

**Introduction to Appalachian Studies (Honors): Constructing Appalachia
APST 3018**

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Required Texts:

Arnow, *The Dollmaker*

Davis, *Where There Are Mountains: An Environmental History of Southern Appalachia*

Gates, *Colored People*

McNeil, ed., *Appalachian Images in Folk and Popular Culture*

Pudup et al., eds., *Appalachia in the Making: The Mountain South in the Nineteenth Century*

Handouts; reserve and on-line readings

Scope of Course:

This course will consider the ways in which the idea of Appalachia has been constructed over the past three centuries and the relationship between that construction and lived experience in Appalachia. Among the topics that we will consider are the idea of cultural construction, Appalachia in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century magazines, settlement schools, the crafts revival, slavery and race, gender and sexuality, coal and other environmental issues, urban Appalachia, and the fine arts. Our approach will be interdisciplinary, drawing from cultural studies, literature, film, anthropology, sociology, history, folklore, art history, and the natural sciences. Geographically we will focus on the heartland of Appalachia (the ARC's central and much of its southern Appalachia); temporally we will emphasize Appalachia prior to 1945 (with some exceptions).

Group Project and Oral Presentations:

Central to our course is the idea of Appalachia as a discourse: interpretations of the region are highly colored by pre-existing interpretations. This textualizing is true of physical sites no less than written accounts. You will work in groups to examine the construction of Appalachia presented by one of these sites: the Kentucky Coal Mining Museum; the Blue Ridge Parkway; Dollywood; Jonesborough, Tennessee. With your group, you will visit your site and "read" it as if it were a written text; you will then give an oral presentations on your findings. As you study the site, ask questions such as:

- What story about Appalachia does the site tell? What are the antecedents of this interpretation? Does this interpretation seem congruous with the historical facts or present situation surrounding the site? How has the institution edited its story—what is included, what is omitted? What moral assumptions underlie this interpretation?
- Who has authored this interpretation? What might have motivated this interpretation?
- What is the relationship between this interpretation and local people's beliefs about themselves and the locale? How do local people feel about this interpretation?

Written Assignments

Students will write six short papers on readings and films, one term paper, and a final exam.

Daily Reading and Film Assignments:

(**Note:** *AIFP* refers to McNeil, *Appalachian Images in Folk and Popular Culture*; *AM* refers to Pudup et al., *Appalachia in the Making*. Unless otherwise noted, watch all films before coming to class.)

Unit 1: The Construction of Culture; Definitions of Appalachia

Aug. 28: Introduction to course: what is Appalachia? What do we mean by the phrase "cultural construction"? In-class film: *That High, Lonesome Sound*.

Aug. 30: Introduction to Appalachia and cultural construction, continued. Readings (handouts): from Said, *Orientalism*; Trevor-Roper, "The Invention of Tradition: The Highland Tradition of Scotland."

Sept. 4: Introduction to Appalachia and cultural construction, continued. Readings: *AIFP*, Introduction (1-20); *AM*: "Taking Exception with Exceptionalism" (1-24). On Cades Cove (reserve). Whisnant, ch. 3 from *All That Is Native and Fine* ("This Folk Work and the 'Holy Folk.'").

Unit II: Classic and Revisionist Constructions of Appalachia

Sept. 6: The non-Appalachian frontiersman as pre-hillbilly. Readings (handouts): William Byrd II, *History and Secret History of the Dividing Line*, Crevecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer*, Longstreet, *Georgia Scenes*, "The Fight."

Sept. 11: Classic early constructions and recent historians' responses: Readings: from *AIFP*: Harney, "A Strange Land and a Peculiar People" (45-58); Frost, "Our Contemporary Ancestors in the Southern Mountains" (91-106); Wilson, "Elizabethan America" (205-214). From *AM*: Dunaway, "Speculators and Settler Capitalists" (50-75); McKinney, "Economy and Community in Western North Carolina" (163-184).

Sept. 18: Moonshiners and Feudists. Readings from *AIFP*: Lynde, "The Moonshiner of Fact" (75-90); Johnston, "Romance and Tragedy of Kentucky Feuds" (107-120). From *AM*: Waller: "Feuding in Appalachia: Evolution of a Cultural Stereotype" (347-376).

Sept. 20: Ballad collecting; the handicrafts revival; settlement and industrial schools. Readings (handouts): Goodrich, *Mountain Homespun*; ballads in Campbell and Sharp's collection. Reading from *AIFP*: Eaton, "The Mountain Handicrafts" (227-242). In class: audiotapes, slides.

Sept. 25: Travel literature and the periodical press. Readings: Christian Reid, "The Mountain Region of North Carolina" (handout); O. B. Bundt, "Lookout Mountain" (handout). From *AM*: Lewis, "Railroads, Deforestation, and the Transformation of Agriculture in the West Virginia Back Counties, 1880-1920." Guest speaker: Kevin O'Donnell.

Sept. 27: The coal in Appalachia. Reading from *AM*: Banks, "Class Formation in the Southeastern Kentucky Coal fields, 1880-1920. Handout: *The Autobiography of Mother Jones*. In class, listen to songs by Aunt Molly Jackson and others.

Oct. 2: The urban Appalachian experience in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as evidenced in literature and the visual arts. Reading: handouts: White, *Great Road Style*; Wolfe, *Look Homeward, Angel*. Film: *The Mystery of George Masa*.

Unit III: Constructions of Appalachia in Film

Oct. 4: Discuss film: *The Trail of the Lonesome Pine*.

Oct. 9: Discuss Appalshop films: *Quilting Women*; *Nature's Way*; *Lily May Ledford*. Reserve reading: Hanna, "Three Decades of Appalshop Films"

Oct. 11: Discuss Appalshop films: *Fast Food Women*; *The Buffalo Creek Flood*.

Oct. 16: Fieldtrip to Appalshop in Whitesburg, Kentucky.

Unit IV: Group Presentations on Contemporary Public Constructions of Appalachia

Oct. 23: Group Presentations on Kentucky Coal Mining Museum and Dollywood.

Oct. 25: Group Presentations on the Blue Ridge Parkway and Jonesborough, Tennessee.

Unit V: Constructing Otherness in Appalachia: Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Sexuality

Oct. 30: Slavery in Appalachia. Readings: from *AM.*: Inscoc, "Race and Racism in Nineteenth-Century Southern Appalachia" (103-133). handout: Dunaway on slavery; Embree, *The Emancipator*.

Nov. 1: Gates, *Colored People*

Nov. 6: Gates, *Colored People*, continued

Nov. 8: Cherokee. From *AM*: Finger, "Cherokee Accommodation and Persistence in the Southern Appalachians." Handouts: Boudinot and *Cherokee Phoenix*.

Nov. 13: *The Dollmaker*. Readings from *AM.*: Anglin, "Lives on the Margin" (185-209).

Nov. 15: *The Dollmaker*, continued.

Nov. 20: Constructing gay and lesbian identities in Appalachia. Reserve reading: Mann, *Loving Mountains, Loving Men*

Unit VI: Classic and Revisionist Constructions of the Appalachian Environment

Nov. 27: Davis, *Where There Are Mountains*, ch. 1-3.

Nov. 29: Davis, *Where There Are Mountains*, ch. 4-6 & 8.

Dec. 4: The chestnut blight. Readings: Davis, *Where There Are Mountains*, ch. 7. Guest speaker: Dr. Paul Sisco

Dec. 6: Interpretation and preserving the Appalachian landscape: the Blue Ridge Parkway.