

American Studies 80B, Fall 1995
Class times: T/Th 4:00-5:45 p.m.
Room: Earth & Marine Sciences B206

The Native American Experience

James Treat, Assistant Professor
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Office: Oakes College 203, x3849

Teaching Assistants:

Teri Greeves, American Studies
Cathleen Grindley, Education
Robert Kuwada, History of Consciousness
David Lista, Education
Hector Rivera, Education
Katherine Spilde, Anthropology
Rochelle Venuto, Literature

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wide range of literature by and about Native Americans, including fiction and non-fiction, autobiography and biography, historical documents and interpretive essays. 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, literatures, 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 human diversity in a multicultural 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, and attend class and section meetings regularly;
- (2) actively participate in class and section discussions and writing exercises, and submit two assigned essays; and
- (3) write and pass the final examination.

Attendance policy:

Class and section attendance is required. Students who fail to attend class and section meetings on a regular and consistent basis will not pass the course, except in the case of documented circumstances such as serious illness or family emergency.

Writing assignments:

Each student will be required to submit two short essays, each essay 3-4 pages long (typed, double-spaced); the first essay will be due on October 24, and the second essay will be due November 14. Late essays will be accepted only by prior arrangement with your section leader. Specific information about these assignments will be distributed in class.

Final examination:

The final examination is comprehensive; students are responsible for all of the assigned readings as well as all of the presentations, discussions, and guest lectures that take place during class meetings. The exam will consist of identifications and short essay questions.

Course Texts

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

Greg Sarris (ed.), The Sound of Rattles and Clappers: A Collection of New California Indian Writing (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona, 1994).

James J. Rawls, Indians of California: The Changing Image (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma, 1984).

Albert L. Hurtado and Peter Iverson (eds.), Major Problems in American Indian History (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath, 1994).

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

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

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

Sherman Alexie, The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven (New York, NY: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1993).

Course Schedule

I. Native American Facts and Fictions

September 28
Course Introductions

October 3
Native American Diversity
Sarris ix-91

October 5
Native American Identities
Sarris 93-161

October 10
Native Americans in Popular Culture
Rawls xiii-80

October 12
California Indian Cultures
Hurtado 285-297; Rawls 81-170

October 17
California Indian History
Rawls 171-217; Hurtado 297-323

II. Native American History and Government

October 19
Native American Origins
Hurtado ix-23, 33-65; O'Brien xv-33

October 24
Native American Tribal Sovereignty
Hurtado 82-162; O'Brien 35-48
ESSAY #1 DUE

October 26
United States Indian Policy
Hurtado 164-210, 235-257; O'Brien 49-70

October 31
Conflict and Change in Indian Country
Hurtado 273-283, 325-355, 369-391, 405-440; O'Brien 71-82

November 2
Native Americans in American Society
Hurtado 442-517, 557-569; O'Brien 82-86

November 7

Contemporary Native American Activism
Hurtado 519-544; O'Brien 86-91, 93-254 (selections)

November 9
Modern Reservation Economies
Hurtado 544-557; O'Brien 255-297

III. Native American Community Life
Specific topics will be announced in class.

November 14
Meili vii-87
ESSAY #2 DUE

November 16
Meili 88-170

November 21
Meili 172-256

November 23 -- Thanksgiving Day -- NO CLASS

November 28
O'Brien 138-161, St. Pierre ix-74

November 30
St. Pierre 75-180

December 5
Alexie 1-109

December 7
Alexie 110-223

FINAL EXAM: Monday, December 11, 4-7 p.m.