aware of and can clearly incorporate global &/or cultural perspectives to an argument or issue. | • Class discussions  
  • Discussion question assignments  
  • Writing projects  
  • Final research paper  
  • Formal speech |
| **3. Critical thinking:** Student advances a position with specific theses or hypotheses & can conceptualize ideas or lines of thought. Conclusions and related outcomes acknowledge complexities of an issue (implications and consequences) and recognize differing points of view. Formulates & develops claims with sufficient support, including reasoning, evidence, & persuasive appeals, & proper attribution where necessary. Uses written and oral communication effectively in persuasive arguments. | • Class discussions  
  • Discussion question assignments  
  • Writing projects  
  • Final research paper  
  • Formal speech |
| **4. Creativity & problem solving:** Creatively applies discipline-based and/or cross-discipline-based knowledge to discover and design a variety of forms often using a problem-solving strategy | • Class discussions  
  • Discussion question assignments  
  • Writing projects  
  • Final research paper  
  • Formal speech |