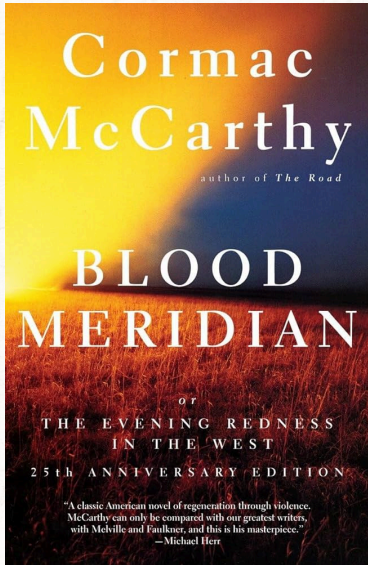


ENG4881G: Cormac McCarthy and the Writing of America's Bloodied History

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COURSE DESCRIPTION



2025 marks the fortieth anniversary of the publication of American novelist Cormac McCarthy's novel *Blood Meridian* or *The Evening Redness in The West*. Drawing from numerous historical sources, and set in the mid-nineteenth-century, *Blood Meridian* details its troubled protagonist's involvement traveling in Northern Mexico with a gang of mercenaries who have been hired to "ethnically cleanse" the area of certain Indigenous tribes with whom the Mexican settlers were in conflict.

A horrifying tale of Indigenous genocide during the age of America's final westward expansion, *Blood Meridian* is an incredibly challenging and difficult text, especially for first-time readers. Yet it is also an incredibly compelling text, written in beautiful and mysterious prose, drawing more critical and popular attention than any of McCarthy's other works, indeed drawing praise from readers with otherwise very different artistic and political tastes.

In this seminar, students confront *Blood Meridian*, not just in isolation but also through a variety of other fictional and nonfictional texts. Students will of course explore the many historical, literary and cultural references woven throughout the novel itself. Alongside the novel itself, and some of the historical and cultural texts it references, students will also be reading a variety of fictional and theoretical texts from European, American and Indigenous writers, that otherwise speak to the novel's poetics and style; its critical vision of America's founding social and political antagonisms; its scientific, philosophical and theological sources; and its sublime portrait of the natural world.