



**CGS 112/ETHN 127: Sexuality & Nation  
Reconsidering the Cowboy Myth  
Spring 2022**

**Dr. Amanda Martin Sandino**

**Sessions Taught synchronously via Zoom, MWF, and asynchronously by request (as needed)**

**Office:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/my/sandino?pwd=VmQ4SWQvS3lkdy9aOGowZk9sZjJ0dz09>

**Office hours:** MW, 12:30–1:30PM and by appointment

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\* Please note that all course materials, including this syllabus, presentations, assignment guidelines, and more, are protected by copyright. I am the exclusive owner of the materials I create. I encourage you to take notes and make copies of course materials for your own educational use. However, you may not, nor may you knowingly allow others to reproduce or distribute class notes and course materials publicly without my express written consent.

Similarly, you own the copyright for your original papers and discussion board posts. If I am interested in posting your privately submitted content on the course web site, I will request your written permission. Only enrolled students may attend our classroom sessions. Our classroom sessions may not be recorded or otherwise disseminated.

\*\* All times listed should be assumed to be in Pacific Day Time.

**Course Description**

For most of us, when we imagine the stereotypical cowboy figure, we picture someone like John Wayne, Gary Cooper, or Clint Eastwood: a White, (supposedly) cishetero, U.S.-born man. Because the cowboy is arguably one of the figures most associated with U.S. American identity, their depiction perpetuates both the normalcy and dominance of those who fit these same characteristics, i.e. White, cishet, U.S.-born men.

So, what does it mean, then, if the cowboy falls into few or none of those categories?

By reconsidering national mythmaking surrounding the Wild West, particularly the cowboy, we'll unpack how the remolding of national figures to match those of the hegemonic classes has proven a successful method for maintaining power. We will further deconstruct the cowboy stereotype, demonstrating that the erasure of Brown, indigenous, queer, non-male, and other marginalized visions of the Wild West has purposefully worked toward establishing and maintaining the White cisheteropatriarchy.

Throughout this class, we'll be bringing in various texts on national identity and sexuality while unpacking key symbols representative of the U.S., Mexico, Japan, and China on a global stage. While learning to unpack key terms such as "West"/"East," "Colonialism," "Nation," and "Manifest Destiny," we will together learn how such forces as capitalism, nativism, and imperialism continue to reshape our powerful national narratives.

**Please note that no texts need be purchased for this course.**

### **Grading Scale**

A+ >= 97%	B- >= 80%	D+ >= 67%
A >= 93%	C+ >= 77%	D >= 63%
A- >= 90%	C >= 73% (P for P/NP Option)	D- >= 60%
B+ >= 87%	C- >= 70%	F <= 59%
B >= 83%		

### **Grade Breakdown**

- Attendance/Participation = 15%
- Semi-Weekly Film Clip Analysis (7 of 10 required) = 35%
- Midterm "Instagram" Project = 20%
- Final Film Analysis = 30%

### **Assignments**

- **All late assignments will receive a 1/3 letter grade reduction per day.** So, for example, an assignment that receives an A grade but is three days late will instead be marked as a B.
- **Attendance and Participation:** Class attendance is mandatory and constitutes a large portion of your participation grade. You are allowed a maximum of two unexcused absences this semester. In the event that you will miss class due to an unexcused absence, you need not email me but *should check in* with another student to catch up on missed material. Any absences or tardies beyond these

two will result in the lowering of your grade and may result in failure of the course. Students who miss two classes in a row without contacting me may be dropped from the roster without advanced notice.

**Remember that this grade is not simply attendance—you are expected to participate in class and will not receive credit for the day if you fail to do so.** Don't worry about impressing your peers or me—simply state how you honestly feel about the readings and other course materials, even if it is to say that you did not understand them, hated them, couldn't get through them, etc. *It is totally acceptable to despise the course materials and normal to find them difficult or frustrating.*

- **Weekly Reflections: Each student will be expected to complete 7 out of 10 weekly short writing reflections, a minimum of 100 words in.** You will be graded upon completion, length, and relevancy. Detailed feedback will be provided in office hours and by appointment only. See Canvas for detailed weekly prompts.
- **“Instagram”–Based Biography Project:** This project is designed to get you us talking about specific figures in the U.S. West who do not fit the myth/model of the White, cishet, male cowboy. Each of us will research a chosen figure and create an Instagram account (or Instagram template in Word/PowerPoint) that offers between 10–15 posts featuring: images of that figure, important quotes (from the person themselves or a scholar), significant details as visualized text, etc. See Canvas for specific project guidelines and a sample.
- **Final Film Analysis Blog:** For this assignment, you will be composing a blog article that briefly summarizes, analyzes, and reviews a film in the Western genre (including space Westerns). If you need help selecting a film, check out Wikipedia's pretty comprehensive list: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lists\\_of\\_Western\\_films](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lists_of_Western_films). For more information and the assignment rubric, visit our Canvas site.
- **Extra Credit: Extra credit opportunities may be provided via Canvas throughout the quarter.**

## **Course Schedule**

**\* Please note that dates may be subject to change.**

**\*\* CW=** Text may be especially emotionally draining or trigger trauma. While many of our texts will include racial epithets, strong language, and descriptions of violence, these marked texts are especially graphic and/or upsetting in nature, in my opinion.

### **Week 1: Introductions**

- Monday:
  - Krista Comer, "West" (2007/2020)
  - Alys Eve Weinbaum, "Nation" (2007/2020)
- Wednesday:
  - Melissa Aronczyk, "Nation" (2017)
  - Yonder Lies, "The Myth of the Cowboy" (2020) \*alt text available\*
  - Alt Text for Yonder Lies- Cherry Pickett, "Rewriting History: How the Cowboy Came to Be White" (2021)
- Friday:
  - Nerdwriter, "Nations, States, & Nation States" (2012)
  - Isenberg and Richards, Jr., "Alternative Wests" (2017)

### **Week 2: Buffalo Bill and U.S. American Spectacle**

- Monday:
  - Footage of Buffalo Bill's Wild West (recorded by Thomas Edison) (1892 and 1898)
  - Skim the Cody Archive (DO NOT READ ALL!!!)--paying particular attention to performers and program details
  - Louis S. Warren, "Cody's Last Stand" (2003) \*alt text available\*
  - \* Alt Text for Warren – The Theatre History Podcast, "Tracing the Origins of the Freak Show" (2018)
- Wednesday
  - Leslie Johnson, "Shattered Dreams" (2008)
  - Leonard Cassuto, "Freak" (2015)
- Friday
  - Trailer for High Noon, Starring Gary Cooper (1952)
  - James Baldwin, "The American Dream and the American Negro" (1965)
  - Lori L. Brooks, "Journey to a Land of Cotton- A Slave Plantation in Brooklyn, 1895" (2014) (PAGES 57–70 ONLY!)

### **Week 3: Vaqueros and the Origins of the Cowboy**

- Monday:
  - Juan González, "The Spanish Borderlands" (rev. ed. 2011)
  - Nicole M. Guidotti-Hernández, "Borderlands" (2017)

- Wednesday:
  - Gloria Alzaldúa, "The Homeland, Aztlán" (1987)
  - Corky González, "I Am Joaquín"/"Yo Soy Joaquín" (1967)
- Friday:
  - Nightline, "Mexican Americans are still fighting for land they were promised generations ago" (2020)
  - Library of Congress, "Vaqueros" (n.d.)
  - Melodie Edwards, "'The boundaries moved': How the Spanish vaquero became the American cowboy" (2021)

#### **Week 4: Manifesting Imperialism**

- Monday:
  - Shanghai Noon (2000) (You may instead watch film elsewhere or during my screening)
- Wednesday:
  - Richard V. Francaviglia, "Another Place Another Time" excerpt (2011)
  - John R. Wunder, "Law and Chinese in Frontier Montana" (1980)
- Friday:
  - The Cynical Historian, "The Frontier Thesis" (2016) (CW: Potential motion sickness)
  - María Lugones, "The Coloniality of Gender" (2008)

#### **Week 5: Re-Queering the Cowboy Archetype**

- Monday:
  - Annie Proulx, "Brokeback Mountain" (1997)--you may alternatively watch the film :)
  - Donald Collins, "That 'Gay Cowboy Movie'" (2020)
- Wednesday:
  - Michael Bronski, "Imagining a Queer America", excerpts (2011)
  - BuzzFeed News, "Welcome to the Gay Rodeo Finals" (2019)
  - David Ng, "'Out West' at the Autry" (2009)
- Friday:
  - Lauren Berlant and Elizabeth Freeman, "Queer Nationality" (1992)

#### **Week 6: Gatekeeping and Borders**

- Monday:
  - Geoff Mann, "Why does country music sound white?" (2008)
  - Trevor Noah Interview with Mitski, "Embracing a Uniquely American Mythos with 'Be the Cowboy'" (2018)
- Wednesday:
  - Amanda Marie Martinez, "As country music faces a racial reckoning, a new question: Where are the Latino artists" (2021)
  - Ricky Treviño ft. Flaco Jimenez, "I Am a Mexican" (2018)

- Friday:
  - Nadra Nittle, "Lil Nas X isn't an anomaly — black people have always been a part of country music" (2019)
  - Lil Nas X ft. Billy Ray Cyrus, "Old Town Road" (2019).
  - Beyoncé ft. Dixie Chicks, "Daddy Lessons" (2016)

### **Week 7: The U.S. vs. Them**

- Monday:
  - Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, "Indian Country" (2014)
  - George Bruns and Thomas W. Blackburn, "The Ballad of Davy Crockett" (1954)
- Wednesday:
  - Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, "Ghost Dance Prophecy" (2014)
- Friday:
  - Christopher Le Coney and Trodd, Zoe, "John Wayne and the Queer Frontier" (2006)
  - Clip from The Bird Cage (1996)

### **Week 8: Mass Marketing Masculinity**

- Monday:
  - Die Hard, 1988 (It is on Prime but you can watch elsewhere or at my screening)—or read the script at <https://imsdb.com/scripts/Die-Hard.html>
- Wednesday:
  - Paul Cohen, "Cowboys Die Hard" (2011)
- Friday:
  - Richard Abel, "'Our Country' /Whose Country? The Americanization Project of Early Westerns, 1907-1910" (1999)

### **Week 9: Big Stick (or Revolver) Diplomacy**

- Monday:
  - Dave Roos, "How Teddy Roosevelt Crafted an Image of American Manliness" (2019)
  - David Serlin, "Crippling Masculinity" (2003)
- Wednesday:
  - William Schneider, "Cowboy Diplomacy" (2002)
  - Tareq Y. Ismael and Jacqueline S. Ismael, "Cowboy Warfare, Biological Diplomacy" (1999)
- Friday:
  - Jasbir K. Puar, "On Torture" (2005) (CW: Torture, sexual violence)
  - Lila Abu-Lughod, "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving?" (2002)

## **Week 10: The Final Frontier**

- Monday: Memorial Day Holiday—No Class!
- Wednesday:
  - Jonathan S. Jones, "Red Dead Redemption 2 Review" (2021)
  - Screened, "The Neo-Western Genre in Movies" (2020)
- Friday:
  - Lee Worth Bailey, "The Space Cowboy" (2005)
  - Jerome Winter, "Review of Weird Westerns" (2021)
  - Westworld, Season 1 Official Trailer (2016)
  - Clip from The Orville, Season 1 Episode 3 (2017)
  - Clip from The Mandalorian, Season 2 Episode 9 (2020)

## **Course Policies**

### **Academic Honesty:**

"Academic Integrity is expected of everyone at UC San Diego. This means that you must be honest, fair, responsible, respectful, and trustworthy in all of your actions. Lying, cheating or any other forms of dishonesty will not be tolerated because they undermine learning and the University's ability to certify students' knowledge and abilities. Thus, any attempt to get, or help another get, a grade by cheating, lying or dishonesty will be reported to the Academic Integrity Office and will result sanctions. Sanctions can include an F in this class and suspension or dismissal from the University.

"So, think carefully before you act by asking yourself: a) is what I'm about to do or submit for credit an honest, fair, respectful, responsible & trustworthy representation of my knowledge and abilities at this time and, b) would my instructor approve of my action? You are ultimately the only person responsible for your behavior. So, if you are unsure, don't ask a friend—ask your instructor, instructional assistant, or the Academic Integrity Office. You can learn more about academic integrity at [academicintegrity.ucsd.edu](https://academicintegrity.ucsd.edu)" (Source: Academic Integrity Office, 2018)

### **Classroom Etiquette:**

Unless you have something extremely pressing, such as another class or a child to pick up, please do not leave Zoom meetings early, even if I run a few minutes over. Such actions can be quite distracting and are considered disrespectful in a college environment. Similarly, try to focus on our course during section. I suggest quitting all email/messaging applications, and merely keeping your Zoom window open with the camera on. Please make sure to mute your mic unless you are speaking to keep environmental noise down to a minimum.

If you do have another obligation just before or right after section and need some extra time, let me know as soon as possible—we can always arrange for you to make up this regularly missed time if need be.

### **Counseling Services:**

Life happens – it brings us joys, sorrows, challenges, and celebrations. In the past, students have been negatively impacted by relationships break ups, deportation, homelessness, losing a job, illness, car stolen, and more! Please contact me right away if these situations impact your work. I want you to succeed and can help you find resources if you let me know.

I also suggest checking out UCSD's Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) website at <https://wellness.ucsd.edu/CAPS/>. CAPS has resources to support students with everything from time management to unexpected stressors to food insecurity.

### **Declaring a CGS Minor or Major:**



Many students take a Critical Gender Studies course because the topic is of great interest or because of a need to fulfill a university or college requirement. Often students have taken three or four classes out of *interest* yet have no information about the major or minor and don't realize how close they are to a major, a minor, or even a double major. A Critical Gender Studies major is excellent preparation for a career in law, public policy, education, public health, social work, non-profit work and many other careers. If you would like information about the Critical Gender Studies major or minor at UCSD, please contact Joje Reyes-Alonzo, Critical Gender Studies Program Advisor, via email at [cgs@ucsd.edu](mailto:cgs@ucsd.edu).

**Disability Support:**

Students with disabilities who may need academic accommodations (e.g. test Students requesting accommodations for this course due to a disability must provide a current Authorization for Accommodation (AFA) letter (paper or electronic) issued by the Office for Students with Disabilities. Students are required to discuss accommodation arrangements with instructors and OSD liaisons in the department **in advance** of any exams or assignments. Check out OSD online at <https://osd.ucsd.edu/students/>.

**Email Policy:**

I usually respond to email within 24 hours Monday through Friday. If you have not received a reply to your message within 48 hours please resend to make sure I have received your inquiry. Remember to sign your name and course number to your email messages.

Please do not email me asking if you have “missed anything” in class—if you been absent then you definitely missed something! It is your responsibility to either come to my office hours or email a friend in class to catch up. Late work will be penalized regardless of whether or not you attend class.

As a rule, I do not discuss grade specifics via email. If you have questions regarding a grading decision, please either meet with me during office hours or another time that works for both of us.

Uncivil emails or messages including vitriol will be forwarded to the Office of Student Affairs.

**Expected Absences:**

Inform me of any intended absences for the session in the first two weeks of class. In general, excused absences are only provided for childcare issues, religious observances, and major medical crises. Please contact me ASAP if you believe you have another planned absence that you believe should be excused.

**Grade Disputes:**

Like all humans, I make mistakes. Which means that you should absolutely check in with me if you feel that a grade is lower than you deserve.

To do so, I merely ask that you:

1. Take 24 hours to let the feeling sit—it is totally normal to feel angry after receiving a grade that is lower than you expected.
2. Reread your assignment and take notes. Be prepared to ask thoughtful questions and make a clear argument as to why you believe you should receive a higher grade.
3. Talk with me during office hours (not at the end of class or via email).

### **Land Acknowledgement:**

The UC San Diego community holds great respect for the land and the original people of the area where our campus is located. The university is built on the un-ceded territory of the Kumeyaay Nation. Today, the Kumeyaay people continue to maintain their political sovereignty and cultural traditions as vital members of the San Diego community. We acknowledge their tremendous contributions to our region and thank them for their stewardship.

*\*The Intertribal Resource Center is working with Kumeyaay community members and the campus community to create an official statement for UC San Diego. The above statement is a temporary draft currently used by the Intertribal Resource Center. As a member of the Mapuche peoples, I recognize that this really is so little compared to the genocide we've faced and survived as indigenous communities.*

### **Late Work Policy:**

Late work will be marked down one letter grade for each class day beyond the due date.

**The last day to submit late work is the day on which the final paper is due—no exceptions.** I understand that life happens—please do not hesitate to ask about getting an extension on paper due dates. However, I do require that you request your extension at least 72 hours in advance of the initial assignment due date.

### **Student Conduct:**

UC San Diego Principles of Community The University of California, San Diego is dedicated to learning, teaching, and serving society through education, research, and public service. Our international reputation for excellence is due in large part to the cooperative and entrepreneurial nature of the UC San Diego community. UC San Diego faculty, staff, and students are encouraged to be creative and are rewarded for individual as well as collaborative achievements.

To foster the best possible working and learning environment, UC San Diego strives to maintain a climate of fairness, cooperation, and professionalism. These principles of community are vital to the success of the University and the well being of its constituents. UC San Diego faculty, staff, and students are expected to practice these basic principles as individuals and in groups.

[Click here for the complete UCSD Principles of Community in English and Spanish.](#)

### **Title IX Compliance:**

UCSD recognizes the inherent dignity of all individuals and promotes respect for all people. Sexual misconduct, physical and/or psychological abuse will NOT be tolerated. If you have been the victim of sexual misconduct, physical and/or psychological abuse, we encourage you to report this matter promptly. As a faculty member, I am interested in promoting a safe and healthy environment, and should I learn of any sexual misconduct, physical and/or psychological abuse, I must report the matter to the Title IX Coordinator. Should you want to speak to a confidential source you may contact the Counseling Center.

The Office for the Prevention of Harassment & Discrimination (OPHD) provides assistance to students, faculty, and staff regarding reports of bias, harassment, and discrimination. OPHD is the UC San Diego Title IX office. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is the federal law that prohibits sex discrimination in educational institutions that are recipients of federal funds. Students have the right to an educational environment that is free from harassment and discrimination.

Students have options for reporting incidents of sexual violence and sexual harassment. Sexual violence includes sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking. Information about reporting options may be obtained at OPHD at (858) 534-8298, [ophd@ucsd.edu](mailto:ophd@ucsd.edu) or <http://ophd.ucsd.edu>. Students may receive confidential assistance at CARE at the Sexual Assault Resource Center at (858) 534-5793, [sarc@ucsd.edu](mailto:sarc@ucsd.edu) or <http://care.ucsd.edu> or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at (858) 534-3755 or <http://caps.ucsd.edu>

Students may feel more comfortable discussing their particular concern with a trusted employee. This may be a student affairs staff member, a department Chair, a faculty member or other University official. These individuals have an obligation to report incidents of sexual violence and sexual harassment to OPHD. This does not necessarily mean that a formal complaint will be filed. If you find yourself in an uncomfortable situation, ask for help.

### **The Writing Center:**

Beginning in Spring quarter, all one-on-one writing consultations for undergraduate and graduate students moved to online/remote access.

During online appointments, students and Writing Consultants will meet in real-time to have productive conversations about writing. This system allows for real-time document sharing and synchronous (i.e. "live") conversation using video-, audio-, and text-based chat.

Visit <https://writinghub.ucsd.edu/what-we-do/remote-services.html> for more information.