

Introduction to Contemporary Indigenous/Native Studies

GES 171, Section 1—Summer 2008



M, T, W, TH, F 10:30—11:45, AVERY 102
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Please try to fathom our great desire to survive in a way somewhat different than yours.

—YUP'IK ELDER
Village of nightmute, Alaska

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Throughout this course, we will inquire about “Indians” from their perspectives and the viewpoints of the colonizers (anthropologists, historians, Supreme Court justices, etc.). The principal objective being to better understand Indigenous histories—the stories of independent sovereign nations who have persevered through 500+ years of attempted colonization, attempted assimilation, and in many instances the outright destruction of their cultures (language, social bonds, spirituality, etc.), peoples, and the poisoning of their bodies and the spaces which those bodies occupy (air, land, water, and the flora and fauna—i.e. all our relations).

These issues will be examined through literature, historical documents, and film. This class will not be about feathers and beads, or frybread (no cultural tourism here...). But, the attempt will be made to represent Indigenous peoples as they truly are; flesh and blood peoples with their own stories of creation, adaptation, and continuation.

This course is also about Indigenous peoples’ stories of resistance, revitalization, and decolonization (thus the use of the word “attempted” previously) and is designed to enhance your knowledge of Native peoples, “Indians”, and global Indigeneity through the historical, social, cultural, political, and aesthetic expressiveness surrounding Native peoples and global Indigenous struggles. Furthermore, we will be problematizing your understanding and experience of Nativeness and Indigeneity—your thinking, your speaking, and your actions—how you frame your worldview and how it affects your interactions with the world.

COURSE STRUCTURE:

This course is broken into smaller units and although they are laid out as separate entries there is a great deal of overlap and interaction between these areas of study. These areas of discovery and disruption are laid out so that you will have a contextual approach to deal with the subject matter. The aim is to provide historical, theoretical, and practical lenses through which you can examine the daily discourses that surround you and affect your world regarding your interactions with both the real/lived and imagined/stereotyped discourses of and about Indigeneity.

The predominant goal is that everyone will receive from this class a better understanding of the fuller/true history of the United States of America and the effects of its colonialism (imperialism, racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, ethnocentrism, xenophobia etc.) on Indigenous communities. Some of you may feel that this attack on colonialism and the colonized mindset is an attack on you...if this is the case, get over your bad self. We are all in it...

Because we are all in it, this class revolves around our classroom dialogue. This is not a debate; we are involved in a dialectic struggle. The struggle is not only about finding solutions (Western civilizational thinking) but it is truly about the questions we ask of the world and ourselves. If we seek change we must approach it "...by means of the praxis: reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" as stated by Paulo Freire in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. This class asks of you to question the structures you have been handed – you will need to take risks and speak out. I am with you, not against you; I learn from you, as you learn from me.

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

- *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide (CSV)*
Andrea Smith, author (2005)
- *Genocide of the Mind: New Native American Writing (GOTM)*
MariJo Moore, editor (2003)
- *Strong Women Stories: Native Vision and Community Survival (SWS)*
Kim Anderson & Bonita Lawrence, editors (2003)
- *Course Reader (CR)*...available at Cougar Copies
- E-mail account

REQUIRED WORK:

Your grade in this course is determined in a simple fashion: do the work and you get the corresponding grade. The work in this class is designed to help you challenge yourself and ultimately everyone in this class will be a teacher as well as a student (myself included). In order for you to succeed you must do the readings and participate. We will fail in our goal of class interaction and growth if the readings are not done. To help you in the goal of absorbing knowledge through the written text three areas of content exist to aid you in your discovery process.

[JOURNALS]: The journals are a vital component of your understanding and allow you the opportunity to express those thoughts that you have further questions on or that you missed the chance to ask about in class. The requirements for the journal are simple – you will engage the author's main ideas by asking questions of *both* yourself *and* the material. These are response essays, not summaries. They need to be typed, 12-point font, one-inch margins, single-spaced, and one and one-half pages in length (minimum). The following list of questions is not comprehensive, but serves as a jumping off point:

Why do you agree or disagree with the author's position(s)? What questions do you still have regarding the material? Deconstruct the author's argument(s) where you are able – is the author presenting new ideas and how does this compare with your prior learning about the material? How does the author's argument(s) compare with others we have read on the same subject matter (if there are others to compare)?

Failure to follow the guidelines will result in a point deduction from the journal point total. You need to engage the texts and critically think about the meanings, sources, and values inherent in these writings.

[QUESTIONS ON READINGS): To help us in our engagement with the readings and with one another you will need to come to each class having done the readings for that day. With the understanding that this is completely new material for the majority of you this section will aid in your comprehension of the material. Any questions that you have regarding the material you will “write” and bring to class as these will assist us in both the lecture and discussion as that material which is most challenging will elicit the most questions and I will be able to gauge the level of understanding of the class and can adjust the lectures/discussions accordingly. You do not need to write questions for every article that we read for a given day, pick *one* article for that day and engage it critically.

(FACE TO FACE/IN YOUR FACE): You will need to meet with me at least once during the summer session as a help for you in your comprehension of the material and to help me get to know you and assist you in your learning goals. This meeting can be *both* regarding your questions on the discussion/lecture material *and* our discussion of your final paper. Because there is a point value assigned to this meeting I will ask that you come prepared with your questions/materials to our meeting (Ex. When you come to discuss your paper please bring your outline, rough draft, etc.)

EVALUATION:

	<u>% of final grade</u>	<u>point value</u>
Attendance/Participation	20%	40
Journals (5)	20%	40
Questions on Readings (15)	15%	30
Midterm Exam	20%	40
Final Paper (Rough Draft/Revision/Final)	20%	40
Meeting with Instructor (1)	5%	10
TOTAL	100%	200

LATE WORK POLICY:

- If you are unable to complete any assignment by the due date, you should notify me at least ONE DAY BEFORE the due date and negotiate an extension. ONLY ONE EXTENSION WILL BE GRANTED FOR ANY ONE ASSIGNMENT (Except where otherwise noted).
- If you do not submit the assignment by the agreed upon extension date your grade for the assignment will be reduced by ONE LETTER GRADE for each additional day it is late. NO EXTENSIONS WILL BE GIVEN FOR THE FINAL PROJECT.
- If you do not notify me about late work at least one day before the due date to negotiate an extension, your grade for the assignment will immediately be reduced by one half grade for each day it is late and WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED after one week past the original due date.
- NO LATE Reading Questions will be accepted. All questions will be collected at the beginning of each class.

Your final grade is the percentage earned of the total points possible and is equivalent to the following letter grade scale:

94-100%	A
90-93%	A-
87-89%	B+
84-86%	B
80-83%	B-
77-79%	C+
74-76%	C
70-73%	C-
67-69%	D+
64-66%	D
60-63%	D-
59% and below	F

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Class participation is essential to your learning process so you are allowed only two absences (excused or otherwise). This requirement may seem difficult but as a community of learning we cannot learn from you if you are not here. Use your absences wisely, for emergencies, sickness, home issues, etc. I will not distinguish between types of absences. If you repeatedly sleep, read the newspaper, or chat with friends during class I will mark you absent. Respect your community and your community will respect you.

Additionally, your participation will be reflected through your journal assignments and questions on the readings. This portion will help those who may feel reticent (i.e. shy) about jumping into the discussion *every* day.

OTHER BUSINESS:

I reserve the right to give unannounced tests/quizzes if I feel there is a lack of commitment to the materials and reading.

Absolutely no cell phones when class starts. No text messaging during class.

No private conversations during class, or when someone else is talking. If you are talking about the subject matter, please keep your voices low –I will call on you to share your thoughts with us as well if I see any private conversations taking place.

ACADEMIC HONESTY:

Following the departmental and University policy, any incident of plagiarism (whether “cutting and pasting” off of the Internet or borrowing a paper or part of a paper from a friend) that is discovered by the instructor will result in a grade of F for the assignment in question and/or a grade of F for the entire course. Please refer to the WSU Student Handbook rules and regulations regarding the University’s policy.

To avoid any potential problems with the appearance of plagiarism be sure in every instance where you are using others’ ideas (i.e. paraphrasing the author, direct quotes) to always properly and accurately cite your source materials –this means both in-text citations and your works cited page. If you do not know how to do academic citations, please consult the latest edition of either the MLA Handbook or the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA). Copies of each may be found at Holland Library and online helps are available (Google search – keyword: MLA).

DISABILITY ACCOMODATIONS:

I am committed to providing assistance to help you be successful in this course. Students with Disabilities: Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and may need accommodations to fully participate in these classes, please visit the Disability Resource Center (DRC). All accommodations MUST be approved through the DRC (Administration Annex Building, Room 205). Please stop by or call (509) 335-3417 to make an appointment with a disability specialist.

COURSE SCHEDULE (I reserve the right to change this schedule for any reason)

WEEK 1: May 5 – May 9

Monday – Syllabus and Introduction

Tuesday – Columbus, The Indians, and Human Progress (CR)

Wednesday – Thanksgiving and Serial Killers: Representations of American Indians in Schools (CR)

Thursday – Putting Ourselves Forward: Location In Aboriginal Research (CR) RQ #1

Warrior Scholarship: Seeing the University as a Ground of Contention (CR)

When Your Hands Are Tied (VIDEO)

Friday – Civilize Them With a Stick (CR) RQ #2

Aboriginal Girls in Canada: Living Histories of Dislocation, Exploitation, and Strength (CR)

The Residential School Experience: A Century of Genocide in the Americas (VIDEO)

WEEK 2: May 12 – May 16

Monday – JOURNAL 1

Boarding School Abuses and the Case for Reparations (CSV)

Creating a Community-based School (SWS)

Tuesday – American Indians and Anthropologists: Issues of History, Empowerment, and Application (CR) RQ #3

Anthropologists and Other Friends (CR)

Wednesday – Ka Huaka 'I O Nā 'Ōiwi: the Journey Home (CR) RQ #4

Repatriation: A Pawnee's Perspective (CR)

Thursday – *Who Owns the Past?* (VIDEO)

Friday – Spiritual Appropriation as Sexual Violence (CSV)

In the Light of Reverence (VIDEO)

WEEK 3: May 19 – May 23

Monday – JOURNAL 2

Plastic Shamans and Astroturf Sun Dances: New Age Commercialization of Native American Spirituality (CR) RQ #5

White Shamans, Plastic Medicine Men (VIDEO)

Tuesday – Honouring the Oral Traditions of My Ancestors Through Storytelling (CR)

Song, Poetry, and Language—Expression and Perception (GOTM)

Wednesday – MID-TERM EXAM

Thursday – Symbolic Racism, History, and Reality: The Real Problem With Indian Mascots (GOTM)

Indians as Mascots: Perpetuating the Stereotype (GOTM)

In Whose Honor? (VIDEO)

Friday – Rape of the Land (CSV) RQ #7

Akwesasne: Mohawk Mothers' Milk and PCBs (CR)

Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit (GOTM)

Homeland: Four Portraits of Native Action, Part 1 (VIDEO)

WEEK 4: May 26 – May 30

Monday – **MEMORIAL DAY HOLIDAY!!!**

Tuesday – JOURNAL 3

Where the Spirits Live: Women Rebuilding a Non-Status Mi'kmaq Community (SWS)

America's Urban Youth and the Importance of Remembering (GOTM)

Wednesday – The Truth About Us: Living in the Aftermath of the Ipperwash Crisis (SWS) RQ #8

Names By Which The Spirits Know Us (GOTM)

Homeland: Four Portraits of Native Action, Part 2 (VIDEO)

Thursday – Nuclear Waste: Dumping on the Indians (CR) RQ #9

Homeland: Four Portraits of Native Action, Part 3 (VIDEO)

Friday – Tribal Feminism is a Drum Song (SWS) RQ #6

Arts and Letters Club: Two-Spirited Women Artists and Social Change (SWS)

The Healing Power of Women's Voices (SWS)

WEEK 5: June 2 – June 6

Monday – JOURNAL 4

Angry Women Are Building: Issues and Struggles Facing American Indian Women Today (CR)

The Eagle Has Landed: Native Women, Leadership and Community Development (SWS)

She No Speaks and Other Colonial Constructs of "The Traditional Woman" (SWS)

Tuesday – Colonialism and Disempowerment (CR) RQ #11

Mohawk Girls (VIDEO)

Wednesday – Activism and Expression as Empowerment (CR)

Anticolonial Responses to Gender Violence (CSV)

Thursday – "Better Dead Than Pregnant:" The Colonization of Native Womens' Reproductive Health (CSV) RQ #10

Sexual Violence as a Tool of Genocide (CSV)

Hózhó of Native Women (VIDEO)

Friday – Aboriginal Women's Action Network (SWS) RQ #12

From Victim's To Leaders: Activism Against Violence Towards Women (SWS)

WEEK 6: June 9 – June 13

Monday – JOURNAL 5

Indigenous Identity: What Is It, and Who *Really* Has It? (CR) RQ #13

The Genocide of a Generation's Identity (GOTM)

Matters of Race: I Belong To This (VIDEO)

Tuesday – Is Urban a Person or a Place? Characteristics of Urban Indian Country (CR) RQ #14

Blood Flowing in Two Worlds (GOTM)

Home: Urban and Reservation (GOTM)

Wednesday – Knowing All of My Names (CR)

"Playing Indian"? The Selection of Radmilla Cody as Miss Navajo Nation, 1997-1998 (CR)

Thursday – We, The People: Young American Indians Reclaiming Their Identity (GOTM) RQ #15

Strong Spirit, Fractured Identity: An Ojibway Adoptee's Journey to Wholeness (SWS)

- *Matters of Race: We're Still Here* (VIDEO)

Friday – The Drum Keeps Beating: Recovering a Mohawk Identity (SWS)

Reclaiming Our Humanity: Decolonization and the Recovery of Indigenous Knowledge (CR)

FINAL PAPER is due by 5 p.m. on Friday, June 13, in either my mailbox (Wilson 111) or my office (Wilson 122) ... NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED.
