

**Oberlin College**  
**Department of History**

HIST 285: American Indians: Pre-Columbus to the Present  
Spring 2014  
MWF – 10:00-10:50am  
King Building 321

Instructor: Matthew R. Bahar  
Office: Rice Hall 306  
E-mail: [mbahar@oberlin.edu](mailto:mbahar@oberlin.edu)  
Office Hours: M – 1:00-2:30, F – 11:00-12:30, & by appt.

Description

This survey course explores the indigenous cultures of North America from the pre-Columbian era through the late twentieth century. We will consider the historical experiences specific to certain of these cultural groups, but we will also dedicate substantial attention to processes that transcended people, place, and time. Themes such as nation-building, violence, race, and self-determination, for example, will occupy much of our lectures and discussions. This approach will allow us to examine the collective experience of indigenous peoples – what makes them “Indian” – while also acknowledging and appreciating the nuances that made each culture’s past unique.

Unlike prior history classes you may have experienced, this course will not center on the rote memorization of random facts (i.e. people, dates, events) and their regurgitation in assignments. Instead, we will focus on the dominant social, intellectual, political, and economic trends and changes in Native America, how these phenomena developed over time, and how they shaped the human experience. By assessing Native history through the lenses of continuity and transformation, you will come to understand the past as something immensely effectual rather than stagnant and irrelevant. Secondly, and in that vein, you will come to understand that history is not simply what happened before the present, but is a constantly evolving creation by human beings. That is to say, history is also something analyzed, interpreted, and debated among professional historians, and society more generally, as fresh evidence is continually uncovered and historical subjects are approached from new angles and interpretive frameworks.

By the end of this course, you should also have sharpened your communication skills. This will be accomplished by writing in a clear, concise, and cogent prose and by discussing class material intelligently and courteously during discussion periods.

Method of Instruction

This course demands your active participation via in-class discussions. Lectures, assigned readings, audio-visual material, and primary source analyses will also comprise the framework with which you will advance your knowledge of American Indian history and the ways it is understood today. As a side note, if you need to miss class for any reason, be certain to contact a classmate for quality notes. It would behoove you to get contact information from someone early on in the semester.

Class Requirements

Class Requirements

*Attendance/Participation*

Mondays and Wednesdays will be lecture periods, all of which you are expected to attend and prepare for by reviewing your notes from preceding lectures. You are encouraged to ask questions and/or offer comments during lectures.

Fridays will be designated discussion periods giving you the opportunity to dissect that week’s assigned readings. To facilitate this exercise, you will be organized into small groups for the semester, though your discussion grades will be earned individually. Your discussion

grade, moreover, will be determined by your small group peers as well as myself at the end of the semester. We will begin each discussion period in these small groups, but reconvene as a class mid-way through the hour. During discussion periods, I will circulate around the room, assisting with questions and noting your talking points. This is worth 20% of your final grade for the class.

### *Synthesis Papers*

Two synthesis papers are assigned (6 pages each, double-spaced). Your goal in these assignments is to creatively synthesize our weekly article readings with our first two monographs (Paper 1: Krech's *The Ecological Indian* with preceding articles; Paper 2: Hamailanen's *The Comanche Empire* with preceding articles). You should make the readings speak to one another in insightful and thought-provoking ways. In what ways, for example, can we think of certain authors as in dialogue with others? How does one historian's work complicate or enrich another's? Are their arguments compatible or incompatible? Be creative, but back up your ideas with the texts too. Papers are due in class on the dates listed in the schedule below. No late papers are accepted. Paper 1 is worth 15% of your course grade, and Paper 2 is worth 25%.

### *Examinations*

Two in-class examinations are assigned. These will require you to synthesize class material and demonstrate your grasp of the broad trends and transformations in Native history. Missed exams cannot be made up under any circumstances. If you have verifiable documentation of your absence during an exam, you will be given the opportunity to complete instead a comparable assignment or an entirely different, make-up version of the exam. The mid-term is worth 15% of your course grade, and the final is worth 25%.

### Grade Breakdown

A+ 97-100%; A 93-96%; A- 90-92%; B+ 87-89%; B 83-86%; B- 80-82%; C+ 77-79%; C 73-76%; C- 70-72%; D 60-69%; F 59% and below

### Required Texts

Hämäläinen, Pekka, *The Comanche Empire* (Yale University Press, 2008)

Krech, Shepard, *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History* (W.W. Norton & Co., 2000)

Rosier, Paul, *Serving their Country: American Indian Politics and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Harvard University Press, 2012)

### Academic Dishonesty

Please do your own work. Cheating on any paper or exam will not be tolerated by either myself or the college. This includes plagiarism (using someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as your own.) You will not, for example, copy another student's work, anything off the internet, or anything from a book while claiming it as your own. If you have further questions about this matter, please consult either myself or the Oberlin College Honor Code.

### Miscellaneous

The use of electronic devices during class periods is strictly prohibited. This includes cell phones, computers, ipads, etc. Violating this policy will result in the lowering of one letter grade for the course per instance. If extenuating circumstances require that you use a computer in class, you must discuss this with me during the first week of class.

## Course Schedule

### **February 3 – February 7 – Introduction - Native America before Columbus**

Richard J. Chacon and Rubén G. Mendoza, eds., *North American Indigenous Warfare and Ritual Violence* (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 2007), pp. 129-148, 160-181, 202-221, 222-232 [Blackboard]

### **February 10 – February 14 – Discovering a New World: Strange Encounters with Exotic Peoples, 1492-1600**

Evan P. Haefeli, "On First Contact and Apotheosis: Manitou and Men in North America," *Ethnohistory* 54 (2007), 407-443 [JSTOR]

Paul Kelton, "Avoiding the Smallpox Spirits: Colonial Epidemics and Southeastern Indian Survival," *Ethnohistory* 51 (2004), 45-71 [JSTOR]

### **February 17 – February 21 – Learning to Live in a New World: Native People and the Founding of European Colonies, 1600-1680**

Juliana Barr, "A Diplomacy of Gender: Rituals of First Contact in the 'Land of Tejas,'" *William and Mary Quarterly* 61 (2004), pp. 393-434 [JSTOR]

Andrew Lipman, "'A meanes to knitt them together': The Exchange of Body Parts in the Pequot War," *William and Mary Quarterly* 65 (2008), 3-28 [JSTOR]

### **February 24 – February 28 – Problems and Opportunities: Indians and the Growth of European Colonies, 1680-1754**

Susan Sleeper-Smith, "Women, Kin, and Catholicism: New Perspectives on the Fur Trade," *Ethnohistory* 47 (2000), 423-452 [JSTOR]

James F. Brooks, "Women, Men, and Cycles of Evangelism in the Southwest Borderlands, A.D. 750 to 1750," *American Historical Review* 118 (2013), 738-764 [Blackboard]

### **March 3 – March 7 – End of an Era: Indians and Imperial Crises in North America, 1754-1821**

March 7 – Paper 1 due

Shepard Krech, *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History* (W.W. Norton & Co., 2000)

### **March 10 – March 14 – From Old Empire to New: Native People in the New Republic, 1783-1820**

Colin G. Calloway, "The Continuing Revolution in Indian Country" in Frederick E. Hoxie, Ronald Hoffman, and Peter J. Albert, eds., *Native Americans and the Early Republic* (Charlottesville, 1999), 3-36 [Blackboard]

Richard White, "The Fictions of Patriarchy: Indians and Whites in the Early Republic," in Frederick E. Hoxie, Ronald Hoffman, and Peter J. Albert, eds., *Native Americans and the Early Republic* (Charlottesville, 1999), 62-84 [Blackboard]

### **March 17 – March 21 – Another New World: the Indian Removal Era, 1820-1845**

March 17 – Mid-Term Exam

Mary Young, "The Cherokee Nation: Mirror of the Republic," *American Quarterly* 33 (Winter, 1981), 502-524 [JSTOR]

Theda Purdue, "The Legacy of Removal," *Journal of Southern History* 78 (February, 2012) [Blackboard]

### March 24 – March 28 – No Class – Spring Recess

**March 31 – April 4 – Blue, Gray, and Red: Native People in the Civil War Era, 1850-1868**

Daniel R. Mandell, "Shifting Boundaries of Race and Ethnicity: Indian-Black Intermarriage in Southern New England, 1760-1880," *Journal of American History* 85 (September 1998), 466-501 [JSTOR]

Nancy Shoemaker, "How Indians Got to be Red," *American Historical Review* 102 (June, 1997), 625-644 [JSTOR]

**April 7 – April 11 – Defending the West: Reckoning with U.S. Imperialism in the Native West, 1845-1886**

April 9 – Tour of Howling Wolf's ledger drawings, Allen Memorial Art Museum

Andrés Reséndez, "National Identity on a Shifting Border: Texas and New Mexico in the Age of Transition 1821-1848," *Journal of American History* 86 (1999), 668-697 [JSTOR]

Brian Delay, "Independent Indians and the U.S.-Mexican War," *American Historical Review* 112 (February, 2007), 35-68 [JSTOR]

**April 14 – April 18 – "Kill the Indian, Save the Man": The Campaign of Assimilation and the Struggle for Survival, 1878-1930**

April 18 – Paper 2 due

Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (Yale University Press, 2008)

**April 21 – April 25 – From Assimilation to Segregation: the Indian New Deal and Reorganization, 1930-1945**

Laurence M. Hauptman, "The American Indian Federation and the Indian New Deal: A Reinterpretation," *Pacific Historical Review* 52 (November, 1983), 378-402 [JSTOR]

Colleen Boyd, "'The Indians Themselves Were Greatly Enthused': the Wheeler-Howard Act and the (Re)-Organization of Klallam Space," *Journal of Northwest Anthropology* 43 (2009), 3-25 [Blackboard]

**April 28 – May 2 – Termination and Urban Relocation: the Changing Face of Indian Country, 1945-1970**

Larry W. Burt, "Roots of the Native American Urban Experience: Relocation Policy in the 1950s," *American Indian Quarterly* 10 (1986), 85-99 [JSTOR]

Douglas K. Miller, "Willing Workers: Urban Relocation and American Indian Initiative, 1940s-1960s," *Ethnohistory* 60 (Winter, 2013), 51-76 [Blackboard]

**May 5 – May 9 – Renewing the Struggle for Sovereignty and Self-Determination, 1970-1990s**

Paul Rosier, *Serving their Country: American Indian Politics and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Harvard University Press, 2012)

**Final Examination Period – TBD**