SYLLABUS
R.250 Native American Religions
Spring, 2008

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Ofc. Hrs:
MWF 1:45-3:00 p.m
T-Th 1:00-2:00 p.m.
Th 3:30- 4:00 p.m.

Course Description. A study of the traditional religious life of selected indigenous peoples of North America. Major religious phenomena will be explored, such as: life-cycle and kinship celebrations, the dream-vision experience, mythology, the shaman, healing ceremonies, and sacred ecology. Contemporary issues such as the environment, gender relations, and alternative healing methods will also be examined.

Course Format. Lecture/Discussion.

Learning Objectives. Through the readings and discussions, students will develop an understanding of the way religious symbols and cultural traditions shape peoples' view of and relationships with other people, the natural world and sacred beings. Through written exploration and discussions, students will demonstrate a capacity to reflect on their own cultural and personal beliefs, attitudes, and values pertaining to nature, gender, health and healing, and sacred beings.

Snow or Illness Policy. Even when blizzard conditions prevail, if the college has not declared itself officially closed (call the Moravian weather hotline), students should assume that classes will be held (off-campus residents should exercise prudence, however). When the instructor is ill, snowed in or otherwise unable to make class, he will contact the Registrar who will notify the HUB and place a notice on the classroom door prior to class time. In such a case a student is not responsible for showing up for or remaining in the classroom for the usual twenty minute courtesy period. If class is cancelled, please read the assignment for the next class.

Evaluation

1) Writing-to-Learn Assignments. These one-page exercises are written either prior to class at home or at the beginning of class in the room and are intended to improve classroom participation, indicate to the teacher if a student is having problems with the work and help the student to keep up with the reading
assignments. They will be marked with a “S” or a “U.” If you are absent you receive a “U” if a writing assignment was given in class. At the end of the semester the records will be tallied: if you receive an “S” on 80% or more of your graded (S or U) papers, your final grade for the course will be raised one notch (ex. B to B+). Between 51 and 79%, your final grade does not change. If 50% or fewer are marked with an “S,” your final average grade for the three essay exams drops one notch (ex. B- to C+). In-class writing assignments or assignments not turned in cannot be “made up.” Exceptions will be granted only for serious reasons.

2) Essay Exams. There will be three essay exams, weighed equally. Non-cumulative except for the final where the instructor reserves the right to ask one question on overall course content, theme or method.

3) Attendance and Participation. Students are expected to come to each class. Roll will be taken. They are expected to have read the material for that class and to be prepared to raise and answer questions or to otherwise participate in discussions. Participation can positively affect one’s grade especially if one is on the borderline between two grades. Missing in-class writing assignments may also affect one’s grade.

Required Texts

Deloria, Vine, Jr., The World We Used to Live In. Fulcrum, 2007.
Tedlock, Dennis and Barbara, Teachings from the American Earth. Liveright, 1975.

Note: Certain dates and assignments in the following outline may be changed at the instructor’s discretion but with notification of students.

OUTLINE

Jan. 14 Introduction to Course

I. THE PLAINS:
GENDER, KINSHIP, AND LIFE CYCLE

Jan. 16 The Plains Indians
Video. People of the Plains. Part One.
Read: Handout

Jan. 18 Lakota Religious Traditions
Read: Sullivan, Ch. 4 Lakota Religion

Jan. 21 MLK NO CLASS

Jan. 23 The Infant: It takes a Village
Read: Waterlily, Chs. 1-3
Jan. 25  Growing Up Amid Relatives  
Waterlily, Chs. 4-7  
Vine Deloria,  
Jan. 28  Initiation into Womanhood  
Read: Waterlily, Ch. 8  
Video. “Mistaken Identity” (M.3)  
Jan. 30  CLIMATE CHANGE: THE WORLD OF INUITS (ESKIMO)  
Research the Web  
Feb. 01  Life Cycle: from Girl to Woman  
Read: “Sullivan, Ch.6 “In the Space…” Talamantez  
Video. Apache “Sunrise Dance.”  
Feb. 04  Life Cycle: From Boy to Man  
Read: Waterlily, Chs. 9&10  
Video. “Mistaken Identity” (M.3.)  
Feb. 06  The Vision Quest  
Read: Tedlock, Ch.3, “Hanblecheyapi: Crying for a Vision”  
Read: Vine Deloria, pp.16-39  
Feb. 08  The Sun Dance  
Read: Waterlily, Ch. 11  
Feb. 11  Responsibilities: Caring for the Dead  
Read: Waterlily, Ch. 12&13  
Feb. 13  Destiny  
Read: Waterlily, Chs. 14 & 15  
Feb. 15  The Future  
Read: Waterlily, Chs. 16 & 17  
Video. People of the Plains. Part Two.  
Feb. 18  EXAM #1  

A. THE EASTERN WOODLANDS:  
COSMOLOGY AND WORLD VIEW  

Feb. 22  Worldview and a Woodlands People  
“Ojibway Ontology, Behavior, and World View”  
Hallowell, in Tedlock, Ch. 10  
Feb. 25  Origin Myths and Sacred Universe  
Read: St. John, *Iroquois Dream Vision*, Ch.1 (Online)  
Feb. 27  The Dream-Vision Experience  
Read: St. John, *Iroquois Dream Vision*, Ch. 2  
Feb. 29  False Faces  
Read: St. John, *Iroquois Dream Vision*, Ch. 3  

March 3-7  SPRING BREAK  
March 10  Handsome Lake of the Seneca  
Read: *Iroquois Dream Vision*, Ch. 4  
March 12  Nativistic Prophets of the Eastern Frontier  
Read: Read: St. John, “Neolin,” *Encyclopedia of Religion*  
St. John, “Tenskwatawa,” *Encyclopedia of Religion*
March 14  Handsome Lake: Prophet and Reformer
   *Iroquois Dream Vision*, Ch. 5
March 17  St. Patrick’s Day: Celts and Inidans
   Read: handout
March 19  Iroquois: The Medicine Societies
   Read: St. John, *Iroquois Dream Vision*, Ch. 6
March 21 & 24 Easter Break
March 26  Iroquois: Thanksgiving & the Calendrical Cycle
   Read: St. John, *Iroquois Dream Vision*, Ch. 7
March 28  Death and Condolence
   Read: Handout
March 31  **EXAM #2**

B. THE SOUTHWEST

1. The Navajo

   April 02  Navajo World
   Read: “The Continuous Renewal …” Griffin-Pierce
   In Sullivan, Ch. 5

   April 04  Emergence and Holy People
   Read: “Return to Origins” Donald Sandner
   *On Reserve*
   Video: Beatrice and Changing Woman

   April 07  Chantways and Healing
   Read: “Navaho Religion: the…Parts,” Sandner
   Video: Bill Yellow and Healing

2. The Pueblo

   April 09  Tewa Pueblo Cosmology.
   Read: “The Tewa World View,” Alfonso Ortiz
   In Tedlock, Ch 11.

   April 11  Hopi Cosmology
   Read: “An American Indian Model of the Universe,” Whorf
   in Tedlock, Ch. 8

III. ANIMALS, LAND AND ECOLOGY

April 14  Koyukons of Alaska
   “Principles of Koyukon Worldview,” Nelson
   *On Reserve*

April 16  Yup’ik Eskimos
   “Eye of the Dance,” Ann Fienup-Riordan

April 18  Stories, Animals and the Land
   “Cartier's Bear,” Calvin Luther Martin,
   *On Reserve*

April 21  Beaver Indians of Canada
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading/Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 23</td>
<td>The Land and the Cosmos</td>
<td>Read: Vine Deloria, Ch. Five</td>
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<td>April 25</td>
<td>The Spiritual Universe</td>
<td>Read: Vine Deloria, pp. 193-206</td>
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<td>“American Indian Circular Philosophy” in</td>
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<td><em>The American Indian Mind in a Linear World</em></td>
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<td>T.B.A.</td>
<td>EXAM #3 (FINAL)</td>
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