

# National Historic Trails

## Course Description

While national parks may grab the headlines, the national historic trails have perhaps even more directly shaped the development of American history and national identities by cultivating migration, trade, community identity, ethnic diversity, and environmental change. This multidisciplinary course (drawing from history, geography, archeology, anthropology, literature, and many others) will provide an introduction to the study, interpretation, and significance of the National Historic Trails System, including the challenges faced by the National Park Service (NPS) in administering them; a significant portion of the course will also engage students as core contributors to new and ongoing research projects at the National Trails Intermountain Region Office.

As preparation for research projects, course readings will address theoretical work in the spatial humanities, general themes pertinent to historic trails, and more in-depth studies of particular trails. Students will gain fluency with primary sources (lots of maps!) as well as recent scholarship. Throughout the course we'll also discuss broad questions about historic preservation: What constitutes a historic trail? How does a historic trail retain cultural significance? What are the challenges and strategies in communicating about the trails to a 21st-century audience? Are there modern day equivalents of the original historic trails? How can trails reveal new perspectives on overland migration generally? Studying the National Historic Trails as conduits for cultural exchange provides a fresh take on the American experience.

## Student Learning Outcomes

- Provide training relevant to careers in the humanities, geography, history and historic preservation, and public history.
- Use native, environmental, and spatial history to highlight historic trails as crucial contributors to our national heritage.
- Examine historic trails as under-appreciated linkages between vastly different nations and ecosystems.
- Establish the importance of historic trails in reevaluating the American frontier.
- Mesh current historic, anthropological, and environmental research with the National Park Service's time-honored mandate to preserve and interpret public lands.
- Develop fluency with both theoretical and practical issues surrounding interpretation and administration of national historic trails.
- Integrate students with ongoing research projects at the National Trails Intermountain Region Office.

## Course Structure

The course will be divided roughly in half. The first segment provides a multi-faceted and thematic view about understanding the history of national trails. The second section develops core research skills while engaging with an ongoing NPS – NTIR trails research projects. Towards the end of the first segment, we will start to develop and coordinate research projects in conjunction with the National Trails Intermountain Region Office (based in Santa Fe, but with an office at UNM). Various deliverables and deadlines will be established throughout the second segment. All work will be due by the final exam date.

## Work Requirements and Grading

Preparation for each class meeting and active participation in the class discussions  
Completion of research project, including completing various components of the projects at deadlines throughout the semester.

- To access all other articles and book chapters on the syllabus, you will need to subscribe to the course Zotero library. More details TBA.

## Accessibility

Accessibility Resources Center (Mesa Vista Hall 2021, 277-3506) provides academic support to students who have disabilities. If you think you need alternative accessible formats for undertaking and completing coursework, you should contact this service right away to assure your needs are met in a timely manner.

## National Trails Syllabus, weeks 1–8

\* = recommended readings

### Week 1—the National Historic Trails

#### Monday: where do trails come from?

- “National Trails System Act” (1968).\*
- “National Parks and Recreation Act” (1978).\*
  - section 551 (“Amendments to National Trails System Act”).

#### Wednesday: background on the trails

[note: this day’s required readings could be split among students to cover all trails]

- Kathleen A. Cordes, *America’s National Historic Trails* (Norman, Okla: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999).\*
  - chapters (<30 pgs. each) on all the Intermountain Region’s trails except the Old Spanish Trail, El Camino Real de los Tejas, and El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro.
- National Park Service, *National Trails System* (map).\*
- Jesus F. De la Teja, “The Camino Real: Colonial Texas’s Lifeline to the World,” in *A Texas Legacy, the Old San Antonio Road and the Caminos Reales: A Tricentennial History, 1691-1991*, ed. A. Joachim McGraw, John Wilburn Clark, and Elizabeth A. Robbins (Texas State Department of Highways and Public Transportation, Highway Design Division, 1991), 43–48.\*
- Max L. Moorhead, “The Significance,” in *New Mexico’s Royal Road : Trade and Travel on the Chihuahua Trail* (Norman: Norman : University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), 184–204.\*
- D. W. Meinig, *The Shaping of America: A Geographical Perspective on 500 Years of History, Vol. 1: Atlantic America, 1492-1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988).
  - chapter 1 (“Doubling the National Territory: Louisiana”), chapter 4 (“The Reach Westward: to Circa 1830”), chapter 5 (“Shoving the Indians Out of the Way”), and/or chapter 8 (“Spanning a Continent—and Ocean”)
- D. W. Meinig, *The Shaping of America: A Geographical Perspective on 500 Years of History, Vol. 2: Continental America, 1800-1867* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).
  - chapter 1 (“Filling in the Framework: Migration Westward”), chapter 2 (“Occupying New Ground: Colonization, America Style”), and/or chapter 8 (“Making New Pathways: Waterways, Roads, and Trails”)

## Week 2—historical sources and historic trails

### Monday: firsthand accounts

- Lewis H. Garrard and A. B. Guthrie Jr., *Wah-to-Yah and the Taos Trail* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972).
- Thomas Bullock and Will Bagley, *The Pioneer Camp of the Saints: The 1846 and 1847 Mormon Trail Journals of Thomas Bullock* (Logan : Utah State University Press, 2001).
- Francis Parkman, *The Oregon Trail : Adventures on the Prairie in the 1840's* (Santa Barbara, Calif. : Narrative Press, 2001).
- Josiah Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies : Or, the Journal of a Santa Fé Trader, during Eight Expeditions across the Great Western Prairies, and a Residence of Nearly Nine Years in Northern Mexico* (New York : J. & H.G. Langley, 1845).

### Wednesday: problems of interpretation

- Robin W. Winks, "A Public Historiography," *The Public Historian* 14, no. 3 (1992): 93–105.\*
- Douglas W. Dodd and Peter J. Edwards, "Getting History out of a Rut: Public Agencies Interpret Oregon's Oregon Trail," *The Public Historian* 16, no. 1 (1994): 45–50.
- Jackson B. Miller, "Coyote's Tale on the Old Oregon Trail: Challenging Cultural Memory through Narrative at the Tamástslikt Cultural Institute," *Text & Performance Quarterly* 25, no. 3 (July 2005): 220–38.
- Gregory E. Smoak, "Beyond the Academy: Making the New Western History Matter in Local Communities," *The Public Historian* 31, no. 4 (2009): 85–89.
- Bill Bigelow, "On the Road to Cultural Bias: A Critique of The Oregon Trail CD-ROM," *Language Arts* 74, no. 2 (1997): 84–93.\*

## Week 3—what exactly is a trail?

### Monday: the bureaucratic perspective

- Oregon State Historic Preservation Office, "[Guidance for Recording and Evaluating Linear Cultural Resources](#)" (Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, 2013).
- Gabriel Sovulewski, "[Observations on Trails in National Parks, October 1936](#)" (National Park Service, 1936).
- Margie Coffin Brown, "[Landscape Lines 15: Historic Trails](#)" (National Park Service, n.d.).
- Guy E. Arthur, "[Trail Construction](#)" (National Park Service, 1975).
- National Park Service, *El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro, Texas--New Mexico: National Historic Trail Feasibility Study, Environmental Assessment* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, 1997).

## Wednesday: the theoretical perspective

- York H. Gunther, *Essays on Nonconceptual Content* (MIT Press, 2003), 157.
  - a long meditation on the philosophical implications of trails
- Timothy Earle, "Routes through the Landscape: A Comparative Approach," in *Landscapes of Movement: Trails, Paths, and Roads in Anthropological Perspective*, ed. James E. Snead, Clark L. Erickson, and J. Andrew Darling (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 253–70.
- James E. Snead, Clark L. Erickson, and J. Andrew Darling, "Making Human Space: The Archaeology of Trails, Paths, and Roads," in *Landscapes of Movement: Trails, Paths, and Roads in Anthropological Perspective*, ed. James E. Snead, Clark L. Erickson, and J. Andrew Darling (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 1–19.
- James E. Snead, "Trails of Tradition: Movement, Meaning, and Place," in *Landscapes of Movement: Trails, Paths, and Roads in Anthropological Perspective*, ed. James E. Snead, Clark L. Erickson, and J. Andrew Darling (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 42–60.\*
- Robert Moor, *On Trails: An Exploration* (London: Quarto Publishing Group UK, 2017).

## Week 4—spatial history

### Monday:

- Richard White, "[What Is Spatial History?](#)" (Stanford Spatial History Project, 2010).\*
- Yi-Fu Tuan, "Space and Place: Humanistic Perspective," in *Philosophy in Geography*, ed. Stephen Gale and Gunnar Olsson (Boston: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1979), 387–427.
- Yi-fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977).
  - chapter 1 ("Introduction"), chapter 2 ("Experiential Perspective"), chapter 7 ("Mythical Space and Place"), and/or chapter 12 ("Attachment to Homeland")

### Wednesday:

- J. B. Harley, "Deconstructing the Map," *Cartographica* 26, no. 2 (1989): 1–20.\*
- Mark Monmonier and H. J. de Blij, *How to Lie with Maps*, 2nd edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996)
  - chapter 1 ("Introduction"), chapter 5 ("Maps That Advertise"), chapter 6 ("Development Maps"), and/or chapter 7 ("Maps for Political Propaganda")

## Week 5—Native history along and among the trails

### Monday: Native spatial conceptions

- Juliana Barr, "Geographies of Power: Mapping Indian Borders in the 'Borderlands' of the Early Southwest," *William and Mary Quarterly* 68, no. 1 (2011): 5–46.\*

- Ned Blackhawk, *Violence over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West* (Harvard University Press, 2008).
  - chapter 2 (“The Making of the New Mexican-Ute Borderlands”), chapter 5 (“Great Basin Indians in the Era of Lewis & Clark”), and/or chapter 7 (“Utah’s Indians and the Crisis of Mormon Settlement”)
- Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).
  - chapter 1 (“Introduction: Reversed Colonialism”), chapter 4 (“The Empire of the Plains”), and/or chapter 5 (“Greater Comancheria”)
- T.J. Ferguson, G. Lennis Berlin, and Leigh J. Kuwanwisiwma, “Kukheypa: Searching for Hopi Trails,” in *Landscapes of Movement: Trails, Paths, and Roads in Anthropological Perspective*, ed. James E. Snead, Clark L. Erickson, and J. Andrew Darling (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 20–41.
- Juliana Barr, *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman: Indians and Spaniards in the Texas Borderlands* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2014).
  - chapter 3 (“Civil Alliance and ‘Civility’ in Mission-Presidio Complexes”) and/or chapter 4 (“Negotiating Fear with Violence: Apaches and Spaniards at Midcentury”)
- Anne F. Hyde, *Empires, Nations, and Families: A New History of the North American West, 1800-1860*, Reprint edition (New York: Ecco, 2012).
  - chapter 4 (“The Early West: The Many Faces of Indian Country”), chapter 5 (“Empires in Transition: Indian Country at Midcentury, 1825–1860”), and/or chapter 6 (“Unintended Consequences: Families, Nations, and the Mexican War”)
- Daniel Goodenough, Jr., “Lost on Cold Creek,” *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 24, no. 4 (1974): 16–29.

### Wednesday: problems of memory

- Marion Blackburn, “Return to the Trail of Tears,” *Archaeology*, no. 2 (2012): 53.
- Raymond Cross, “‘Twice Born’ from the Waters’: The Two-Hundred-Year Journey of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Indians,” in *Lewis & Clark : Legacies, Memories, and New Perspectives*, ed. Kris Fresonke and Mark David Spence (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 117–42.
- Michael J. Zogry, “Wide Open Spaces: The Trail of Tears, the Lewis and Clark Expedition, and Gaps in the National Memory,” in *New Territories, New Perspectives: The Religious Impact of the Louisiana Purchase*, ed. Richard J. Callahan, Jr. (Columbia, Mo: University of Missouri, 2008), 56–82.
- Guy McClellan, *Place Names Along the Santa Fe Trail* (maps)
  - [“Linguistic Origins of Place Names Along the Trail”](#)
  - [“What Were Places Along the Trail Named For?”](#)

## Week 6—economic history and commodity flows

### Monday: intercultural commerce

- Christopher L. Miller and George R. Hamell, "A New Perspective on Indian-White Contact: Cultural Symbols and Colonial Trade," *The Journal of American History* 73, no. 2 (1986): 311–28.\*
- Henri Folmer, "Contraband Trade between Louisiana and New Mexico in the Eighteenth Century," *New Mexico Historical Review* 16 (July 1941): 249–74.
- Juliana Barr, "Womanly 'Captivation': Political Economies of Hostage Taking and Hospitality," in *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman: Indians and Spaniards in the Texas Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 240–76.\*
- Carroll L. Riley, "The Road to Hawikuh: Trade and Trade Routes to Cibola-Zuni during Late Prehistoric and Early Historic Times," *Kiva* 41, no. 2 (1975): 137–59.
- Thomas Frank Schilz and Donald E. Worcester, "The Spread of Firearms among the Indian Tribes on the Northern Frontier of New Spain," *American Indian Quarterly* 11, no. 1 (1987): 1–10.
- Andrés Reséndez, "The Spirit of Mercantile Enterprise," in *Changing National Identities at the Frontier: Texas and New Mexico, 1800–1850* (Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 93–123.
- Henri Folmer, "The Mallet Expedition of 1739 through Nebraska, Kansas and Colorado to Santa Fe," *Colorado Magazine* 16 (September 1939): 161–73.
- Susan Calafate Boyle, "Going Down the Royal Road," in *Los Capitalistas: Hispano Merchants and the Santa Fe Trade* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997), 28–44.
- Douglas C. Comer, *Ritual Ground: Bent's Old Fort, World Formation, and the Annexation of the Southwest* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).

### Wednesday: cities, capitalists, and commodities

- Richard C. Wade, *The Urban Frontier: The Rise of Western Cities, 1790-1830* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996).
  - chapter 1 ("The Beginnings of Western Urbanism") and/or chapter 2 ("The Economic Base")
- Adam Arenson, "The Double Life of St. Louis: Narratives of Origins and Maturity in Wade's Urban Frontier," *Indiana Magazine of History*, no. 3 (2009): 246.
- William J. Parish, *The Charles Ifeld Company: A Study of the Rise and Decline of Mercantile Capitalism in New Mexico* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1961).
- Jay Gitlin, *The Bourgeois Frontier: French Towns, French Traders, and American Expansion* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2010)
  - chapter 4 ("How the West Was Sold") and/or chapter 5 ("Beyond St. Louis: Negotiating the Course of Empire")
- Susan Calafate Boyle, "New Mexican Merchants and Mercantile Capitalism," in *Los Capitalistas: Hispano Merchants and the Santa Fe Trade* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000), 57–72.



- Morris F. Taylor, *First Mail West : Stagecoach Lines on the Santa Fe Trail* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000).
- David Lavender, *Bent's Fort* (Lincoln : University of Nebraska Press, 1972).
- Anne F. Hyde, *Empires, Nations, and Families: A New History of the North American West, 1800-1860* (New York: Ecco, 2012).
  - chapter 1 ("Families and Fur: The Personal World of the Early American West") and/or chapter 3 ("Western Places: Regional Communities and *Vecinidad*")

## Week 7—environmental history

### Monday: mythical and natural environments

- Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," *Annual Report of the American Historical Association* (1894), 119–227.
- Walter Prescott Webb, "The American Approach to the Great Plains," in *The Great Plains*, (Boston: Ginn and Co., 1931), 140–204.
- Elliott West, *The Contested Plains: Indians, Goldseekers, and the Rush to Colorado* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998).
  - prologue and/or chapter 3 ("Frontiers and Visions")

### Wednesday: flora, fauna, and energy

- William W. Dunmire, *Gardens of New Spain: How Mediterranean Plants and Foods Changed America* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004).
  - chapter 6 ("Spanish Technology, Trade, and Livestock"), chapter 9 ("The Corridor Into Texas"), and/or Appendix ("Master Plant List")
- Elliott West, "Land," in *The Way to the West: Essays on the Central Plains* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), 13–50.\*
- Elliott West, "Animals," in *The Way to the West: Essays on the Central Plains* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), 50–84.\*
- Guy McClellan, *Place Names Along the Santa Fe Trail* (maps)
  - "What Were Places Along the Trail Named For (Besides Individuals)?"

## Week 8—gender, family, and migration

### Monday: ideas of gender and family travel westward

- Johnny Faragher and Christine Stansell, "Women and Their Families on the Overland Trail to California and Oregon, 1842-1867," *Feminist Studies* 2, no. 2/3 (1975): 150–66.
- Virginia Scharff, "The Hearth of Darkness: Susan Magoffin on Suspect Terrain," in *Twenty Thousand Roads: Women, Movement, and the West* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).
- John Mack Faragher, *Women and Men on the Overland Trail* (New Haven, Conn. : Yale University Press, 2001).



- chapter 1 (“The Overland Emigrants”), chapter 3 (“Men’s and Women’s Work on the Overland Trail”), and/or chapter 6 (“The World of the Family”)
- Julie Jeffrey, *Frontier Women: “Civilizing” the West? 1840-1880* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998).
- Elliott West, “Families,” in *The Way to the West: Essays on the Central Plains* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), 85–126.

### Wednesday: women in their own words

- Sandra L. Myres, ed., *Ho for California!: Women’s Overland Diaries from the Huntington Library* (San Marino, Calif.: Huntington Library Press, 2007).
- Sandra L. Myres, *Westward Ho! Women on the Overland Trails* (Albuquerque : University of New Mexico Press, 1982).
- Deborah Lawrence, *Writing the Trail : Five Women’s Frontier Narratives* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2006)
  - chapter 1 (“Susan Shelby Magoffin”) and/or chapter 5 (“Lydia Spencer Lane”)
- Susan Shelby Magoffin and Howard R. Lamar, *Down the Santa Fe Trail and into Mexico: The Diary of Susan Shelby Magoffin, 1846-1847*, ed. Stella M. Drumm (Lincoln, Neb.: Bison Books, 1982).