

HIS 266
History of the United States West

M/W 3:30pm-4:50pm

Satisfies: USA

Thematic Categories: "Empires, Violence & Global Connections,"
"Health, Science & Environmental Change"

Professor Mark Chambers

This course examines the history of the U.S. West, a shifting region of Native North America that was the object first of Spanish, French, English, and then American settler-colonialism and empire with a unique relationship to the U.S. federal government, distinctive patterns of race relations, and a unique place in American cultural memory. It will examine the West as both a place and as an idea in American culture and in the popular imagination. Using films, monographs, memoirs, letters, and academic articles and literary fiction it will explore the struggle for land, resources, identity, and power, which have characterized the west and its role in the history of the American settler-colonial nation-state. While tracking how the history of the region unfolded, we will also explore changing representations of the West in American culture, especially as they appeared on film. Since at least 1890 the West has been central to the cultural identity of the nation; 20th-century Hollywood was especially powerful at conveying the meanings of the region for the broader United States and the world.