

The following is a list of films, readings, and assignments (essays and seminar tickets) from the winter quarter of The Legacy of Conquest.

**Films** (winter quarter):

- *Black Robe* (Bruce Beresford)
- *Stagecoach* (John Ford)
- *Last of the Mohicans* (Michael Mann)
- *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (Ford)
- *Fort Apache* (Ford)
- *Red River* (William Wyler)
- *Buffalo Bill* (Robert Altman)
- *Gettysburg* (Ron Maxwell)
- *Shane* (George Stevens)
- *Glory* (Edward Zwick)
- *Little Big Man* (Arthur Penn)
- *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (George Roy Hill)
- *The Way West* (Ken Burns documentary)

Plus one film chosen from the following list:

- *High Noon* (Fred Zinnemann)
- *Tombstone* (George Cosmatos)
- *Red Badge of Courage* (John Huston)
- *Dances with Wolves* (Kevin Costner)

**Required reading:**

- *Last of the Mohicans* (James Fennimore Cooper)
- *Black Elk Speaks* (John Neihardt)
- *Killer Angels* (Michael Shaara)
- *It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own* (Richard White)
- *The Virginian* (Owen Wister)

Essays:

1. What is *Black Robe* about? What historical subject is the film addressing and what position does it take vis-à-vis the main character?
2. How has your understanding of Cooper's novel informed the way you viewed Mann's film? Conversely, did the film reveal anything to you about the novel that you had not considered? Cite at least two examples to support your conclusions.
3. Using at least two terms from our film glossary, please discuss *Stagecoach*. Beyond commercial considerations, what do you think was John Ford's purpose in making *Stagecoach* and how did he achieve it? What does the film say about democracy on the frontier and manifest destiny?
4. *Gettysburg* and *Glory* are two combat films that attempt to convey a realistic picture of characters and events from the Civil War. Using the readings and film glossary, discuss how they achieved (or not) historical authenticity.

5. Gore Vidal: "Westerns, in their simplest form, are conquest narratives that glorify and justify the exploits of the conquerors." In a brief response essay to *Red River*, assess the validity (or invalidity) of Vidal's observation about Westerns and specify what is being conquered, for whom and for what purpose. Buttress and illustrate the main points of your essay with specific references to scenes from the film and to the readings. (Hint: Follow the money.)

6. *Buffalo Bill* and *Little Big Man* examine a hitherto (socially and cinematically) dispossessed people and culture. Based on your knowledge of the classic Western genre, how do these films challenge preconceptions about the dominant myth of western expansion and its historical accuracy?

7. In his chapter on Social Conflict (13), Richard White begins by describing the tendency of Westerns to reduce real social conflicts into a series of individual confrontations between symbolic characters. How does *Shane* fit into this description? And what kinds of larger social conflicts are being addressed in the film? Also, please include a paragraph on how *Shane* can be understood in the tradition of *The Virginian*. BE SPECIFIC WITH YOUR SOURCES!

#### Seminar tickets

1. How does the Myth of the Frontier figure into Cooper's *Last of the Mohicans*? Please cite at least two examples to support your analysis.

2. How has your understanding of *Killer Angels* informed the way you viewed the first half of *Gettysburg*? For example, how have literary conventions been translated into film codes? Cite at least two examples to support your conclusions. Also, please include one or two short reflections about the Gettysburg address in relation to our readings and screenings this week.

3. Compare and contrast the worldview of Black Elk with that of Euro-American invaders of the west.

4. Who was Buffalo Bill and how does he figure into the legacy of conquest? Cite at least three examples from the above reading.