

American Studies 80B, Fall 1994
T/Th 4:00-5:45, Oakes College 105
James Treat, Assistant Professor
Office: Oakes College 203
Office Hours: TBA

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, traditional stories and contemporary speeches. 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 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 three-four pages long (typed, double-spaced); the first essay will be due on October 25, and the second essay will be due November 15. Late essays will be accepted only by prior arrangement with your section leader. Specific information about these assignments will be distributed at a later date.

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).

Peter Nabokov (ed.), Native American Testimony: A Chronicle of Indian-White Relations from Prophecy to the Present, 1492-1992 (New York: Viking, 1991).

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

Dianne Meili, Those Who Know: Profiles of Alberta's Indian 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 29: Course Introduction

October 4: Sarris ix-91

October 6: Sarris 93-161

October 11: Rawls xiii-80

October 13: Rawls 81-170

October 18: Rawls 171-217, Nabokov xvii-17

II. Native American History and Government

October 20: Nabokov 18-67, O'Brien xv-33

October 25: Nabokov 68-144, O'Brien 35-48

October 27: Nabokov 145-231, O'Brien 49-70

November 1: Nabokov 232-303, O'Brien 71-91

November 3: Nabokov 304-403

November 8: O'Brien 93-254 (selections)

November 10: O'Brien 255-297, Nabokov 404-441

III. Native American Community Life

November 15: Meili vii-87

November 17: Meili 88-170

November 22: Meili 172-256

November 24: ACADEMIC HOLIDAY--NO CLASS

November 29: St. Pierre ix-89

December 1: St. Pierre 89-180

December 6: Alexie 1-109

December 8: Alexie 110-223

FINAL EXAM: Tuesday, December 13, 4-7 p.m.