

**HIST 3266 E01 - The Canadian West**

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Lectures: Mo 16:00-17:30; We 17:30-19:00

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"The 49<sup>th</sup> Parallel at Waterton Lake, Alberta."

Governments have removed vegetation along the border to increase their control over the lives of their citizens. This picture illustrates the highly artificial nature of the Canada-US border and the highly artificial nature of the two nations.

The official title of this course is "the History of the Canadian West". However, my lectures will deal with western North America as a whole. It is impossible to understand the history of western Canada without knowing about events south of the border. The 49<sup>th</sup> parallel transects biomes, traditional aboriginal territories, and natural economic communities. Despite the best efforts of governments based in the eastern time zone to exercise control over the border, animals, drugs, and illegal migrants continue to flow across it.

Many westerners dislike the border and the central government power it represents. Some First Nations regard the border as illegitimate. Anti-Ottawa sentiment is common among the whites of western Canada. In Alberta, many right-wing people believe that they have more in common with their American neighbours than with central Canadians. Some ecologists in BC and the Pacific North West have dreamt of establishing a new nation called Cascadia. Separation from Canada remains a topic of conversation in Alberta.

Anti-central government sentiment is also pronounced in the American West. In some cases, this sentiment translates into outright secessionism. In other cases, dislike of Washington takes the form of hostility to specific federal government policies and strong regional or state identities.

Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater once said that he would be happy if the whole eastern seaboard of the United States fell into the Atlantic Ocean. It is not unknown for Californians travelling overseas to tell people that they are from "California" rather than "the U.S."

The American West has been the birthplace of many protest movements of both the political left and the political right. Some of these protest movements crossed the border and became part of western Canadian political history.



Image= The Las Vegas Strip at Night, 2004

There is a strong libertarian movement in western North America. Western libertarians tend favour policies such as low taxes, unrestricted immigration, the right to carry handguns, and the legalization of divorce, homosexuality, pornography, drugs, gambling, and prostitution. The environmental, Native rights, and gay rights movements have also been strong in western North America. Greenpeace was created in Vancouver.

There are others reasons for treating the histories of the American and Canadian Wests in a single course. Large First Nations and East Asian populations are two things the American and Canadian Wests have in common. The economies of the two regions have marked similarities and similar environmental challenges. In the nineteenth century, both regions had skewed sex ratios, which changed gender roles and encouraged new forms of sexuality.



Image= San Francisco Chinatown, 1890s. Source: Wikimedia Commons.

The course explores major topics in the political, social, and economic history of western North America. As a vehicle for teaching these broad themes, I have adopted a "history through biography" approach, so each lecture revolves around the life and times of an individual. The men and women who are the subject of my lectures come from diverse social groups and historical epochs.



Image= Apache bride, late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Source: Wikimedia Commons.

Canada's four western provinces have much in common (including resentment of central Canada), but they are four quite distinct polities and societies. At the end of this course, you should be able to both defend and criticize the usefulness of the geographical term "the Canadian West." You should also be able to discuss the utility of other geographical terms used in the course, including "the North American West"; the "Canadian Prairies"; and the "Great Plains".



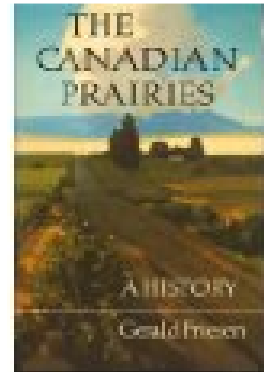
### Mark Breakdown

Book Review	20%
Mid-Term Exam	20%
Research Paper	30%
Final Exam	30%

### BOOKS TO PURCHASE

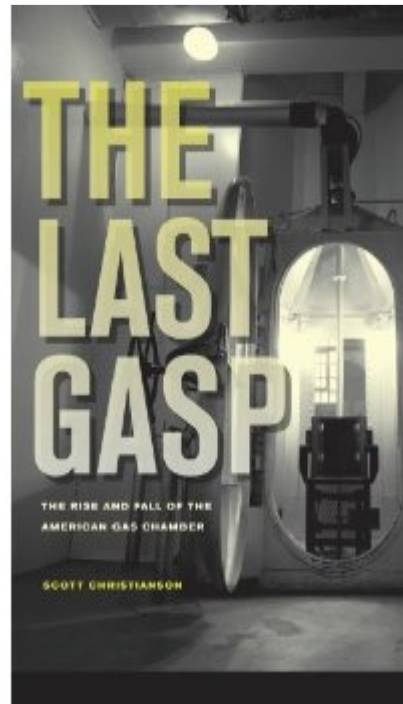
Textbook: Gerald Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987).

Other readings are available on WebCT.



Book for Review: Scott Christianson, *The Last Gasp: the Rise and Fall of the American Gas Chamber* (University of California Press, 2010). ISBN-13: 978-0520255623

You are asked to write a book review that is five pages in length. A *précis* of a book merely provides a descriptive summary of the book's contents. A proper book review, on the other hand, involves going beyond mere description and requires the input of one's own reasoned opinions. Published reviews of the work can be consulted, but mainly as a way of stimulating your own thinking on this topic. Reviews consulted should be properly documented.



### RESEARCH ESSAY

Each student will write a research essay twelve pages in length. A list of topics will be provided. It is possible to write an essay on a topic not on the list, provided one obtains the permission of the instructor in advance. This will require a visit during office hours.

The page limit will be strictly enforced. Any assignment over the limit will be returned to the student without being marked. The students will be asked to revise the assignment to bring within the limit. Normal late penalties will accrue during the period in which the assignment is being revised. Students should not try to evade the page limit by varying font size, page margins, etc. The font should be Times New Roman Size 12. All assignments in this course should be on white, letter sized paper. This assignment should be double-spaced.

Your grade will depend on both style and content. You will lose marks for stylistic defects such as spelling and other typographical errors, grammatical mistakes, and sentences of excessive length. You are also expected to have a clear thesis, or a strong central argument that your assignment seeks to prove using evidence.

### ESSAY ASSISTANCE

If you need help with your assignments, the Writing Assistance Program in Desmarais Library can help. It offers Laurentian students free help with their writing assignments. You may bring assignments in progress to the trained writing assistants, who will help them understand and solve their writing difficulties. The Program is open from 10 to 4 Monday to Thursday and 10 to 12 Friday. Students may make an appointment by calling 675-1151, ext. 3426, or by going to 30-249 and 30-250 in the J.N. Desmarais Library.

### UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS

Review Laurentian University's policy of dishonesty:

[http://www.laurentian.ca/NR/rdonlyres/F3863BE2-8E85-4C59-BE14-1CBC82D5045D/0/AcademicDishonestyPolicy\\_Jan18\\_2005.pdf](http://www.laurentian.ca/NR/rdonlyres/F3863BE2-8E85-4C59-BE14-1CBC82D5045D/0/AcademicDishonestyPolicy_Jan18_2005.pdf)

Plagiarism is a serious problem. The instructor will punish cases of plagiarism seriously. Plagiarized assignments will receive a grade of zero. In addition to loss of course credit, plagiarism can result in expulsion from the university. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please contact me. The rules regarding deferred examinations, doctor's notes, and attendance are set by the university, not by the instructor. Please look at the university regulations.

## COMMUNICATIONS

My office is A-258. I am always happy to speak to students during my office hours. Meetings outside office hours can be arranged. Email is the best way of reaching me for urgent matters. My email address is [adsmith@laurentian.ca](mailto:adsmith@laurentian.ca) not [asmith@laurentian.ca](mailto:asmith@laurentian.ca). I check my email at least once every weekday. If I have not replied to you within two working days, assume that I have not received your message. If I need to contact an individual student, I will send an email to his or her Laurentian email account. It is your responsibility to activate this account and to check it regularly. Your Laurentian account can be set to forward emails to another address (e.g., hotmail) but I will send emails only to the Laurentian system.

## LECTURES

8 September	<b>Introduction: Defining Regions</b> Alan Brinkley, "The Western Historians: Don't Fence Them In" <i>New York Times</i> , 20 September 1992.
13 September	<b>George Vancouver</b>
15 September	<b>Sacagawea</b>
20 September	<b>Sir George Simpson</b> Readings: Friesen, 22-65
22 September	<b>Amor de Cosmos: Making a White Man's Province</b>
27 September	<b>George Mercer Dawson and the Making of the Canada-US Border</b>
29 September	<b>Sitting Bull</b>
4 October	<b>Louis Riel and the "Rebellions"</b> Readings: Friesen, 91-161
6 October	<b>Poundmaker and Treaty Six</b>
11 October	<b>THANKSGIVING</b>
13 October	<b>MID TERM</b> <b>BOOK REVIEW DUE</b>

18 October	<b>Sir Sam Steele, Man of the Law</b> Readings:
20 October	<b>Kitty LeRoy's Whorehouse: Prostitution in the North American West</b>
25 October	<b>Study Week</b>
27 October	<b>Study Week</b>
1 November	<b>George Chaffey and the Creation of Ontario, California</b>
3 November	<b>Charles Ora Card, Mormon Albertan</b> Readings: Friesen, 162-194, 242-273
8 November	<b>William Jennings Bryan and Western Populism</b> Readings: Friesen, 339-381
10 November	<b>Emily Murphy, Albertan</b> Readings: Friesen, 382-417
15 November	<b>Tommy Douglas and the Depression's Legacy</b> Readings: Friesen, 382-460
17 November	<b>John Diefenbaker and the People of Prince Albert: the Prairie Provinces in the Post-War Era</b> Additional Reading: <i>The Canadian Bill of Rights</i> , <a href="http://www.efc.ca/pages/law/canada/BillofRights.html">http://www.efc.ca/pages/law/canada/BillofRights.html</a>
22 November	<b>Pat Brown: California Rising</b>
24 November	<b>David Suzuki and Transformation of British Columbia</b>
29 November	<b>Barry Goldwater and Western Libertarianism</b> <b>ESSAY DUE</b>
1 December	<b>Preston Manning and the Rise of the Reform Party</b>
6 December	<b>Elijah Harper</b>
8 December	<b>The New West Continuities and Discontinuities</b> Readings: <a href="http://allangregg.com/?p=47#more-47">http://allangregg.com/?p=47#more-47</a>

#### POSSIBLE ESSAY TOPICS

- 1) How did the Cold War influence the development of the North American West?
- 2) What was the impact on the North American West of the great smallpox epidemic of 1837-8?
- 3) Discuss the role of the mounted police in enforcing Canadian rule in the Prairie West.
- 4) Why was the murder rate higher in the American West than in the territory north of 49?
- 5) To what extent did westward migration undermine traditional gender roles in North American society?

- 6) Why was the Pig War resolved peacefully?
- 7) Who was John Wesley Powell? Why was he important?
- 8) What role did polygamy play in the politics of Utah statehood?
- 9) How effective was Cesar Chavez in improving the working condition of farm workers?
- 10) Why did relatively few francophones settle in the Canadian West after 1870?
- 11) Did the National Policy increase or decrease the rate of Prairie settlement?
- 12) Discuss the impact of the 1947 Leduc oil discoveries on the Alberta economy.
- 13) Discuss the impact of irrigation on the history of the North American West.
- 14) What was the Wise Use Movement? Why was it important in the politics of Canada and the United States?
- 15) How did the adoption of the horse influence gender roles in Prairie First Nations?
- 16) Until 1930, the natural resources in the Prairie Provinces were owned and managed by the federal government. In that year, control was transferred to the provinces. Why? What were the long-term consequences of this transfer?
- 17) Why did the Progressive movement emerge in the West rather than in some other part of Canada?
- 18) How did the Second World War affect the economy of the North American West?
- 19) What were the political consequences of Trudeau's National Energy Program?
- 20) Should the CCF party in Saskatchewan be seen as a socialist movement or as an example of Prairie populism?
- 21) Why was the Free Speech Movement at the University of California Berkeley socially important?
- 22) How did the role of women in the fur trade change over time?
- 23) To what extent was an anti-Asian sentiment in British Columbia connected to anti-Asian sentiment in California?
- 24) How did the Sioux respond to the imposition of a border along the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel?
- 25) Why did the Oblate Order play such an important role in the Christianization of the Native peoples of the west?
- 26) What impact has the Indian Act of 1876 had on the native peoples of the West?
- 27) Agriculture is an important part of the economy of the Prairie Provinces. Why are so few natives represented in this sector?
- 28) Why did the federal government ban the potlatch ceremony in British Columbia?