



# Conquest East, Conquest West

## Comparative “Manifest Destinies”

8-credits · Tuesdays & Thursdays · 6-10pm · Winter/Spring 2014

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## Winter 2014 Syllabus

While most American college students know some of the history of the westward expansion of settlers in North America (often associated with the infamous phrase, “manifest destiny”), few are aware that Russia conducted a very similar *eastward* expansion in Siberia during the same time period. In both cases, the conquering powers built empires at the expense of indigenous peoples and by extracting the seemingly endless resources of the vast lands they saw as “savage wilderness.” As post Cold-War tensions between Russia and the US continue to make headlines, we invite you to join us in exploring these compelling parallel histories that have brought us to the present day.

This interdisciplinary program offers comparative study of the Russian conquest of northern Eurasia (Siberia) and the Euro-American conquest of North America. We will explore the impact of what environmental historian Alfred Crosby calls “ecological imperialism” on native populations, economic development of the nations based on the exploitation of natural resources, the ecological consequences of this exploitation, and the successes and failures of conservation efforts in Russia east of the Urals and, in the United States, west of the Mississippi. We will also consider the religious, economic, and social motivations and *apologias* for the ecological conquests. During the winter quarter, we will examine these two world historical examples of ecological expansion and its consequences from 1600-1900; during the spring quarter, we will explore the course and legacy of these conquests in the twentieth century, as well as the current ecological state of these two continent-wide environments.

Students can expect to write responses and short essays informed by bio-geographical, environmental-historical, ethnographic, natural historical, demographic, and political economic texts, focusing on the western United States and on northern Eurasia. Personal and fictional accounts, as well as films, will also enhance our understanding of the environmental, economic, and social consequences of conquest. During the spring quarter, students can expect to research and write short environmental histories of local areas in Western Washington. We also plan to have up to two field trips, during which we will study the impacts of “manifest destiny” on a particular local place. Credit may be awarded in environmental history, bio-geography, and political economy.

Additionally, students who join this program will be well prepared to join the 2-week international field trip to Kazan, Russia, which the faculty team plans to offer in early Summer Quarter of 2014. We hope you will join us. *Nostrovია!*

## READINGS FOR WINTER QUARTER (Book readings may be partial excerpts)

### BOOKS

- *Conquest of a Continent*, by W. Bruce Lincoln (read across both quarters) – SEE SPECIAL NOTE BELOW
- *It's Your Misfortune & None of My Own*, by Richard White (read across both quarters)
- *The Cossacks*, by Leo Tolstoy
- *The House of the Dead*, by Fyodor Dostoevsky
- *Black Elk Speaks*, Neihardt, ed.
- *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England*, by William Cronon
- *A History of the Peoples of Siberia: Russia's North Asian Colony 1581-1990*, by James Forsyth
- *The Patriot Chiefs*, by Alvin Josephy
- *The Cowboy & the Cossack*, by Clair Huffaker

### ARTICLES/CHAPTERS

- Donald Worster, “The Vulnerable Earth”
- Alfred Crosby, “Ecological Imperialism: The Overseas Migration of Western Europeans as a Biological Phenomenon”
- E. K. Hunt, “The Transition to Early Capitalism and the Beginning of the Mercantilist View”
- Richard Pipes, “The Environment and Its Consequences
- Carolyn Merchant, “The American Environment and Native-European Encounters, 1000-1875”
- E. K. Hunt, “The Conflict in Mercantilist Thought”
- E. K. Hunt “Classical Liberalism and the Triumph of Industrial Capitalism”

Articles and chapter-length excerpts will be available for download in PDF format from the program’s Moodle page.

**Special Note:** One of our core texts, *Conquest of a Continent*, by W. Bruce Lincoln, is no longer in print, which means that the campus bookstore cannot sell it. However, copies are readily available online, and at least one local bookstore has copies available. 4 copies will be made available on reserve in the Library.

## SEMINARS AND CLASS PREPARATION

Seminars are, in essence, reading groups that discuss and analyze particular texts. It is expected that you will have thoroughly and thoughtfully read the assignments prior to seminar. You should come prepared with your reading notes, questions and comments, ready to identify key themes and make contributions that are supported by specific passages in the readings. Seminar sessions give you the opportunity to share ideas with your colleagues, explore questions inspired by the readings—and also demonstrate your engagement and scholarship to the faculty. Please use this time constructively!

## COLLEGE-LEVEL ACADEMIC WRITING

The faculty expect written essay assignments to meet college-level writing standards. This means, in general, writing that is free of grammar and syntax errors, is logically organized, and is focused on a clear expository thesis, avoiding vague language. Moreover, college-level academic writing should include properly cited quotations and references to your program’s texts. Assignments that meet length requirements, but do not meet college-level standards, may earn less than full credit. Students with concerns about their writing skills should visit the campus Writing Center, located in the main library building.

## WEEKLY WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

Every week, you will turn in a brief written reflection that connects with the current readings. Late papers (regardless of reason) may not be accepted or evaluated for credit. The due date and content of the assignments will alternate, week-by-week, according to the following schedule:

### **“EVEN” WEEKS (weeks 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10): Due Tuesday**

**“LOW STAKES” Paper:** this paper is “low stakes” because it will not be evaluated as a formal academic essay. Rather, it will be evaluated solely in terms of how well it demonstrates thoughtful, critical engagement with our readings for that week. Here are the requirements:

- Choose a 1-3 sentence quotation from our readings. This quotation (properly cited) should appear before your own written reflections
- In the body of the paper, address the following questions:
  - Why did you choose this quote? Why is it important?
  - How does the quote relate to one of the author’s key themes or major arguments in the reading?
  - What questions does this quote raise, and how might you answer them?
- Finally, close with further reflections that tie this quote to other texts in this program and/or beyond.
- Total length should be 1-2 *full pages* (not counting the gap at the top of page one, where you write your name, course name, title, and opening quote).

### **“ODD” WEEKS (weeks 3, 5, 7, and 9): Due Thursday**

**“HIGH STAKES” Paper:** this paper is “high stakes” because it will be further evaluated as a formal academic essay. Here are the requirements:

- Compare or contrast some aspect of European conquest of western North America with the Russian conquest of Siberia.
- Each paper should be a well-written, concise essay that focuses on one particular theme or topic from the readings, makes a clear assertion (or thesis) in your own words, and defends that assertion with properly quoted and cited evidence from one or more of our program texts.
- Papers must be properly formatted: double-spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins
- Papers must cite quotations using Chicago Style format and include a properly formatted list of references in Chicago Style.

These papers are an opportunity for you to demonstrate close, critical engagement with our readings, but also your college-level writing skills, so do spend the time to make them polished.

**Option for Revision:** Students have the option to choose one (1) “high stakes” paper for revision. The revised paper should be clearly marked as such and turned in with the other papers as part of the final portfolio. Successful revisions may result in a more positive final evaluation. This option may *NOT* be applied to a missing or late paper, without express permission from the student’s seminar faculty.

## **FINAL RESEARCH PROJECT: ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

In preparation for a substantial research paper to be completed during Spring Quarter of the program, you will produce an annotated bibliography with multiple sources in study areas relevant to our program's themes of environmental history, ecological imperialism, indigenous peoples, and political ecology in Siberia and western North America. The specific details of this assignment will be given in a separate handout early in Winter Quarter. See that handout for further information.

## **PORTFOLIO**

You are required to keep an organized portfolio. It will be turned in on the final day of class and returned during your evaluation conference. The portfolio must be labeled and organized chronologically in the following order:

1. Syllabus & Signed Covenant
2. Your detailed lecture and reading notes
3. Seminar Papers (in order)
4. Workshop and other handouts with notes
5. All readings downloaded from the program moodle with margin notes and/or highlighted passages of importance
6. A final student self-evaluation is required for full credit and should be part of the portfolio

## **EVALUATIONS**

You will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Successful completion of all program requirements
- Adherence to the syllabus and the Program Covenant
- Full attendance and excellent preparation for, and full participation in, all program activities
- The quality of ideas and the writing in your papers
- Demonstration of understanding of program content and accomplishment of learning goals

**Evaluation conferences** will be held at the end of the quarter. *Credit is not the same as positive evaluation.* Students receive credit for fulfilling minimum requirements and standards. The evaluation is a statement describing the quality of the student's work. It is possible for a student to receive credit but receive an evaluation that describes poor quality work. It is also possible for a student to attend class regularly yet receive zero or reduced credit because of unsatisfactory performance.

## **EXPECTATIONS**

The faculty member assumes that students have well-rounded college-level skills. In case of deficiencies in basic skills, students are expected to take advantage of on-campus resources, including the Writing Center and the QuaSAR. The faculty member does not assume that students initially will be conversant with critical terminology or special techniques for discussing the works to be assigned. It is assumed that, by the end of

the program, students will have developed the ability to think, speak, and write effectively about the materials and themes of the program. Students are expected to fully participate in all aspects of the class, to thoroughly prepare for each class session, and to complete all assignments on time. Late assignments may not be evaluated. Attendance and being on time for class are essential. Unexcused absences, late, incomplete, or unsatisfactory completion of assignments or plagiarism will constitute grounds for loss of credit.

Faculty are expected to be prepared for lectures and class sessions, to provide feedback on written assignments in a timely manner, to be available for consultation by appointment and to provide a written evaluation of the student's overall work in the program. Please refer to covenant for further details.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**Access Services:** If you are a student with a *documented disability* that requires arrangements, technology or expense to ensure full access to this program, please contact Meredith Inocencio in the Access Services Office (Library 2153 or 360-867-6348 or [inocenc@evergreen.edu](mailto:inocenc@evergreen.edu); website: <http://www.evergreen.edu/access>). In order to make accommodations, your program faculty must be informed no later than the second week of the quarter *by the student and in writing from Access Services*.

**On Critical Writing:** Blaise Pascal once wrote a long, drawn-out letter to a friend, then apologized in the postscript that he didn't have time to write a short one. As your faculty, we subscribe to what Thomas Jefferson once noted: "the most valuable of all talents is that of never using two words when one will do." Clear, concise critical writing requires time, reflection and effort.