

**GEOG 325V: New Mexico and the American West  
Spring 2019**

**Room: BD 185 // M,W 1:30 pm – 2:45 pm**

**Professor:** Dr. Eric Magrane

**Email:** magrane@nmsu.edu

**Office:** Breland Hall, Rm 145

**Office Hours:** M 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm, T 10:00 am -11:45 am, W 12-1, or by appointment

**Graduate Assistant:** Iftikhar

**Email:** iftikhar@nmsu.edu

**Office:** Breland Hall, Rm 140

**Office Hours:** M 9:00 am – 10:30 am, F 8:00 am – 9:30 am, or by appointment

### **Course Description**

In this course, we will examine the human and cultural geography of New Mexico and the American West. We will explore cultural and historical patterns, economic activities, and environmental and physical characteristics of the region, as well as current challenges in the region.

### **Course Objectives**

By the end of this course, students should be able to

- Understand the human and cultural geography of New Mexico and the American West
- Critically examine narratives of the American West and different ways of defining the region, as well as the processes that create the cultural landscapes of the West
- Discuss and analyze contemporary environmental and cultural challenges in the West
- Articulate an understanding of the landscapes of the West through critically “reading” the landscapes of the West

### **Course format**

There are two weekly class sessions and participation and attendance are required. These sessions will include a combination of lectures, class discussions, group exercises, in-class writing assignments, viewing of film, and presentation of work completed outside of class. Students taking this class are expected to be willing to ask and answer questions in class and to participate actively in discussion and debate on the topics at hand.

### **Course materials**

**Required Text:** Wyckoff, W. (2014). *How to Read the American West: A Field Guide*. University of Washington Press. ISBN: 9780295993515

The other required text is *High Country News (HCN)*, a magazine that focuses on the West. We will use the magazine as a text to examine and discuss current issues in the West. A subscription to the magazine will be provided to each of you for the semester free of charge. I will distribute print copies of the magazine in class. To access the magazine digitally, visit [hcn.org/subscribe](http://hcn.org/subscribe). Under “Student Subscription,” choose “Student - Digital Subscription.” Then, enter code “HCNstudent” to change term and pricing to \$0 for 6 months.

All other course materials will be posted on Canvas.

## **Grading summary**

---

|                                       |                  |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| Canvas discussion posts on <i>HCN</i> | 200 points (20%) |
| Quizzes/Short Writings                | 100 points (10%) |
| Western Landscapes Assignment         | 200 points (20%) |
| Current Event Assignment              | 200 points (20%) |
| Final Presentation                    | 100 points (10%) |
| Final Exam                            | 100 points (10%) |
| Participation/Attendance              | 100 points (10%) |
| <hr/>                                 |                  |
| Total                                 | 1000 points 100% |

|             |             |             |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| A = 93-100% | A- = 90-92% |             |
| B+ = 88-89% | B = 83-87%  | B- = 80-82% |
| C+ = 78-79% | C = 73-77%  | C- = 70-72% |
| D+ = 68-69% | D = 63-67%  | D- = 60-62% |
| F = < 60%   |             |             |

### **Canvas discussion posts**

Students will be required to post and respond to discussions on Canvas for each *High Country News* issue that we read. The posts will be located under “Discussions” on the course Canvas site. More specific instructions will be provided in the Canvas discussion prompts.

### **Quizzes/Short Writings**

Quizzes may be both announced and “pop quizzes.” Sometimes short writings (either in class or out of class) will take the place of quizzes. Quizzes and short writings cannot be made up.

### **Assignments, Final Presentation, and Final Exam**

Students will be responsible for completing two project assignments and giving a final presentation. More detailed instructions for these assignments will be provided in class. We will hold in-class review sessions for the midterm and final exams.

### **Extra Credit**

Occasionally during the semester, I will announce extra credit opportunities to attend geography colloquia or other related events. If you attend one of these events for extra credit and write a one-page response to the event, you will receive 10 points (1% extra credit on your final grade). The most extra credit that a student can receive is 3% of your final grade (3 extra credits). The final day to turn in any extra credit is May 1.

### **Absence and Late Assignment Policy**

Attendance in class is crucial and mandatory, and a percentage of the course’s grade is based on attendance. It is important to come to class on time; tardiness is disruptive to class. Three or more unexcused absences or late arrivals will affect a student’s final grade. Late assignments will be penalized 10% for each day they are late. Canvas discussion posts will not be accepted late.

### **Academic Policies**

#### **Academic Misconduct**

Academic and non-academic misconduct: The Student Code of Conduct defines academic misconduct, non-academic misconduct and the consequences or penalties for each. The Student Code of Conduct is available in the NMSU Student Handbook online:

<http://studenthandbook.nmsu.edu/>

Academic misconduct is explained here:

<http://studenthandbook.nmsu.edu/student-code-of-conduct/academic-misconduct/>

### **Discrimination and Disability Accommodation**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADA) covers issues relating to disability and accommodations. If a student has questions or needs an accommodation in the classroom (all medical information is treated confidentially), contact:

Main Campus  
Student Accessibility Services (SAS)  
Corbett Center Student Union Room 208  
Trudy Luken, Director  
575-646-6840  
[sas@nmsu.edu](mailto:sas@nmsu.edu)

New Mexico State University, in compliance with applicable laws and in furtherance of its commitment to fostering an environment that welcomes and embraces diversity, does not discriminate on the basis of age, ancestry, color, disability, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, retaliation, serious medical condition, sex (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, spousal affiliation, or protected veteran status in its programs and activities, including employment, admissions, and educational programs and activities. Inquiries may be directed to the Laura Castille, Executive Director, Title IX and Section 504 Coordinator, Office of Institutional Equity, P.O. Box 30001, E. 1130 University Avenue, Las Cruces, NM 88003; 575.646.3635; 575-646-7802 (TTY); [equity@nmsu.edu](mailto:equity@nmsu.edu).

Title IX prohibits sex harassment, sexual assault, intimate partner violence, stalking and retaliation. For more information on discrimination or Title IX, or to file a complaint contact:  
Laura Castille, Executive Director and Title IX Coordinator  
Office of Institutional Equity (OIE) - O'Loughlin House, 1130 University Avenue  
Phone: (575) 646-3635 E-mail: [equity@nmsu.edu](mailto:equity@nmsu.edu)  
Website: <http://equity.nmsu.edu/>

### **Other NMSU Resources:**

|                                |                |  |
|--------------------------------|----------------|--|
| NMSU Police Department:        | (575) 646-3311 | <a href="http://www.nmsupolice.com">www.nmsupolice.com</a> |
| NMSU Police Victim Services:   | (575) 646-3424 |  |
| NMSU Counseling Center:        | (575) 646-2731 |  |
| NMSU Dean of Students:         | (575) 646-1722 |  |
| For Any On-campus Emergencies: | 911            |  |

**Electronic equipment in class (Laptops, phones etc.):** Laptops should only be used for note taking or for course-related activities. Cell phones should be on silent and put away during class. Use of electronic equipment for social media, text, etc. is disrespectful and distracting to both the instructor and class peers. If you are using a laptop for notetaking, I ask that you sit in the front rows of class.

### **Withdrawals/Incompletes:**

Withdrawals are your responsibility. The instructor will not withdraw or drop students from this class under any circumstances. Incomplete grades will not be given except under extraordinary

circumstances related to serious illness, bereavement, etc. Documentation will be required in these limited circumstances.

**Code of Academic Integrity**

Students are encouraged to share intellectual views and discuss freely the principles and applications of course materials. However, graded work/exercises must be the product of independent effort unless otherwise instructed. **Do not plagiarize.**

**Statement of Inclusivity**

An inclusive and respectful classroom environment is crucial to our success and is a fundamental part of higher education. This course supports elective gender pronoun use and self-identification; rosters indicating such choices will be updated throughout the semester, upon student request. As the course includes group work and in-class discussion, it is vitally important for us to create an educational environment of inclusion and mutual respect.

**Information contained in the course syllabus may be subject to change with advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the professor.**

**COURSE TOPICS OUTLINE (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)**  
**CHECK CANVAS REGULARLY FOR COURSE MATERIALS AND UPDATES.**

| <b>Date</b>                                  | <b>Topic</b>  |
|--|---|
| Week 1<br>W 1/16                             | Course Introduction   |
| Week 2<br>W 1/23                             | <i>The American West</i><br>Defining the American West          |
| Week 3<br>M 1/28, W 1/30                     | <i>The American West</i><br>Reading the American West           |
| Week 4<br>M 2/4, W 2/6                       | Nature's Fundament<br>Farms and Ranches                         |
| Week 5<br>M 2/11, W 2/13                     | Landscapes of Extraction<br>Places of Special Cultural Identity |
| Week 6<br>M 2/18, W 2/20                     | Connections<br>Landscapes of Federal Largesse                   |
| Week 7<br>M 2/25, W 2/27                     | Cities and Suburbs<br>Playgrounds                               |
| Week 8<br>M 3/4, W 3/6                       | <b>Western Landscapes Assignment Due 3/6</b>                    |
| Week 9<br>M 3/12, W 3/13                     | Public lands and National Parks in the West                     |
| Week 10<br>M 3/18, W 3/20                    | Environmental Change in the West                                |
| <i>No class 3/25 and 3/27. Spring Break!</i> |   |
| Week 11<br>M 4/1, W 4/3                      | <i>New Mexico</i><br>Physical & Environmental Geography         |
| Week 12<br>M 4/8, W 4/10                     | Human & Cultural Geography<br>Historical Geography              |
| Week 13<br>M 4/15, W 4/17                    | <b>Current Event Assignment Due 4/17</b>                        |
| Week 14<br>M 4/22, W 4/24                    | Future Geographies of New Mexico and the American West          |
| Week 15<br>M 4/29, W 5/1                     | Final Project Presentations                                     |
| Week 15<br>(5/1 and 5/3)                     | Final Project Presentations & Final Exam Review                 |
| Finals Week<br>(5/7-5/11)                    | <b>Final Exam Wednesday, May 9, 1:00 pm– 3:00 pm</b>            |

In addition, we will incorporate *High Country News (HCN)* into our classes throughout the semester, to focus on contemporary issues in the West. The HCN issue publication dates for the semester are: 1/21, 2/4, 2/18, 3/4, 3/18, 4/15, and 4/29 and each issue will be assigned for reading and classroom discussion. You will also be responsible for posting a Canvas discussion post for each issue.