Native American Worldviews

Instructor
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Course level and type
undergraduate seminar

Hours of Instruction
2.5 hours/week; 16 week term

Enrollment and year last taught
26 students in 1996

Course Description
This course engages in a close examination of the role of worldview in academic scholarship, especially as worldview defines and determines the process of inquiry and interpretation. We particularly focus on the ways in which contemporary native scholars are bringing indigenous intellectual and cultural traditions to bear on a wide range of dominant academic disciplines and theories. Course readings present native critical approaches to themes in representation, orality and literacy, material culture, historiography, ethnography, literary theory, feminist theory, religious studies, and natural science. Selected critical films by native filmmakers are also screened and discussed. Each student initiates and completes an independent research project on a major native intellectual figure. Class attendance and participation is required.

Course Readings
The following books are available for purchase at the Maxwell Museum store in the Anthropology building. Most of these books are also on closed reserve at Zimmerman Library and at the Native American Studies Center library.


Course Requirements

Each student in this course is required to:

(1) complete the assigned readings and maintain a reading journal;

(2) attend class regularly and participate in class and small group discussions and other activities;

(3) write and submit a mid-term essay on the topic of intellectual autobiography;

(4) initiate and complete an original, substantive research project on a major Native American intellectual, and submit all research project assignments in a timely fashion;

(5) collaborate with several other students in developing a group presentation based on their research projects; and

(6) write and submit a final essay integrating the assigned readings with the research project.

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 a major Native American intellectual. Research topics will be determined by the fifth week of the semester, and students will then be organized into research groups. Project assignments are due in my box in the American Studies office (Ortega 305) at 4:00 p.m. on the dates specified in the following schedule:

February 2 Intellectual Autobiography
February 16 Topic Statement
February 23 Preliminary Bibliography
March 8 Intellectual Biography
April 5 Presentation Outline
May 3 Annotated Bibliography
May 6 Final Essay

Grading Criteria
Class participation and course assignments will be graded on a point system, according to the following breakdown:

- Attendance 30 points
- Intellectual Autobiography 10 points
- Intellectual Biography 10 points
- Annotated Bibliography 15 points
- Class Presentation 10 points
- Final Essay 25 points

Assignments that are submitted late will have one-half point deducted per day (not counting weekends). Final grades will be determined according to the following scale:

- A 90-100 points
- B 80-89 points
- C 70-79 points
- D 60-69 points

**Reading Schedule**

- January 16, 18
  - Course Introduction
- January 23, 25, 30, February 1
  - Meili, *Those Who Know*
- February 6, 8
  - Bates, *Indian Humor*
- February 13, 15
  - Lippard, *Partial Recall*
- February 20, 22
  - Brant, *Writing as Witness*
- February 27, 29
  - Momaday, *The Way to Rainy Mountain*
- March 5, 7, 19, 21
Sarris, *Keeping Slug Woman Alive*
March 26, 28, April 2, 4

Allen, *The Sacred Hoop*
April 9, 11, 16, 18

Treat, *Native and Christian*
April 23, 25, 30, May 2

Deloria, *Red Earth, White Lies*

**Course Objectives and Key Questions**

**Course Objectives**

To learn through cross-cultural educational experiences.

To use a better understanding of others in order to engage in a reevaluation of self.

To broaden the experience of university education.

To compare university education with the oral traditions of native elders.

To learn how stories in the oral tradition can provide guidance and leadership.

To develop a better understanding of the role of folklore and mythology in society.

To understand the differences between linear and cyclical concepts of time.

To analyze the relationships between nature, identity and power.

To explore the complexities of religious identity amidst traditional/Christian diversity.

To improve basic skills such as reading, writing, speaking, doing research, and thinking critically.

To get acquainted with a new faculty member.

To make new friends.

To earn three credits by passing the course.

To receive a good grade.

**Key Questions**
What is a worldview?

How should we study and/or represent a worldview?

What kinds of ethical problems are involved in studying worldviews?

What kinds of practical problems are involved in studying worldviews?

What kinds of epistemological problems are involved in studying worldviews?

Are there shared and distinctive features of indigenous worldviews?

How are native intellectuals engaging dominant academic disciplines and theories with indigenous worldviews?

What is the role of worldview in analytical scholarship?

What is the role of worldview in creative expression?

What is a text?

How should we read/interpret a text?

What is the relationship between worldview and imagination in texts?

What is the relationship between worldview and imagination in reading/interpreting texts?

**Special Accommodations**

Please notify me as soon as possible if you experience any personal circumstances that might affect your participation in this course: medical conditions, physical limitations, learning disabilities, academic problems, emotional difficulties, or religious obligations. I will be happy to make reasonable accommodations when appropriate, provided that you notify me in a timely fashion. All personal information will be kept in strict confidentiality. Several important campus offices that you may find helpful are listed below:

- Center for Academic Program Support
  Zimmerman Library third floor, 277-4560

- Learning Support Services
  Zimmerman Library 339, 277-8291

- Disabled Student Services
  Mesa Vista Hall 2021, 277-3506

- Student Crisis Center
  Mesa Vista Hall, 277-3013

- Mental Health Service
Academic Integrity

The American Studies faculty has adopted the following policy on matters of academic integrity:

Each student is expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity in academic and professional matters. The University reserves the right to take disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, against any student who is found guilty of academic dishonesty or otherwise fails to meet the standards. Any student judged to have engaged in academic dishonesty in course work may receive a reduced or failing grade for the work in question and/or for the course.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to: dishonesty in quizzes, tests, or assignments; claiming credit for work not done or done by others; hindering the academic work of other students; misrepresenting academic or professional qualifications within or without the University; and nondisclosure or misrepresentation in filling out applications or other University records.

If you are found guilty of academic dishonesty, you will receive an ÒFÓ for the class and be reported to the Dean of Students. If you are given a written, take-home exam, it is dishonest to work with another student on that exam. If your work shows marked similarity to any other students’ work, you both will be failed. Take responsibility for your own work and do not leave it anywhere (including in the storage unit of the various University computer pods) where it can be copied.