

American Studies 80B, Fall 1993
105 Oakes College
Tuesday/Thursday 4:00-5:45

James Treat, Assistant Professor
Office: Oakes College 203
Office hours: Monday 3:00-5:00

The Native American Experience

This course is an introductory survey of Native American history, culture, and contemporary life. Students will gain a basic understanding of the diversity and complexity of Native American identity in contemporary society, and will learn to appreciate the continuity and change that has marked the history of Native American survival. We will be reading a wide range of literature by and about Native Americans, including fiction and non-fiction, autobiography and biography, traditional stories and contemporary speeches. We will work together on this project in large class meetings (twice a week) and in small section meetings (once a week). Our discussions and interactions will be supplemented by guest speakers on selected topics and by films and other audiovisual presentations.

Course Objectives

Students in this course will:

- (1) develop a basic understanding of Native American societies, worldviews, and intellectual traditions;
- (2) evaluate the prominence of Native American images and stereotypes in American popular culture;
- (3) study selected aspects of Native American history and culture in order to understand the contemporary issues facing Native Americans;
- (4) learn to appreciate the importance of Native American contributions to American life;
- (5) consider the diversity and complexity of Native American identity in contemporary American society; and
- (6) refine their abilities to understand and to respect cultural diversity in the modern world.

Course Requirements

Each student in this course will be required to:

- (1) complete the assigned readings in a timely fashion, according to the course schedule;
- (2) attend class and section meetings regularly (see attendance policy below), and actively participate in class and section discussion and writing exercises; and
- (3) submit three assigned essays and write the final examination (see writing assignments below).

Attendance policy:

Class and section attendance is required. Short writing exercises will be completed during some class meetings, and students who miss more than two of these exercises (without making arrangements with their Teaching Assistant) will not pass the course. Additionally, students who miss more than two section meetings (without making arrangements with their Teaching Assistant) will not pass the course.

Writing assignments:

Each student will be required to submit three short essays, each essay approximately three pages long (typed, double-spaced), due on the following dates:

October 12 Native American origins and worldviews

November 9 Native Americans and land

November 30 Native American elders

Specific information about each of these assignments will be distributed at a later date.

The final examination (December 7, 8-11 a.m.) will be comprehensive and will consist of short essay questions and identifications.

Course Texts

The following seven books are required; they are available at Bay Tree Bookstore and are on reserve at McHenry Library:

Carl A. Hammerschlag, M.D., The Dancing Healers: A Doctor's Journey of Healing with Native Americans (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1988).

Malcolm Margolin (ed.), The Way We Lived: California Indian Stories, Songs and Reminiscences rev. ed. (Berkeley: Heyday, 1993).

Peter Nabokov (ed.), Native American Testimony: A Chronicle of Indian-White Relations from Prophecy to the Present, 1492-1992 (New York: Viking, 1991).

Sharon O'Brien, American Indian Tribal Governments (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1989).

Dianne Meili, Those Who Know: Profiles of Alberta's Indian Elders (Edmonton, Alberta: NeWest, 1991).

Mark St. Pierre, Madonna Swan: A Lakota Woman's Story (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1991).

Louis Owens, The Sharpest Sight (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1992).

Course Schedule

I. Native American Facts and Fictions

September 23
Course Introduction and Overview

September 28
Native American Diversity
Reading assignment: Hammerschlag 1-87

September 30
Native Americans in American Popular Culture
Reading assignment: Hammerschlag 88-170

October 5
California Indian Worldviews and Oral Traditions
Reading assignment: Margolin 1-116

II. Native American History and Government

October 7
California Indian History
Reading assignment: Margolin 117-231

October 12 (Indigenous Peoples Day)
Invasion, Resistance, Survival
Reading assignment: Nabokov 1-67, O'Brien 1-33

October 14
International Treaties and Colonial Policies
Reading assignment: Nabokov 68-169, O'Brien 35-48

October 19
Native Americans in the Twentieth Century
Reading assignment: Nabokov 170-255, O'Brien 49-70

October 21
Contemporary Crises in Indian Country
Reading assignment: Nabokov 256-331, O'Brien 71-91

October 26
Social and Cultural Revitalizations
Reading assignment: Nabokov 332-441

October 28
Tribal Governments and Resource Management
Reading assignment: O'Brien 93-196

III. Native American Community Life

November 2
Native American Elders
Reading assignment: O'Brien 197-297

November 4
Reading assignment: Meili 1-87

November 9
Native Americans and Religious Freedom
Reading assignment: Meili 88-170

November 11
Native People in Canada
Reading assignment: Meili 172-256

November 16
Native Americans and Education
Reading assignment: St. Pierre 1-89

November 18
Gender in Native American Societies
Reading assignment: St. Pierre 90-180

November 23
Native Americans and Christianity
Reading assignment: Owens 1-91

November 25 (Thanksgiving Day?)
Academic holiday -- NO CLASS

November 30
Native American Literatures
Reading assignment: Owens 92-185

December 2
The Persistence of Native American Identity
Reading assignment: Owens 185-263

Final Exam:
Tuesday, December 7, 8-11 a.m.