

Virginia Western Community College

HIS 205

Local History

Prerequisites

None

Course Description

Studies the history of the local community and/or region.

This interdisciplinary study of southern Appalachia will focus on the land, people, economics, and folklore of the region's history, placing Appalachia in the context of other major historic events. A primary focus throughout the course will be America's idea and perception of Appalachia over time through the visual arts, music, literature, and modern media. How the region is portrayed through regional parks and museums will also be examined.

Semester Credits: 3

Lecture Hours: 3

Required Materials

1. Textbook
2. Internet access
3. Blackboard

Textbook:

Straw, Richard, & Blethen, Tyler. High Mountains Rising: Appalachia in Time and Place. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004. ISBN: 978-0-25207176-8

Other Required Materials:

None

Course Outcomes

At the completion of this course, the student should be able to:

- Define Appalachia as a geographically and culturally distinct region.
- Trace the evolution of the American concept and image of Appalachia from the late 19th century to present time.
- Understand the industrialization and economics of the region related to the use and removal of its natural resources.
- Understand Appalachia in the context of major historical events.
- Analyze regional parks and museums' attempts to interpret Appalachian history.

Topical Description

1	Introduction and Defining Appalachia – Defining the region through Appalachian Regional Commission definitions and maps.
2	The American Image of Appalachia – The initial “discovery” of the region through post-Civil War literature and the social and missionary movements of many Protestant and Catholic organizations. The region’s struggle with stereotypes that continue today.
3	Appalachia in Media & Museums – Analysis of the images of Appalachia from popular films 1930s – Present day, popular novels of the early 20 th century, comic strips, and television programs.
4	Geography and Environment – Using a variety of current and historical maps and examining the region through “Google Earth,” establishing the importance of geography, geology, and overall environment of the region.
5	The Ecology of Appalachia – An overview of the ecology and biodiversity of the region compared to the environments that European settlers were familiar with before coming to North America.
6	Economics of Agriculture and Industry – An overview of Appalachia as a primarily agricultural area, but with emphasis on extraction of timber, iron, and coal.
7	Native Americans in Appalachia – An overview of prehistoric and historic Native Americans in the region.

8	European Settlement, Race, and Ethnicity – An overview of European settlement, establishment of settlement patterns, and the overall ethnicity of the region.
9	Music, Folklore, and the “Merchandizing” of Appalachia – An overview of the importance of preservation of music and folklore in the region and how that has been used to market an image of Appalachia.
10	Literature, Arts, and Crafts – A study of how Appalachia has been at the center of many arts, literature, and craft movements in America.
11	Appalachia in War and Politics – An overview of the role Appalachia played in Revolutionary War, Civil War, and in a variety of New Deal programs.

Notes to Instructors

None