

NORTHERN PLAINS STUDIES

at Augustana University and
The Center for Western Studies



The northern Great Plains became the home of Augustana University in 1881 when Norwegian-American pioneers moved west to Iowa and then, in 1883, across the Big Sioux River into Dakota Territory. This region, which we call the Northern Plains, is comprised of South and North Dakota, Nebraska, and parts of Minnesota, Iowa, Wyoming, and Montana. Today, more than 90% of Augie students call the Plains home, and most alums remain in or eventually return to the region.

At Augustana, students enjoy the opportunity to study other regions of the world, but few consider studying their own region. There are ways to combine an interest in the global community with knowledge about one of the largest regions of the United States and one that continues to fascinate many foreign travelers. For example, students might consider taking courses that allow for a comparative study of colonized people—a course about Ireland and a course about the Lakota/Dakota Sioux, or a course about the Indian subcontinent and a course about the American West. Augustana offers an interdisciplinary minor in Northern Plains Studies (NPST), initiated by the Center for Western Studies (CWS), to take advantage of courses and programs that lead to an understanding of the history and cultures of the Northern Plains region. Many of these courses also fulfill requirements for the major/minor in American Studies.

Courses supporting a concentration in Northern Plains Studies:

ANTH 270	Introduction to Archeology	ENGL 340	Native American Authors
ANTH 271	Cultural Anthropology	HIST 303	History of the American West
ANTH 397	Prehistory of the Northern Plains	NAST 320	Native American Social Systems
BIOL 180	Environmental Science	NAST 352	History of the Lakota/Dakota
BIOL 336	Ornithology	NPST 202	South Dakota and the World
BIOL 348	Principles of Ecology	NPST 397	Search for Authenticity (CWS)
CIVT 201	Reading Augustana	NPST 397	Finding the Great Plains (CWS)
ENGL 200	Literary Experience: Northern Plains		

The Center for Western Studies strives to improve the quality of social and cultural life in the Northern Plains, achieve a better understanding of the region, its heritage, and its resources, and stimulate interest in the solution to regional problems. In carrying out these precepts, CWS fulfills its mission to both the campus and community through the following programs and resources:

- Collections (archives, library, art, and museum)
- Paid internships in archives, museum collections, and gallery exhibits (5-6 students annually)
- Faculty Research Award (\$1,500 for faculty and \$500 for student assistant)
- Dakota Conference on Northern Plains History, Literature, Art, and Archaeology (student and faculty presenters)
- Student award categories for papers presented at the Dakota Conference: \$500 and \$250
- Boe Forum on Public Affairs (student and faculty preparation of forum questions, student news conference)
- Art gallery exhibits (student and faculty artists, collaborative exhibits with Eide/Dalrymple)
- Artists of the Plains Art Show & Sale in downtown Sioux Falls (collaboration with Art Department)
- Book publications by faculty at Augustana and other colleges (some are used as course texts)
- Independent Study courses and two NPST 397 courses
- Civitas office, classroom, and committee space (8-9 CIVT and non-CIVT classes held per year in seminar room)

Information about CWS programs: Dr. Harry Thompson, Executive Director (harry.thompson@augie.edu)

Information about Northern Plains Studies minor: Dr. Michael Mullin, Coordinator (michael.mullin@augie.edu)