HIST 322: The West in Film (5 credits)
Campus – Winter 2015 – Dr. Ryan Dearinger

*THIS COURSE COUNTS TOWARD THE HISTORY MAJOR/MINOR*

HIST 322 investigates the ways in which the history of the American West has been represented through film. A defining genre in the Hollywood tradition, Westerns have expressed a range of often contradictory ideologies and assumptions about American history and culture. Through screenings and readings, we will explore the underlying components of Western films, including issues of violence, race, class, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, politics, ideology, community, and landscape. We will evaluate films as historical texts and cultural products, Hollywood as an historian, and the Western as an enduring template for the understanding and critique of American culture. What have Westerns told us about ourselves, our nation, and our society? How do Westerns reflect the ideas, values, and larger historical issues of the period in which they were created? What role have Westerns played in popular interpretations of the history of the American West?