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Religions of Native American Peoples

Instructor

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Institution

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PLEASE NOTE: I have not offered this course for several years, due to released time for course development projects. On my next offering, I would update both the reading lists, with more focus on Native authors, as well as films.

Description

Introduction to the study of non-Western religions, analyzing primal cultures and early civilizations using Amerindian examples, considering traditional (Ojibwa to Inca) and contemporary (American Indian Movement, Peyote Religion) phenomena and their interrelationships with Western religion. Canadian examples will predominate.

The course will be divided into three parts. First, we will examine representative Native American religions prior to contact with European and Euro-American culture. In the second part, we will consider the effects on these religions of domination by the colonial powers. Finally, we will focus on responses to these deleterious effects, including the contemporary revitalization of Native religions.

Course Requirements

10%: Class participation (including preparation for discussion as well as meaningful participation in discussion).

10%: Class report (in-class oral and written book report; oral - maximum 12 minutes; written - 1000-1500 words). Report must include a) bibliographic data, b) description of book, c) aspects relevant to week's topic, d) evaluation, e) representative quotations. Books for report will be chosen from those works listed as R# in the course outline; first come, first served. Reporters should be prepared to lead class discussion on book in relation to week's theme and assigned reading. No make-up of the oral report is possible.

15% & 25%: Two examinations (in-class, closed book, cumulative, comprehensive essay questions based on understanding the course material and requiring extensive reference to the course readings; make-up examinations will be given only in case of documented hospitalization or incarceration).

Examination questions: Mid-term: Rewording of Part I of Course Description above.

Final: Rewording of entire Course Description above, plus open-ended question(s) regarding personal interpretations of course themes.

(No special examination preparation will be necessary for students who prepared for and took part in class discussions. For students who did not do so, no special preparation will adequately prepare them for

the examinations.)

40%: Project: Topic and format completely open but format and/or media (not the topic) must be one in which the student has prior experience and topic and format must be approved by course director.

Project requirements and due dates (all submissions must be turned in at the beginning of class on the due date in the classroom):

- a) written statement of preliminary topic due: Nov. 10.
- b) written statement of topic and annotated bibliography due: Jan. 5.
- c) written statement of progress and outline (in outline form) due: Feb. 2.
- d) completed project due: March 2.

Second copy of requirements "a" through "c", with course director's comments, will be returned the week following the due date; students must be present at class to receive them.

Students notified of required changes on the second copy must return the revision (two copies) at the following class (two classes after original due date).

Course Materials

Summer Reading List (one-day reserve)

1. Leo W. Simmons, ed., Sun Chief (Yale U. Press)
2. Thomas E. Mails, Fools Crow (U. of Nebraska)
3. Gretchen M. Bataille & Kathleen M. Sands, American Indian Women: Telling Their Lives (U. of Oklahoma)

Book List (available in paperback and on 2-hour reserve)

IMPORTANT NOTE: Books that are out of print* will available from Kinko's.

FURTHER IMPORTANT NOTE: Students should not assume that course director agrees with the tone, expressed attitudes, opinions, data, etc. of assigned readings. Students are expected to learn to read various types of material concerning Native religions with a critical eye.

- A. Wolfgang Jilek, Indian Healing (Hancock House)
- B. William Powers, Yuwipi (U. of Nebraska)
- C. Thomas E. Mails, Fools Crow (U. of Nebraska)
- D. Jordan Paper, Offering Smoke (U. of Alberta)
- E. Ruth Underhill, Papago Woman (Waveland Press)
- F. Anthony Wallace, The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca (Vintage)

G. Gene Weltfish, The Lost Universe (U. of Nebraska)

H. Marla Powers, Oglala Women (U. of Chicago)

I. Leo W. Simmons, ed., Sun Chief (Yale U. Press)

J. Cobo, Inca Religion and Customs (U. of Texas Press)

K. Paul Radin, Autobiography of a Winnebago Indian (Dover)

L. *Salerno & Vanderburgh, Shaman's Daughter (Dell)

M. N. Scott Momaday, House Made of Dawn (HarperCollins)

N. James Mooney, The Ghost Dance Religion (Dover)

O. Weston Labarre, The Peyote Cult (Oklahoma)

Syllabus (Available at Kinko's)

I. Paper, "Slighted Grandmothers: The Need for Increased Research on Female Spirits and Spirituality in Native American Religions."

II. Paper, "Through the Earth Darkly"

III. Paper, "'Sweat Lodge': A Northern Native American Ritual for Communal Shamanic Trance."

IV. Hallowell, "Ojibwa Ontology, Behavior and Worldview."

V. Jenness, The Indians of Parry Island, Their Social and Religious Life

VI. Selections from Benton-Banai, The Mishomis Book

Report readings [R:] (see course outline - on one-day reserve)

Reserve list (all books listed above and under "R" below, plus the following recommended for reference):

Hultkrantz, The Religions of The American Indians

Hultkrantz, Belief and Worship in Native North America

Hultkrantz, The Study of American Indian Religions

Sullivan, Native American Religions, North America

Vecsey, Religion in Native North America

Carrasco, Religions of Mesoamerica

Films (to be shown in class)

September 22: The Shadow Catcher

September 29: To Find Out Lives

October 06: Eduardo the Healer

October 13: Iyahknix: Blackfoot Bundle Ceremony

October 27: Attiuk: Cree Hunters of the Mistassini

November 10: Green Corn Festival

November 24: Age of the Buffalo

January 26: The Longhouse Religion

February 09: Appeals to Santiago

February 16: [Get Lost or Get Real]

March 2: A Strict Law Bids Us Dance

March 09: Wandering Spirit Survival School; [The Spirit of Crazy Horse]

March 16: The Sacred Circle - Recovery

Course Outline

[**denotes readings relevant to feminist studies; #denotes extra credit; list number = week]

1. CANCELLED Intro. to course and Native American traditions
2. **INTRODUCTION**

Problems and the missing element| Kit:*I,*II

3. Ecstatic states and reality| A: 3, B: all

R3a: *Horse Capture, ed., The Seven Visions of Bull Lodge

R3b: Lizot, Tales of the Yanomami

4. Shamanism| C (review if you read it during the summer)

R4a: #Merkur, Becoming Half Hidden

R4b: #Wilbert, Tobacco and Shamanism in South America

5. Ritual| Kit:*III, *D: 1-2

R5a: Radin, The Road of Life and Death

R5b: Walens, Feasting With Cannibals

6. Myth| *D: 3

R6a: Lopez, Giving Birth to Thunder, Sleeping With His Daughter

R6b: Thompson, Tales of the North American Indians

7. PART I

Northern Woodland| Kit:IV,V

R7a: Brown and Brightman, The Orders of the Dreamed

R7b: **Dahlberg, ed., Woman the Gatherer

8. Mixed economy: desert| **E:all

R8a: *Wyman, Blessingway

R8b: **Frisbie, Kinaalda, a Study of the Navaho Girl's Puberty Ceremony

9. woodland| *F: part I

R9a: Tooker, The Iroquois Ceremonial of Midwinter

R9b: Tooker, An Ethnography of the Huron Indians, 1615-1649

10. plains| G: (chap.) 5-7, 9-10, 12-13, 15, 23-24, 30, 32, 34-36, 61-62,

R10a: Catlin, Ewers, ed., George Catlin's O-kee-pa

R10b: #*Powell, Sweet Medicine (2 Vol.)

11. Herding| **H: 1-6

R11a: **Jones, Sanapia, Commanche Medicine Woman

R11b: Nabakov, Two Leggings

12. Gardening| I (review if you read it in the summer)

R12a: #*Geertz & Lomatuway'ma, Children of Cottonwood

R12b: **Brown, Tsewa's Gift

13. Agriculture J: pp. xi-xl, 2-25, 42-53, 56-64, 70-72, 115-25, 156-57, 194-96, 206-10, 216-25, 258-61

R13a: **Silverblatt, Moon, Sun, and Witches

R13b: Carrasco, Quetzalcoatl and the Irony of Empire

14. PART II

MID-TERM EXAMINATION

Post-contact effects I| K: all

- R14a: **Lurie, Mountain Wolf Woman
- R14b: Spindler & Spindler, Dreamers Without Power
15. Post-contact effects II| *L: all
- R15a: **Landes, Ojibwa Religion and the Midewiwin
- R15b: Vennum, The Ojibwa Dance Drum
16. Post-contact effects III| M: all
- R16a: Deloria, Jr., God is Red
- R16b: #Geertz, The Invention of Prophecy
17. **PART III**
- Transformative Movements: Handsome Lake| *F: part III
- R17a: Parker, The Code of Handsome Lake, The Seneca Prophet
- R17b: Dusenber, The Montana Cree, A Study in Religious Persistence
18. Ghost Dance| N: pp. 2-36, 60-73, 88-200
- R18a: Edmunds, The Shawnee Prophet
- R18b: Martin, Sacred Revolt
19. Native American Church| O: 1938 part
- R19a: Stewart, Peyote Religion
- R19b: Steinmetz: Pipe, Bible and Peyote Among the Oglala Lakota
20. Revitalization: modern Midewiwin| Kit: VI
- R20a: Jorgenson, The Sun Dance Religion
- R20b: Dewdney, Sacred Scrolls of the Southern Ojibway
21. Northwest Coast| B: 1-2, 4-12
- R21a: LaViolette, The Struggle for Survival
- R21b: Ruby & Brown, Dreamer-Prophets of the Columbia Plateau
22. A.I.M.| **H: 7-12
- R22a: Lame Deer and Erdoes, Lame Deer, Seeker of Visions
- R22b: #Matthiessen, In the Spirit of Crazy Horse

23. Continuity: the Pipe| *D: 5-6


R23a: Black Elk & Lyon, Black Elk, The Sacred Ways of a Lakota

R23b: Young, Cry of the Eagle: Encounters With a Cree Healer

24. FINAL EXAMINATION

25. STUDENT PROJECTS

26. STUDENT PROJECTS

Select a location 

http://www.wlu.ca/~wwwaar/syllabi/religions_native_american_peoples-paper.html

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