

Teaching Tribal/Reservation History OFF the Reservation

by
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I attended the Local History Seminar at LCO Community College looking for new approaches to teach Native American history and for new colleagues involved in this project-I found both. I am particularly interested in developing alternatives to the traditional pedagogy that focuses on the history of "Indian-white relations," an interpretive framework that often lumps together very disparate tribal experiences and then perpetuates Eurocentric perspectives by marginalizing or ignoring Native American interactions with African Americans, Asian Americans, and Latinos. The local history approach seems like an appropriate way to mitigate these problems, though Fred Hoxie is right in pointing out that teaching tribal history can lead to "parochialism and narrowness." I am convinced that taking a multidisciplinary approach to teaching and writing Native American history can also play an important part in breaking down the colonial master narrative that has dominated the scholarly discourse in Native American Studies since 1492.

"Native American Tribal Histories" is a new course offering in the American Studies curriculum at the University of California at Santa Cruz. Courses in Native American Studies are currently offered by several campus program units including the Boards of Literature, History and Anthropology; these courses cover many of the central themes and issues involved in the study of Native American peoples by surveying cultural traditions, historical experiences, and literary expressions on a broad

national and comparative level. In the American Studies program we are attempting to design course offerings that will complement these established courses while emphasizing multidisciplinary and topical approaches to Native American Studies. The course on tribal histories will facilitate the discussion of a wide range of historical, cultural and literary questions that are important for understanding contemporary realities and theories, and it may also provide pedagogical alternatives to the cultural and historical generalizations that sometimes emerge from survey courses.

Native Americans are a popular topic among UCSC students, most of whom think of themselves as liberal or progressive in their political and social orientations. For example, during the 1992-93 academic year the lower-division American Studies survey course, "Native American Indian Cultures" (recently retitled "The Native American Experience"), was offered twice; it enrolled approximately 175 students and continually turned away just as many so that (allowing for some overlap between the two quarters) about eight percent of the undergraduate population attempted to take this course in a single year. The Native American student population at UCSC, however, is roughly representative of state and national demographics: fifty to seventy-five of the eight thousand UCSC undergraduates are Native American, constituting less than one percent of the total population. Courses in Native American Studies are thus intended to diversify the curriculum for all UCSC students while also serving the personal interests and educational needs of UCSC's Native American students.

Other courses in Native American Studies at UCSC incorporate

a regional emphasis by highlighting Native Californian groups; the course on tribal histories might very well take a local history approach and focus on the study of the Ohlone (Costanoan) people, whose traditional territory extends from the Monterey Bay to the San Francisco Bay and some of whom still live in this area. Two important factors make the local history paradigm less useful or desirable here than it may be in other parts of the United States. First, Native California is home to a rich variety of tribal peoples; anthropologists and others have described this area as the most culturally and linguistically diverse region in North America. Restricting the scope of the course to studying only the most immediate "local" group would be overly narrow, especially since several other tribal groups (which are distinctly different from the Ohlones in language, cultural traditions, and historical experiences) are located within fifty miles of Santa Cruz. Such a course would serve the interests of only a small portion of the University's primary constituency, the population of the state of California. Second, Native Californians make up only about ten percent of the Native American population in the state; the remaining ninety percent came to California from other areas to pursue employment opportunities in the urban areas. A local (or even regional or statewide) history approach might actually benefit non-native students more than UCSC's Native American students, who typically maintain family and community ties outside of California and are understandably more interested in exploring their own cultural and historical roots.

So how should we teach a course on Native American tribal

histories at UCSC, in light of these geographic and demographic factors? While participating in the seminar at LCO Community College, I found myself envying the situation facing some of the educators from tribal colleges: they enjoy ready access to a wealth of community resources (elders and leaders, community events, the land), and they appreciate the urgency of teaching tribal history in an effective way as a means of strengthening reservation community life and of defusing off-reservation racism. In Santa Cruz, Indian country seems far away, and most of my urban, liberal, privileged, Hollywood-educated students think that everyone loves Indians as much as they think they do. How can the tribal history approach be useful in a situation where there is a drought of community resources and a bumper crop of romanticized stereotypes?

I will be teaching "Native American Tribal Histories" as an upper-division seminar emphasizing research methodologies and interpretive theories demonstrated with a single in-depth case study and then applied by students to their own research projects. We will consider a wide range of textual materials from a multidisciplinary perspective in an attempt to understand the significance of tribal identity in American society. I intend to use the Muscogee (Creek) Nation of Oklahoma as the case study; there is a good variety of readily accessible literature on Creek history and culture, and this will afford me the opportunity to become better acquainted with my own tribal history. Readings in theory and methodology will precede and accompany the case study, including selections from Calvin Martin's The American Indian and the Problem of History (1987) and articles from the growing

literature on nationalism and ethnicity and on representations of cultural identity. Each student will select, by the end of the second week of class, a particular nation/tribe/community for the research project (I encourage students to choose topics they have some personal connection to) and will submit weekly progress reports throughout the quarter. During the last three weeks of the quarter, students will make class presentations on their research and each student will also submit a final written report at the end of the quarter.

The key to making the case study approach work, since most students will have little specific interest in or connection to the particular case study under consideration, is to demonstrate that there is no one right answer to the question "Who are the Creeks?" This is not so much a course on tribal history, then, at least not in the sense that it is limited to the study of a unilinear chronology of documented and remembered events, as it is a course on the nature of tribal identity and on the different ways in which tribal members, outside observers, and academic scholars attempt to understand and to interpret the significance of this identity in the context of American society.

Course readings will be drawn from a variety of documentary sources representing historical, ethnographic, and literary perspectives on Creek life:

Traditional stories describing Creek origins and migrations, beliefs and values.

Archaeological interpretations of Creek life prior to contact with Europeans and Africans.

Ethnographic accounts by early observers and scholars such as Hernando de Soto and John R. Swanton.

Autobiographies by Creek individuals such as George Washington Grayson and Tsianina Blackstone.

Biographies of prominent Creek leaders such as Alexander McGillivray and Alexander Posey, along with their speeches and writings.

Historical surveys such as Angie Debo's The Road to Disappearance and J. Leitch Wright Jr's Creeks and Seminoles.

Oral histories recorded during the 1930s by fieldworkers with the Works Progress Administration.

Maps of the Creek Nation before removal, in Indian Territory, and after Oklahoma statehood.

Treaties and other agreements between the Creek nation and the United States.

Muscogee language texts and the Muscogee-English dictionary by Loughridge and Hodge.

Contemporary literatures (prose and poetry) by Creek authors such as Joy Harjo and Louis Littlecoon Oliver.

Contemporary tribal publications including official reports describing tribal government, economic development, and social services, along with the tribal newspaper, Muscogee Nation News.

These texts will be supplemented by classroom experiences aimed at expanding students' understanding of Creek identity even further:

Guest lectures by Creek individuals living in the Monterey Bay or San Francisco Bay areas.

Videotapes produced during the last decade by the Creek Nation Communications Department and independent filmmakers, which cover a wide range of topics related to Creek history and culture.

Audio tapes of spoken Muscogee language and of Creek music including Stomp Dance songs and hymnal.

Traditional and contemporary art (slides) by Creek artists such as Joan Hill and Fred Beaver.

The tribal histories course will meet twice a week in a seminar format; class meetings will consist of brief lectures,

audiovisual presentations, discussions of the readings, and collaborative research projects. After their research topics have been finalized, students will be organized into research groups of three or four on the basis of cultural, historical, or geographical connections among their projects. Each student will submit weekly progress reports consisting of two parts: a brief critical response to the week's readings, and a brief summary of research progress and direction. Each student also will be required to conduct at least one interview with an elder or leader from their particular tribe and to incorporate this information into the final report. The final report will represent a critical assessment of tribal history, identity and survival; it will consist of four parts: 1) an annotated bibliography covering the major historical and ethnographic sources as well as audiovisual materials and other unconventional "texts"; 2) an historical outline of tribal history reflecting particular tribal conceptions of history and historical periodization; 3) a sketch of tribal community life today, surveying topics such as demographic trends, land base, government, economic development, language; 4) and a brief essay on the issues and challenges facing tribal elders and leaders as they look to the future.

"Native American Tribal Histories" will consider a wide range of themes and issues that are involved in the study of Native American cultural traditions, historical experiences, and literary expressions; the course will also raise important questions about community and identity as they are negotiated on the multicultural terrain of contemporary American society.

Students will find themselves engaged in debates over: nationalism and ethnicity; social constructions of "tribe" and "history"; cultural perceptions of historiography' authorship, authority and authenticity; oral traditions and documentary history; forms of self-narration; and representations of ethnic identity. Students will also acquire theoretical tools and develop research methodologies that will enable them to make constructive contributions to the ongoing effort to write tribal histories that are accurate, current, relevant, meaningful and responsible.

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There shall be perpetual peace and friendship between all the citizens of the United States of America, and all the individuals, towns and tribes of the Upper, Middle and Lower Creeks and Semanolics composing the Creek Nation of Indians.

Treaty of 1790

The vitality of our race still persists. We have not lived for naught. We are the original discoverers of this continent, and the conquerors of it from the animal kingdom, and on it first taught the arts of peace and war, and first planted the institutions of virtue, truth and liberty. The European Nations found us here and were made aware that it was possible for men to exist and subsist here. . . . We have shown that what they believed were arid and desert places were habitable and capable of sustaining millions of people. We have led the vanguard of civilization in our conflicts with them for tribal existence from ocean to ocean. The race that has rendered this service to the other nations of mankind cannot utterly perish.

Pleasant Porter, 1906

*oklahoma will be the last song
i'll ever sing*

Joy Harjo, 1979

Like people in all human communities, members of every Native American society have conceived of themselves as being independent and unique in some way, as having their own particular identity in a world of human diversity. Today many Native American tribal nations continue to assert their political sovereignty and cultural autonomy within the context of contemporary American society. This course is based on the premise that studying the history of a single Native American tribal nation is as worthwhile and interesting as studying the history of any modern African, Asian, or European nation.

The course is organized around an in-depth case study of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation of Oklahoma, which is the third-largest federally recognized tribe in the United States. We will read a wide range of literature drawn from the fields of ethnography, history, ethnohistory, and political science, as well as journalistic accounts, legal documents, reference works, tribal publications, Creek language texts, speeches, autobiographies, poetry, short stories, oral traditions, art, photographs, and maps. In the classroom we will also learn from guest speakers and make use of multimedia resources including videotapes, audiotapes, and slides. Our primary goal in this case study will be to answer the question, "Who are the Creeks?" This is not so much a course on tribal history, at least not in the sense that it is limited to the study of a unilinear chronology of documented and remembered events, as it is a course on the nature of tribal identity and on the different ways in which tribal members, outside observers, and academic scholars attempt to understand and to interpret this identity in the context of American society.

The case study will provide us with the opportunity to consider a wide range of theoretical and methodological questions about Native American tribal histories. Some of the themes we will discuss include: nationalism and ethnicity; social constructions of "tribe" and "history"; cultural perceptions of historiography; authorship, authority and authenticity; oral traditions and documentary history; worldview and interpretation; and representations of cultural identity. Students will employ insights gained from the case study in their own tribal history research projects.

This is not an introductory-level course; enrollment preference will be given to students who have completed American Studies 80B (The Native American Experience) or comparable course work in Native American studies, or who have had first-hand experiences with Native American communities.

Please note: the structure of this course has been revised slightly since the original catalog description was submitted, but we will still be covering all of the themes suggested in that description.

Course Texts

This course has one required course text (below), which is available at Bay Tree Bookstore, and one required course reader, which is available at the UCSC Copy Center. The text and the reader are both also on reserve at McHenry Library.

Calvin Martin (ed.). The American Indian and the Problem of History. New York: Oxford, 1987.

Course Objectives

Students in this course will

- (1) consider theoretical and cross-cultural perspectives on the idea of "history" and learn research methodologies useful for writing tribal/ethnic/national histories;
- (2) learn about Native American history and culture by focusing on an in-depth case study of one particular tribal nation, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation of Oklahoma;
- (3) develop skills in textual criticism while reading a wide range of historical source materials on Muscogee tribal history;
- (4) participate in collaborative learning experiences in the classroom and outside of class;
- (5) refine their abilities to conduct academic research by working with documentary resources, scholarly interpretations, multimedia materials, and oral testimonies; and
- (6) work with tribal representatives in preparing bibliographic materials for use in education and public relations.

Course Requirements

Each student in this course will be required to:

- (1) complete the assigned readings, attend class regularly, and participate in class and small group discussions and exercises;
- (2) collaborate with one or two other students in initiating the class discussion of the readings on one occasion;
- (3) submit weekly progress reports on the assigned readings and the research project; and
- (4) initiate and complete an original, substantive research project on a Native American tribal history, and submit all research project assignments in a timely fashion.

Each student will be evaluated on the basis of her/his class participation (preparation, attendance, discussion, collaboration), weekly progress reports, and research project (preliminary bibliography, interview synopsis, historical outline, oral presentation, written report).

Progress Reports

Progress reports are due at the beginning of the Tuesday class meeting each week, starting with the second week of class and continuing through the eighth week of class (seven reports total). Each report should be 2-3 pages in length and may be typed or handwritten in a neat and legible format.

Each progress report should include two sections: (1) a summary of your critical response to the assigned readings, and (2) a summary of your work on the research project. You may want to consider the following general questions while preparing each progress report.

(1) Assigned readings:

What did you learn about Creek history that gives you better insight into the Native American experience?

What did you learn about historical methodology that is useful in your research?

(2) Research project:

What surprising or interesting discoveries did you make about the tribal nation you are studying?

What substantive progress did you make toward being able to complete the written report?

You may also use the progress reports to discuss any questions, concerns, or problems you have regarding the assigned readings, your research project, or the course in general.

Research Project

This course is a research seminar; the primary course assignment is the research project. Each student will engage in a detailed study of one particular Native American tribal nation. Research topics will be determined by the end of the second week of the quarter, when students will be organized into research groups focusing on historically, culturally, or geographically related tribal nations. Each research project will

incorporate a range of bibliographic resources (primary documents, popular and scholarly interpretations, and non-literary "texts"); in addition, each student must conduct at least one conversation/interview with an individual who is affiliated with the tribal nation in some way.

Research project schedule:

class 4	Topic due
class 6	Preliminary Bibliography due
class 8	Interview Synopsis due
class 14	Historical Outline due
class 15-18	Oral Presentations in class
class 20	Written Report due

Course Schedule

Course Introductions

Native American Tribal Histories

Community, Time, and Interpretation

Calvin Martin (ed.), The American Indian and the Problem of History (New York: Oxford, 1987), Preface-97.

The Muscogee (Creek) Nation Today

Tribal Identity in American Society

Calvin Martin, 98-155.

Principal Chief Bill Fife, "A Time of Change," condensed version of Inaugural Address delivered January 4, 1992, Muscogee Nation News 21/1 (January 1992).

"1993 Festival offers more events and fun for everyone than ever," Muscogee Nation News, June 1993.

Stephanie Berryhill, "Setting American Straight: Creek produces radio series to counter Columbus hype," Muscogee Nation News 20/10 (October 1991), 1, 15.

Stephanie Berryhill, "Kv'be Cv'fke: Mvskoko grandmother carries on dying tradition," Muscogee Nation News, April 1992.

Stephanie Berryhill, "Wild onion season upon us," Muscogee Nation News 20/3 (March 1991), 1, 10.

James H. Howard, Oklahoma Seminoles: Medicines, Magic, and Religion (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1984), xv-xxiv, 122-66.

Este Mvskoke, The Muscogee People

Origins, Traditions, Worldviews, Languages

Calvin Martin, 156-220.

Edgar Legare Pennington (ed.), "Some Ancient Georgia Indian Lore," Georgia Historical Quarterly 15 (1931), 192-98.

John R. Swanton, "Tokulki of Tulsa," in American Indian Life, edited by Elsie Clews Parsons (New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1922), 127-45, 393-94, 416.

"Lullaby," in The Sacred Path: Spells, Prayers and Power Songs of the American Indians, edited by John Bierhorst (New York: William Morrow, 1983), 26.

R. M. Loughridge and David M. Hodge, English and Muskokee Dictionary (Okmulgee, OK: Baptist Home Mission Board, 1964 [reprint]), 92-93.

W. S. Robertson and David Winslett, Na kcokv es Kerretu Enhvteceskv (Muskokee or Creek First Reader) (Okmulgee, OK: Baptist Home Mission Board, 1963 [reprint]), 2-3, 13-15.

Henry O. Harwell and Delores T. Harwell, The Creek Verb (Muskogee, OK: Indian University Press, 1981), 2-7, 13-15.

William Harjo (Thomas E. Moore), Sour Sofkee (Muskogee, OK: Hoffman Printing, 1983), Preface-5.

The Muscogees and European Colonialism. 1539-1783 Britain, Spain, France, and the United States

Sharon O'Brien, American Indian Tribal Governments (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1989), xv-xviii, 20-23, 119-37.

J. Leitch Wright, Creeks and Seminoles: The Destruction and Regeneration of the Muscogulge People (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1986), ix-xv, 1-20.

The Emergence of the Muscogee Confederacy. 1783-93 Alexander McGillivray

Wright, 73-99.

R. S. Cotterill, The Southern Indians: The Story of the Civilized Tribes before Removal (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1954), ix-x, 57-99.

The Muscogee Civil War. 1813-14 Red Sticks

Joel W. Martin, Sacred Revolt: The Muskogees' Struggle for a New World (Boston: Beacon, 1991), 114-68.

Carl Waldman, Atlas of the North American Indian (New York: Facts on File, 1985), 120-22.

"Treaty with the Creeks, 1814," in Treaties and Agreements of the Five Civilized Tribes (Washington: Institute for the Development of Indian Law, no date), 206-9.

The Muscogee Migration, 1828-37 Removal to Indian Territory

Elizabeth Sullivan, Indian Legends of the Trail of Tears and Other Creek Stories (Oklahoma?: Elizabeth Sullivan, 1974), Introduction-7.

"Treaty with the Creeks, 1832," in Treaties and Agreements, 222-24.

Michael D. Green, The Politics of Indian Removal: Creek Government and Society in Crisis (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1982), xi-xiii, 174-87.

Morris, 18, 23, 26, 33, 55, 59.

The Muscogees in the Twentieth Century, 1907-71 Cultural Resistance

Donald E. Green, The Creek People (Phoenix: Indian Tribal Series, 1973), 88-99.

Muriel H. Wright, "Yuchi," in A Guide to the Indian Tribes of Oklahoma (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1951), 264-69.

Gunter Wagner, Yuchi Tales, Publications of the American Ethnological Society 13 (New York: G. E. Stechert, 1931), viii-x, 188-203.

William Harjo, 14-21.

Stephanie Berryhill, "Veterans tribute: World War II prisoner recalls his sacrifice for freedom," Muscogee Nation News, November 1991, 6-7.

Stephanie Berryhill, "Muscogee war hero inducted into Broken Arrow Hall of Fame," "Seek, Strike, Destroy," and "Creek woman served in U.S. Navy WAVES," Muscogee Nation News, November 1992.

"Creek Tribe Fights for Elected Tribal Government," Indian Voices, June 1965, 3-4.

Clifton Hill, "Creek Leader Makes Policy Statement," Indian Voices, December 1965, 16-17.

Stan Steiner, The New Indians (New York: Dell, 1968), 110-15.

The Reemergence of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, 1971-94 Tribal Sovereignty and Self-determination

Muscogee (Creek) Nation, an ancient partnership: the energy of the Soil . . . the energy of the Muscogee people . . ., 17 pp. brochure, ca. 1980.

The Muscogee Creek Nation Directory of Services 1993-94, 19 pp. brochure.

Stephanie Berryhill, "Tribal towns appoint executive secretary, OK expense ordinance" and "About the Mvskokullke Etulwa Etelaketa," Muscogee Nation News, August 1990, 14.

Donald L. Fixico, "Sovereignty Revitalized," in Nabokov, 420-23.

Stephanie Berryhill, "Thlopthlocco elects its leaders," "'Standing votes' decide winners," and "The evolution of Thlopthlocco," Muscogee Nation News, February 1991, 6, 16, 17.

George Stiggins, Creek Indian History: A Historical Narrative of the Genealogy, Traditions and Downfall of the Ispocoga or Creek Indian Tribe of Indians, edited by Virginia Pounds Brown (Birmingham, AB: Birmingham Public Library, 1989), 13-25, 51-68.

The Muscogees and the U. S. Civil War, 1861-65 Loyal Creeks and Southern Creeks

W. David Baird (ed.), A Creek Warrior for the Confederacy: The Autobiography of Chief G. W. Grayson (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1988), xi-xvii, 3-11, 32-72.

John R. Swanton, "Social Organization and Social Usages of the Indians of the Creek Confederacy," in Forty-Second Annual Report of the United States Bureau of American Ethnology, 1924-25 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1928), 31-33, 242-47.

"Treaty with the Creeks, 1866," Treaties and Agreements, 239-44.

The Muscogee (Creek) Nation, 1867-1899 Constitutional Government

Sharon A. Fife, "Baptist Indian Church: Thlewarle Mekko Sapkv Coko," Chronicles of Oklahoma 48/4 (Winter 1970-71), 450-466.

Pu Pucase Momet Pu Hesayecv Cesvs Klist En Testament Mucvsat (Muskokee New Testament) (New York: American Bible Society, 1979), 1-9.

Creek hymns

Angie Debo, The Road to Disappearance: A History of the Creek Indians (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1941), vii-xiii, 285-323.

John W. Morris, et al, Historical Atlas of Oklahoma, 3rd ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1986), 40-41.

The Muscogees and Oklahoma Statehood, 1899-1907 Allotment and Dispossession

Angie Debo, And Still the Waters Run: The Betrayal of the Five Civilized Tribes (Princeton: Princeton University, 1940), ix-xii, 92-158.

"Agreement with the Creek Nation, September 27, 1897," Treaties and Agreements, 248-52.

"The Plea of Crazy Snake," in A Short History of the Indians of the United States, Edward H. Spicer (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1969), 165-70.

Alexander Posey, "Big Man's Rules and Laws," in Native American Testimony: A Chronicle of Indian-White Relations from Prophecy to the Present, 1492-1992, edited by Peter Nabokov (New York: Viking, 1991), 263-65.

Waldman, 181.

Tribal History and Tribal Survival Contemporary Creek Literature and Art

Louis Oliver, The Horned Snake (Merrick, NY: Cross-Cultural Communications, 1982), 8-11, 16;
Chasers of the Sun: Creek Indian Thoughts (Greenfield Center, NY: Greenfield Review Press,
1990), 3-13, 20-21, 35-37, 41, 45-46, 48-49, 52-61.

Joy Harjo, "Ordinary Spirit," in I Tell You Now: Autobiographical Essays by Native American Writers,
edited by Brian Swann and Arnold Krupat (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1987), 263-70;
What Moon Drove Me to This? (New York: I. Reed, 1979), 5, 14, 18, 35, 37, 46-48, 61,
64, 67; She Had Some Horses (New York: Thunder's Mouth, 1983), 25-26, 32, 40, 42-44,
63-64, 68-69; In Mad Love and War (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University, 1990), 1, 14-
15, 30, 47-48, 57-58.

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133 (Johnny Tiger); 128 (Joan Hill).

Paintings by Joan Hill: An Exhibition. May 16-June 30, 1993, 6 pp. brochure (Anadarko, OK:
Southern Plains Indian Museum and Crafts Center, 1993)

Stephanie Berryhill, "Creek artist revives material Mvskoke culture," Muscogee Nation News 21/2
(February 1992), 1, 11.

Class Presentations

Course Conclusions

Course Evaluations