

**History 4850: Public and Popular Histories of the North American West  
Spring 2024 T/Th 12-1:15 SA7230**

*I live and work in Treaty 7 territory, here in the heart of traditional Siksikaitstapi (Blackfoot Confederacy) territory; I am a guest here, as all non-Blackfoot peoples are guests in this territory, and I try to be mindful of that in my scholarship and conduct. As a historian I also acknowledge the role that my discipline has played in the genocide of Indigenous peoples and the erasure of their histories.*

**Best way to reach me:** [sheila.mcmanus@uleth.ca](mailto:sheila.mcmanus@uleth.ca) I try to answer student emails within 48 hours, less if it is urgent.

**Drop-in hours:** I will be in my office (UH C872) most Tues/Thurs mornings or we can make an appointment to meet in person or online at another time.

**Course description:** The North American West *is* its stories, told over and over again in places far beyond a university classroom and indelibly shaping what we think we know about “the West.” More often than not those stories have more to do with settler colonial fantasies about the West than they do historical realities and Indigenous perspectives, but in recent years historians and creators in a wide variety of genres have been pushing back against those traditional stereotypes. In this course we will explore how and why the histories of the North American West are told and re-told in a wide range of public and popular genres, from museums and historic sites to comic books and video games.

**Course objectives:** This seminar is designed to help you:

- 1) explore and think critically about your interest in the history of the North American West;
- 2) explain how settler colonialism has shaped and continues to shape what we think we know and the stories we tell about the West;
- 3) discuss how we can share the West’s many histories with different audiences;
- 4) complete a substantial research project you could show an employer.

**Prerequisites:** Hist 2222 AND third year standing AND one of History 3703 or 3604

**This course has four required texts, and all other readings will be in Moodle Coursepack**

Chester Brown, *Louis Riel: A Comic-Strip Biography* (Drawn and Quarterly, 2006).

Robert Coutts, *Authorized Heritage: Place, Memory, and Historic Sites in Prairie Canada* (University of Manitoba Press, 2021).

The Graphic History Collective, *1919: A Graphic History of the Winnipeg General Strike* (Between the Lines Press, 2020).

**Schedule (topics and timing are highly likely to change)**

**Thurs Jan 4:** What do we already know/believe about the history of the North American West? What genres can historians use to tell our stories instead of books, articles, and essays? Who are the audiences for stories about the West?

**Tues Jan 9:** Robert Coutts, *Authorized Heritage: Place, Memory, and Historic Sites in Prairie Canada*. University of Manitoba Press, 2021. Read the Intro (pp.1-36) and Conclusion (pp. 199-204)

**Thurs Jan 11:** Coutts, *Authorized Heritage*, Chs 1-2 (pp. 37-110)

**First self-assessment due Thurs Jan 11 – Sunday Jan 14**

**Tues Jan 16:** Coutts, *Authorized Heritage*, Chs 3-5 (pp. 111-198)

**Thurs Jan 18:** Museums and historic sites in BC (articles in Moodle)  
Alyssa Tobin and Tracey Calogheros, “Hodul’eh-a: A Place of Learning, The Exploration Place, Lheidli T’enneh, and the Rethinking of a Local Museum.” *BC Studies* Issue 199 (Autumn 2018).

Watch the webinar on this project:

<https://www.canadashistory.ca/explore/webinars/hodul-eh-a-a-place-of-learning>

Gordon Walker, “Beyond Inclusion: Canadian and Indigenous Sovereignties in Mainstream Museums.” *BC Studies* Issue 199 (Autumn 2018): starts p129.

**Tues Jan 23** Historic sites in southern Alberta

James Opp, “Public history and the fragments of place: archaeology, history, and heritage site development in southern Alberta.” *Rethinking History* Vol 15, No, 2 (June 2011): 241-267. (use America History and Life database to find this article)

<https://headsmashedin.ca>

<https://blackfootcrossing.ca/wordpress/>

**Thurs Jan 25:** Museums in western Canada and US (links in Moodle)

**Tues Jan 30:** guest speakers from the Galt Museum:

Tyler Stewart, (I’nákyaahkioosínaa - Little Boat Man/Water Traveler), Curator;  
Camina Weasel Moccasin (Ikinainiahkii – Gently Singing), Indigenous Curator;  
Bobbie Fox (Akaiksims’staki – Many Thoughts Woman), Archives Assistant.

**Thurs Feb 1:** US historic sites (use America History and Life database to find all articles)  
Mark Walker, “The Ludlow Massacre: Class, Warfare, and Historical Memory in Southern Colorado.” *Historical Archeology* Vol 37 #3 (2003): 66-80.  
John Barnes, “The Struggle to Control the Past: Commemoration, Memory, and the Bear River Massacre of 1863.” *The Public Historian* Vol 30 #1 (February 2008): 81-104.  
James Green and Betsy Jameson, “Marking Labor History on the National Landscape: The Restored Ludlow Memorial and its Significance.” *International Labor and Working-Class History* No 76 (Fall 2009): 6-25

### **Draft proposals and bibliographies due Thurs Feb 1 – Sunday Feb 4**

**Tues Feb 6:** “The West” on film (all readings in coursepack)  
Janne Lahti, “The Unbearable Settler West in *The Ballad of Buster Scruggs*. In *Cinematic Settlers: The Settler Colonial World in Film*, edited by Janne Lahti and Rebecca Weaver-Hightower (Routledge, 2020)  
Sheila McManus, “*Gunless* as Settler-Colonial Borderlands Fantasy.” In *Cinematic Settlers*  
Lorenzo Veracini, “Settler Evasions in *Interstellar* and *Cowboys and Aliens*.” In *Cinematic Settlers*

**Thurs Feb 8:** guest speaker Shannon Murray, Manager, Indigenous Engagement, Calgary Stampede

**Tues Feb 13:** “The West” on the small screen (all readings in coursepack)  
Meredith Harvey, “Shining the Light of Civilization: The Savage Other of the Frontier in *Firefly* and *Serenity*.” In *Weird Westerns: Race, Gender, Genre*, edited by Kerry Fine et al (University of Nebraska Press, 2020).  
Michael K. Johnson, “Race and Gender in the Time Travel Western.” In *Weird Westerns*.  
Rebecca M. Lush, “Racial Metaphors and Vanishing *indians* in *Wynonna Earp*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, and Emma Bull’s *Territory*.” In *Weird Westerns*

**Thurs Feb 15:** guest speaker Stephanie Hamilton, CSPT PhD student, “How to Design a Museum Exhibit about Beer!”

### **Second self-assessment due Thurs Feb 15 – Sunday Feb 18**

#### ***Reading week!***

***This week:* watch at least one Western movie and/or tv show  
(free movies available through the library’s [Criterion On Demand](#) Film Database)**

**Tues Feb 27:** We will discuss the movies/shows you watched over the break

**Thurs Feb 29:** We will discuss the movies/shows you watched over the break (or play the Fall 2023 Hist3604 board games)

**Tues Mar 5:** Graphic history: Chester Brown's *Riel*

**Thurs Mar 7:** Riel online (all links in Moodle)

**Tues Mar 12** Graphic History Collective, *Winnipeg 1919*

**Thurs Mar 14:** General Strike(s) online (all links in Moodle)

### **March 18-22 Indigenous Awareness Week**

**Tues Mar 19:** Video games and the US West

Sara Humphreys, "Rejuvenating 'Eternal Inequality' on the Digital Frontiers of 'Red Dead Redemption.'" *Western American Literature* Vol 47, No. 2, (Summer 2012): 200-215.

Esther Wright, "Rockstar Games, Red Dead Redemption, and Narratives of 'Progress.'" *European Journal of American studies* Vol 16, No 3 (2020): 1-19.

**Thurs Mar 21:** Public and popular histories of racialized communities (links in Moodle)

**Tues Mar 26:** presentations of your draft projects + feedback (sign-up in Moodle)

**Thurs Mar 28:** presentations of your draft projects + feedback (sign-up in Moodle)

**LAST DAY FOR T/Th classes: Tues Apr 2:** Women's/queer western histories (links in Moodle)

**Final projects and self-assessments due Wed Apr 3 – Sunday Apr 14**

**How you will earn your grade**  
**(Note: you must complete all six assignments)**

**Three self-assessed engagement reflections (worth 50%).** Detailed instructions and the prompts are in Moodle.

**The project (three components, 50%).** Choose a topic in the history of the North American West, then research and develop a project for a public audience about that topic. You can produce a mock museum exhibit, plaques for a historic site, website, podcast, game, short story, art exhibit, etc. You can collaborate with someone else in the class if you want, and in that case the expected word count/number of sources etc will all double.

- 1 One page proposal + annotated bibliography. Due Thurs Feb 1 – Sunday Feb 4. Make sure your topic and intended audience are clear. Must include ten items, including at least two substantive primary sources and at least 5 recent scholarly secondary sources. Cite everything properly. Each annotation should be ~125-150 words and include a brief description of the source, your evaluation of the quality of the scholarship, and a brief explanation of how it is relevant to your topic. Ungraded = feedback only.
- 2 Presentations. March 26 and 28 (sign up in Moodle). Share a draft of your final project with your colleagues, and provide constructive feedback for your colleagues on their projects. You do not have to do this presentation live and in person; you can pre-record and post it ahead of time instead if you prefer. Ungraded = feedback only.
- 3 Final submission due Wed Apr 3 – Sunday Apr 14. ~2500-3000 words of text or equivalent (i.e. 15 mins video, spoken). Must include complete and correct bibliography, which can be submitted as a separate file.  
\* Interested in using the Agility maker space (everything from button maker to 3d printer) for your final projects? Let me know and I will arrange a tour!

**Extensions:** If you need more time for an assignment, just email me and we will work it out. I will not accept assignments that are more than a week late unless we have discussed it ahead of time.

**U of L History Department grading system**

94-100%	A+	4.0 GPA	70-73.9	C+	2.3
90-93.9	A	4.0	66-69.9	C	2.0
86-89.9	A-	3.7	62-65.9	C-	1.7
82-85.9	B+	3.3	58-61.9	D+	1.3
78-81.9	B	3.0	50-57.9	D	1.0
74-77.9	B-	2.7	0-49.9	F	0

**Academic integrity:** We commit ourselves to act with academic integrity this term: to be ethical in what we say and write, offer credit to others for thinking of ideas before us, and not use any “generative AI” (aka plagiarism) tools. I believe that everyone in this course is fundamentally honest, and I will help you learn the conventions of academic integrity such as citing sources and being clear about where your own words begin and end. If you use a tool like Grammarly to edit your papers for you, please submit a “before” and “after” copy so that

I can see what you did vs what the program did, and include a short reflection about how you can use the program's edits to improve your own writing next time. If you want to read what the U of L Calendar says about this topic, you can find it in the Undergraduate Calendar under "[Academic Regulations – Student Policies.](#)"

### **Support and services, on and off campus**

[Academic Services and Support](#)

[Academic Writing Program](#)

[Accessible Learning Centre](#)

[Campus Collective Centre](#)

[Chinook Sexual Assault Centre](#)

[Counselling Services](#)

[Ikaisskini \(Low Horn\) Gathering Place for FNMI Students](#)

[International Student Centre](#)

[ULSU Student Clubs \(including the particularly-awesome History Students' club\)](#)

[Student Success Centre](#)

[2SLGBTQ+ Resources](#)

University of Lethbridge Students' Union Food Bank  
Room 180 in the Students' Union Building, 403-329-2222