

American Studies 80B, Winter 1995
T/Th 4:00-5:45, Oakes College 105
James Treat, Assistant Professor
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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wide range of literature by and about Native Americans, including fiction and non-fiction, autobiography and biography, historical documents and interpretive essays.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 special 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 January 31, and the second essay will be due February 23. 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

January 5
Course Introduction

January 10
Native American Diversity
Sarris ix-91

January 12
Native American Identities
Sarris 93-161

January 17
Native Americans in Popular Culture
Hurtado 285-297; Rawls xiii-65

January 19
California Indian Cultures
Rawls 67-133

January 24
California Indian History
Rawls 135-217

II. Native American History and Government

January 26
Native American Origins
Hurtado ix-23, 33-50; O'Brien xv-33

January 31
Native American Tribal Sovereignty
Hurtado 82-95, 117-162; O'Brien 35-48
ESSAY #1 DUE

February 2
United States Indian Policy
Hurtado 164-171, 196-210, 235-257; O'Brien 49-70

February 7
Conflict and Change in Indian Country
Hurtado 273-283, 325-344, 369-391, 405-419; O'Brien 71-82

February 9

Native Americans in American Society
Hurtado 442-462, 483-517, 557-569; O'Brien 82-86

February 14
Contemporary Native American Activism
Hurtado 519-544; O'Brien 86-91, 93-196 (selection), 212-226

February 16
Modern Reservation Economies
Hurtado 544-557; O'Brien 255-297

February 21 -- NO CLASS (Exchange Day)

III. Native American Community Life

February 23
Native People in Canada
Meili vii-87
ESSAY #2 DUE

February 28
Native People in Hawaii
Meili 88-170

March 2
Native American Elders and Youth
Meili 172-256

March 7
Native American Education and Health Care
O'Brien 138-161, St. Pierre ix-74

March 9
Native American Religious Freedom
St. Pierre 75-180

March 14
Native American Literature
Alexie 1-109

March 16
Native American Survival
Alexie 110-223

FINAL EXAM: Tuesday, March 21, 4-7 p.m.