The flower-fed buffaloes of the spring
In the days of long ago
Ranged where the locomotives sing
And the prairie flowers lie low. . .

--Vachel Lindsay

Course description, objectives and learning outcomes: Welcome to IDH 2003, Inhabiting other Lives. The FIU catalog describes this as a class that “exposes students to issues of human commonality and diversity, and invites them to investigate and to understand the interconnectedness of various cultures, times and life experiences.”

This year marks the bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark expedition. We will use that anniversary as the jumping-off point for our own exploration of the myths and realities of the American West. Our travels will take us back in time, to a place that is no more and perhaps never was. We will try to see it through the eyes of diverse participants and observers and to consider how the westward migration helped to shape not just the geography of our nation, but our vision of what it means to be an American.

The reading, writing and speaking you do this semester is intended to help you build skills, confidence and awareness. As we share classic works of fiction and nonfiction this semester, we will look for the connections between these works—using history, geography, ethnography and art to help us understand “others” and ourselves.

Required texts: You will need the following texts this semester. All will be available for purchase in the FIU bookstore.


**Assignments and evaluation:** This is a seminar. Much of our work will be done in class. Attendance will count heavily in your semester grade. Up to 15 of the total 45 possible points on which your semester grade is based will be earned for being in class, on time, every time. Each class meeting after the first is worth ½ point. One point will be added to compensate for occasional emergencies. No attendance points will be earned for any class period for which you are absent or late or which you leave early.

Your class participation will count for up to 15 points of the total 45. (Oral presentations, including leading class discussions, will earn up to 5 points. Participation in class discussions will earn up to 5 points. A written journal responding to your reading and classes will earn up to 5 points.)

You may earn a maximum 5 points each for three papers, making up the remaining 15 possible points.

The total points you earn during the semester will determine your semester grade. Here are the point ranges needed for each of the following semester grades:

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I expect you to come prepared, having completed the reading or other work assigned to you in advance. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to see me before the next class for any assignments or materials distributed in your absence.

**Assignments:**

8/31 Introduction (no advance reading assignment. Please read the entire course syllabus before the end of Drop/Add week.)

9/2 East meets West: *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*

We will begin our exploration with John Ford’s 1962 classic story of an eastern lawyer who meets a western bad man in a story that explores the legends on which many of our notions about the American West (and what it means to be an American) are based.

9/7 East meets West: *Liberty Valance*
9/9  East meets west: *Liberty Valance*

9/14 East meets West: The Lewis and Clark expedition  (Ambrose, 13-67)

We will turn from the movie legends of the West to the realities of America’s westward expansion, as seen through the eyes of a 20th Century historian.

9/16 East meets West: The Lewis and Clark expedition  (Ambrose, 68 – 139)

**First paper due**

9/21 East meets West: The Lewis and Clark expedition  (Ambrose, 140 - 210)

9/22 The Dalai Lama visits UP.

9/23 East meets West: The Lewis and Clark expedition  (Ambrose, 211- 288)

9/27 Honors College Convocation, UP

9/28 East meets West: The Lewis and Clark expedition  (Ambrose, 289 – 341)

9/30 East meets West: The Lewis and Clark expedition  (Ambrose, 342 – 421)

**Responsive journal due**

10/5 East meets West: The Lewis and Clark expedition  (Ambrose, 422 – 484)

10/7 East meets West: The Lewis and Clark expedition

10/12 East meets West: La Vérendrye, a “footnote” in history  
(Veraldi and Veraldi, “La Vérendrye: An Expedition before Lewis and Clark,” on reserve, Biscayne Bay Campus Library)

10/14 East meets West: summary and conclusions

**Second paper due**

10/ 19 West meets East:  Westward expansion through Indian eyes in *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*  (Brown: xv - 66)

For Dee Brown, the Lewis and Clark expedition marked the beginning of an era when “the culture and civilization of the American Indian was destroyed.” According to Brown, “Americans who have always looked westward when reading about his period should read this book facing eastward.”

10/21 West meets East: *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*  (Brown, 67 – 174)

10/26 West meets East: *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*  (Brown, 175 – 314)
10/28 West meets East: *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* (Brown, 315 – 366)

**Responsive journal due**

11/2 West meets East: *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* (Brown, 367 – 449)

11/4 West meets East: summary and conclusions

**Third paper due**

11/5 **Last day to drop the class with a DR grade**

11/9 Transition: Plenty Coups and the Crows  (Linderman, ix – 42

The Crow chief Plenty Coups grew up schooled in the old ways, but came to believe his tribe’s future depended on learning to see through the eyes of the “other.” Frank Linderman, a white man who first spoke to Plenty Coups in sign language, later listened to the old man’s stories and wrote them down for the rest of us to hear.

11/11 Veteran’s Day holiday, University closed

11/16 Transition: Plenty Coups and the Crows  (Linderman, 43 - 104 )

11/18 Transition: Plenty Coups and the Crows  (Linderman, 105 - 151)

11/23 Transition: Plenty Coups and the Crows  (Linderman, 152 – 178)

11/25 Thanksgiving Day, University closed

11/30 Transition: *Little Big Man*

**Last day to submit rewrites**

Another transitional figure, the fictional Little Big Man, is a white man who adopts Cheyenne culture and learns, like Plenty Coup, to see through the eyes of the “other.” In this fictional tale of life in a changing West, brought to the screen in 1970 by Arthur Penn, we see still another view of the period of transition in which Plenty Coups lived and one of its seminal events, the Battle of the Little Big Horn.

12/2 Transition: *Little Big Man*

12/7 Final thoughts

12/9 Final thoughts

**Responsive journal due**

**About your teacher:** In 1970, I graduated from Eastern Montana College with a B.A. in English and a minor in theater. I taught English to ninth graders for a year, saved some money, and went off to write and to act. I did both for a couple of years, for very little
pay. Then one of my smarter sisters pointed out that if I actually wanted to earn a living acting or writing in the second half of the 20th Century, I ought to learn more about television. So I headed off to graduate school to do that.

While I worked on my master's degree at the University of Utah, my interests turned to news and law. After I earned my M.A. in Mass Communication in 1976, I worked as a television news writer, reporter and producer. Then I went back to school again. I studied law part time at night at New York Law School while I worked full time—first for a law firm with an FCC practice and then for a talk radio station. After I earned my J.D. in 1981 and was admitted to the New York bar in 1982, I became Vice President and General Counsel of a media corporation. In 1985, I started my own law practice in New York City. In 1988, I moved to Florida and joined the FIU faculty.

Since I came to FIU, I have continued a limited law practice. I am a member of the Federal Communications Bar Association and currently work on First Amendment issues as a member of the Legal Panel of the Greater Miami ACLU. I teach courses about law and ethics and television in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication. I previously taught at the University of Utah and at Hofstra University School of Law.

I hope that you will find this class both intellectually challenging and useful. Your future achievements after you complete your studies in the Honors College will be a source of pride and satisfaction to me long after you have graduated. If this class is to meet your expectations, it is important that you understand mine. Here is what I expect from you.

**Veraldi's Rules**

1. **Spelling, etc.:** Spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, word choice, organization—the elements that make speech and writing clear, accurate and effective—always count.

2. **Office hours:** I am happy to meet with you to discuss this class or your career—or just to talk. You are welcome to call or stop in whenever I am in my office, whether or not I have scheduled office hours at that time.

   If I were in my office all day, you could drop in whenever you happen to have a free moment. Unfortunately, the university requires me to be many other places. So please try to come by during my scheduled office hours. If my scheduled office hours aren't convenient for you, let me know and we will try to work out a mutually convenient time.

   If you are making a special trip to campus to meet with me, please make an appointment in advance, even if you are coming during my scheduled office hours. I won't be able to meet with you unexpectedly if I am busy with another student. And be sure to let me know if you need to cancel a scheduled appointment.

   You are always welcome to send an e-mail message or leave a voice mail message. I will try to respond within 24 hours.
3. **Late papers:** I will accept a late paper or reschedule a class presentation only if you supply written evidence of an emergency beyond your control that prevented you from making a presentation or handing in a paper on time (for instance, a doctor's note showing that you were ill on the day the paper was due) or if FIU policy otherwise entitles you to make up work (for instance, if you are traveling with a university athletic team the day a presentation is due).

Emergencies beyond your control do not include conflicts with your job. I will not accept late papers to accommodate travel to conferences, real estate closings, unexpected meetings with important customers, covering breaking news stories, etc. I expect that you have discussed the schedule for this class in advance with your employer and that he or she has agreed that you may arrange your work schedule to give this class priority during scheduled class time. Emergencies do not include social events or family gatherings, even important ones like weddings and anniversaries.

If after the drop date an emergency arises that will prevent you from regularly attending class or doing your best work, talk with me about an incomplete as soon as possible. If you have special needs for accommodation of a disability or a religious observance, please discuss appropriate accommodations with me in advance.

You may rewrite any paper (as long as it was initially submitted on time) to try to improve your score on the paper. Rewrites will be accepted until the deadline indicated in the course outline. You may rewrite any paper as many times as you wish to try to maximize your points on the paper. No more than 5 points will be assigned to any paper, and I will not accept a rewrite until I have returned the latest version of that paper to you. This may take up to two weeks.

4. **Attendance, conduct:** Don't take this class if you know in advance you won't be able to attend regularly or to be on time. Class starts promptly at 2:00 and does not end until 3:15. Do not disrupt the class by arriving late or leaving early. Please be realistic about other demands on your time and don't expect the rest of us to work around you.

Don't bring food or drinks to class. Set your beeper to silent page and turn off your phone before class starts. Save conversations for after class. If at any time during the semester I feel that your behavior is disruptive to the class, I reserve the right to drop you from the class (in which case you will receive a "DF" if the deadline to drop has already passed).

5. **Retaining course materials:** Save this course outline, any other materials I distribute in class and all work I return to you until you have received your semester grade. If you have a question about your grade on an assignment or your semester grade, let me know immediately.

6. **Academic misconduct:** The University publishes in its student handbook a section on "Student Rights and Responsibilities." Please read it. University policy requires that academic misconduct be reported to the Office of Academic Affairs. Academic
misconduct (including cheating on exams, plagiarizing or other misrepresentations about your work) can result in severe penalties, including a failing grade for the assignment or test in question, a failing grade in the class, being dropped from the class or being expelled from the university. Whether you steal someone else's work or pay good money for it, representing someone else's efforts as your own is unacceptable.

7. **Time required for class:** I know that you are busy with other classes, jobs, family and friends. So are all your classmates. Balancing your responsibilities isn't easy.

A prolific writer whose name I have forgotten was asked how he had managed to write so many books. He replied that every day there are "16 hours until midnight." Like him, each of us can accomplish a lot in 16 hours. But none of us can do (or have) it all. No one knows better than you how much time you need for your other responsibilities. But I can tell you how much time you need for this class.

As a general rule, you should expect to work about two hours outside class for every hour you spend in class. For an average student in a 3-credit course like this, that means about 6 hours outside class in addition to almost three hours in class every week—about a workday a week. (A course load of 12-15 credits is expected to be the equivalent of a fulltime job.)

The required reading is the minimum you are expected to do to pass this class. If you have time left over after finishing the required reading, use it for the additional work that will help you excel.

I give assignments in advance so you can complete them on a flexible schedule. But if you don't have the equivalent of a workday each week to devote to this class this semester, please take this class when you can make time for it.

As I see it, my job as a teacher is not to make everything easy—even if I could. Most things worth thinking about are not simple. Many of the questions we will explore have no simple solution, no single right answer. I will do my best to help you find the information you need to make judgments about complex problems. In return you must commit yourself to your work.

I cannot give you all the answers. But I hope you will leave this class asking better questions. I hope the work we do in this class will help you to learn to listen better, to read more critically, to write more clearly, to speak more confidently. I hope you will become both more skeptical and more tolerant—even though those two qualities may at first seem mutually exclusive. I hope you will become more critical of yourself even as you become more confident—though those qualities, too, may seem at odds. I hope this class will help you to leave FIU with both a credential and an education.