

Oberlin College
Department of History

HIST 285: American Indians: Pre-Columbus to the Present
Spring 2013
MWF – 10:00-10:50am
King Building 341

Instructor: Matthew R. Bahar
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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

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 the lectures. Fridays will be discussion periods giving you the opportunity to dissect that week’s assigned readings. This is your time to prove to me, to yourself, and to your classmates that you not only completed the readings for that week, but also thought critically about them and are capable of articulating your ideas constructively and courteously. Please bring some form of the readings to the discussion. This is worth 20% of your final grade for the class.

Response Papers

Two papers are assigned (6 pages each, double-spaced), each covering one of the course monographs. For each paper you will respond to a question designed to examine your careful reading of the book. These two questions can be found in the course schedule below. You are encouraged to cite specific examples from the text that support your ideas, but please do so sparingly and selectively (I am far more interested in your interpretation of the reading). Papers are due in class on the dates listed in the schedule below (do not email your paper). Late papers will not be accepted under any circumstances. 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

Harmon, Alexandra, *Rich Indians: Native People and the Problem of Wealth in American History* (University of North Carolina Press, 2010)

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

Saunt, Claudio, *Black, White, and Indian: Race and the Unmaking of an American Family* (Oxford University Press, 2006)

Academic Dishonesty

Please do your own work. Cheating on any written assignment 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 4 – February 8 – 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 11 – February 15 – 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]

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]

February 18 – February 22 – Learning to Live in a New World: Native People and the Founding of European Colonies, 1600-1680

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

Jenny Hale Pulsipher, "Gaining the Diplomatic Edge: Kinship, Trade, Ritual, and Religion in Amerindian Alliances in Early North America," in Wayne E. Lee, ed., *Empire and Indigenes: Intercultural Alliance, Imperial Expansion, and Warfare in the Early Modern World* (New York University Press, 2011), pp. 19-48 [Blackboard]

February 25 – March 1 – Problems and Opportunities: Indians and the Growth of European Colonies, 1680-1754

March 1 – Paper 1 due. Paper 1 question: According to Krech, what is the myth of the Ecological Indian, and how did it originate? What are the most salient themes reverberating through Krech's case studies? What implications might this book have in the modern-day world?

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

March 4 – March 8 – End of an Era: Indians and Imperial Crises in North America, 1754-1821

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

James F. Brooks, "'This Evil Extends Especially...to the Feminine Sex,' Negotiating Captivity in the New Mexico Borderlands," *Feminist Studies* 22 (Summer, 1996), 279-309 [JSTOR]

March 11 – March 15 – 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 18 – March 22 – Another New World: the Indian Removal Era, 1820-1845

March 18 – Mid-Term Exam

Francis Paul Prucha, "Andrew Jackson's Indian Policy: A Reassessment," *Journal of American History* 56 (December, 1969), 527-539 [JSTOR]

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

March 25 – March 29 – No Class – Spring Recess

April 1 – April 5 – 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]

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

April 8 – April 12 – Defending the West: Reckoning with U.S. Imperialism in the Native West, 1845-1886

April 10 – Tour of Howling Wolf's ledger drawings, Allen Memorial Art Museum

Dan Flores, "Bison Ecology and Bison Diplomacy: The Southern Plains from 1800 to 1850," *Journal of American History* 78 (September, 1991): 465-485 [JSTOR]

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

April 15 – April 19 – "Kill the Indian, Save the Man": The Campaign of Assimilation and the Struggle for Survival, 1878-1930

April 19 – Paper 2 due. Paper 2 question: According to Saunt, how did the concept of "race" emerge in Creek society, and what were the most transformative effects of this development? How did a commitment to racial hierarchy assist, and later thwart, the Creek quest for sovereignty and self-determination in the nineteenth century?

Claudio Saunt, *Black, White, and Indian: Race and the Unmaking of an American Family* (Oxford University Press, 2006)

April 22 – April 26 – 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 29 – May 3 – Termination and Urban Relocation: the Changing Face of Indian Country, 1945-1970

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

Paul C. Rosier, "'They Are Ancestral Homelands': Race, Place, and Politics in Cold War Native America, 1945-1961," *Journal of American History* 92 (2006), 1300-1326 [JSTOR]

May 6 – May 10 – Renewing the Struggle for Sovereignty and Self-Determination, 1970-1990s

Alexandra Harmon, *Rich Indians: Native People and the Problem of Wealth in American History* (University of North Carolina Press, 2010)

Final Examination Period – TBD