

University of Oklahoma  
Honors College 2973.400  
Perspectives on the American Experience  
Spring 2001

## Myth and Popular Culture

Honors College 180/181  
Class meetings: Tuesday/Thursday 1:30-2:20  
Section meetings: Thursday 2:30-3:20, 3:30-4:20

Prof. James Treat  
Office hours: Tuesday 2:30-3:30, Thursday 4:30-5:30  
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### Course Description

What are myths, and what can they mean? What is popular culture, and how does it work? Have myths and popular culture influenced public policy in the modern nation-state, and why should we care? This course is an interdisciplinary exploration of worldview, behavior, and law in American life. It is also an introductory survey of the American experience, emphasizing American Indian perspectives on our collective history. Course readings include archival documents, historical narratives, cultural criticism, autobiography, short fiction, drama, and poetry; these written texts are supplemented by visual media including art, photography, film, and museum objects. Students have the opportunity to deepen their appreciation for the mythic and popular dimensions of American culture, to broaden their understanding of responsible citizenship in the context of an emerging global society, and to develop their critical skills for use in academic, professional, and personal settings.

## Course Texts

These books can be purchased at the OU Bookstore, and they are also available at the reserve desk in Bizzell Memorial Library:

Colin G. Calloway, *First Peoples: A Documentary Survey of American Indian History* (Bedford/St. Martin's, 1999)

Philip Deloria, *Playing Indian* (Yale University Press, 1999)

Leslie Marmon Silko, *Storyteller* (Seaver Books, 1981)

Gerald Vizenor, *The People Named the Chippewa: Narrative Histories* (University of Minnesota Press, 1984)

N. Scott Momaday, *The Way to Rainy Mountain* (University of New Mexico Press, 1969)

Greg Sarris, *Mabel McKay: Weaving the Dream* (University of California Press, 1994)

Linda Griffiths and Maria Campbell, *The Book of Jessica: A Theatrical Transformation* (Coach House Press, 1989)

## Course Schedule

January 16/18

Read: handouts  
Tuesday: course overview  
Thursday: course overview

January 23/25

Read: handouts, Calloway introduction, Deloria introduction  
Tuesday: course overview  
Thursday: quiz assigned, presentations assigned

January 30/February 1

Read: Calloway chapter 1  
Tuesday: quiz  
Thursday: presentations

February 6/8

Read: Calloway chapter 2  
Tuesday: quiz  
Thursday: project #1 assigned, presentations

February 13/15

Read: Silko  
Tuesday: quiz  
Thursday: draft #1 due, presentations

February 20/22

Read: Calloway chapter 3, Deloria chapter 1  
Tuesday: quiz  
Thursday: presentations

February 27/March 1

Read: Vizenor  
Tuesday: quiz  
Thursday: paper #1 due, presentations

March 6/8

Read: Calloway chapter 4, Deloria chapter 2  
Tuesday: quiz  
Thursday: project #2 assigned, presentations

March 13/15

Read: Calloway chapter 5, Deloria chapter 3  
Tuesday: quiz  
Thursday: draft #2 due, presentations

~~March 20/22~~

Spring break

March 27/29

Read: Momaday

Tuesday: quiz

Thursday: presentations

April 3/5

Read: Calloway chapter 6, Deloria chapter 4

Tuesday: quiz

Thursday: paper #2 due, presentations

April 10/12

Read: Sarris

Tuesday: quiz

Thursday: project #3 assigned, presentations

April 17/19

Read: Calloway chapter 7, Deloria chapter 5

Tuesday: quiz

Thursday: draft #3 due, presentations

April 24/26

Read: Griffiths and Campbell

Tuesday: quiz

Thursday: presentations

May 1/3

Read: Calloway chapter 8, Deloria chapter 6, Deloria conclusion

Tuesday: quiz

Thursday: paper #3 due, presentations

Monday, May 7, 1:30-3:30

Final exam

## Course Requirements

Course grades will be determined using a point system, according to the following breakdown:

### Reading quizzes

13 individual quizzes @ 12 points 156 points  
13 group quizzes @ 8 points 104 points

### Writing projects

3 drafts @ 3 points 9 points  
3 consultations @ 4 points 12 points  
3 papers @ 60 points 180 points

### Oral presentations

3 outlines @ 3 points 9 points  
3 presentations @ 40 points 120 points

### Class attendance

15 section meetings @ 4 points 60 points

### Final exam

5 short questions @ 10 points 50 points  
2 essay questions @ 50 points 100 points

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800 points

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700-800 points = A  
500-699 points = B  
300-499 points = C  
100-299 points = D  
0-99 points = F