CAST 223
SURVIVING AMERICA: INTRODUCTION TO NATIVE STUDIES MWF 3:30-4:20

Steven Williams, Ph.D.
Office Hours: Mon & Fri 2:00-3:00 p.m. or by appointment
E-mail: Steven.Williams@oberlin.edu
Checked Mon-Fri 9:00 AM & 4:00 PM
Office: King 141F
Classroom: King 123

Course Description

This class is an introduction to the study of the indigenous peoples of North America and the academic field of Native Studies. Native Studies seeks to understand indigenous peoples from indigenous perspectives and to undertake research to address the problems created by the history of Euro-American misrepresentations and mistreatment of Native peoples. This course explores critical issues facing Native communities including legal and cultural identities, cultural revitalization, environmental racism, gender and sexuality, religious freedom, sovereignty, and tribal self-determination.

The course particularly focuses on the themes of identity and representation and as such will examine Euro-American constructions of “native” people and how those constructions have developed over time as a result of and in-step with colonization. Students should expect to take away an understanding of Native Studies’ theoretical/methodological concerns and debates and situate these within Native/Indigenous peoples’ broader responses to ongoing colonization.

Course Objectives

- Be able to trace historical representations, constructions and uses of “the Native” and discuss the ways that Native peoples have contested or engaged with these
- To understand the colonization of Native peoples in the North America as an ongoing, multiply encoded, perpetuated, and complex process
- To engage with and learn more about contemporary Native American identities, struggles, cultural politics, nationalisms, and futures
- To discuss the possibilities of Native/Indigenous Studies as discipline/theories/methodology to address the issues of colonialism that will effect Native/Indigenous peoples and non-natives into the future
Recommended Texts


E-Texts


All assigned course readings not from the above required texts will be posted to Blackboard.

Course Format/Expectations

This course will be a combination of lecture, large and small group discussion. Lectures will supplement readings with historical background and/or context. Students should arrive to each class having read the assigned texts for that day and be prepared to engage those materials in class discussions. It is useful if you bring printed copies of the days readings to class.

The course is broken into smaller units, however, as Indigenous Studies is interdisciplinary by design many areas of study/topics will overlap. Students are expected to engage or read those materials both comparatively in relation to other course materials and specifically with the current topic of study.

The histories of Indigenous/Native peoples is a colonial history and as such will inevitably and necessarily bring out many difficult or sensitive issues including, for example, racism, genocide, ethnocentrism, classism, sexism, and xenophobia: but it is my hope that as a collective group we can grapple with and work through these sensitive subjects and develop an intellectual community that is able to skillfully and respectively debate these pressing issues that affect not only Native/Indigenous peoples but extend also to U.S. and global futures.

Policies

Attendance

Class participation is essential to get the full learning process. The class is built, in great part, on class participation from all students so all students need to attend. Regular attendance and thoughtful preparation also show respect for other students and the instructor and help contribute to a respectful and productive class environment and intellectual community.
Therefore, to receive participation points students must be in regular attendance.

That being said, it is expected that absences are sometimes unavoidable. Each student will be allowed to miss one class over the semester without affecting their final grade. Beyond that unexcused absences will bear on your grade for the class. It is expected that students will make every reasonable effort to attend all classes and to notify me as soon as possible of any absence. If you miss class it is your responsibility to ask a fellow class member for details and catch up.

I will take attendance (after the first) two weeks by leaving a daily attendance sheet on the table in front of the room that students should sign as they enter the classroom.

Tardiness

All students are expected to be in a seat and ready for the class to begin at the scheduled start time of 3:30. Walking into the class late is disruptive and disrespectful to the class and our class time is short. The same goes for leaving the classroom during class time. We should all be able to make it through a 50 min. class without coming and going so please take care of any business you may need to attend to prior to class. I will do my very best to start and finish the class at the scheduled times and expect the same respect from students.

Tech Devices

Cellphones
Off and stored in your bag. No exceptions.

Laptops
Many of your readings will be in pdf form so I appreciate the usefulness of computers in class. You may use your laptop in order to have course readings immediately available or to take notes during lectures. However, use of laptops in class for anything not related directly to class lectures or discussions will result in loss of the privilege for the class. I reserve the right to at anytime restrict the use of laptops for the entire class if this privilege is being abused.

Timeliness

Assignments must be submitted on time to receive full credit. I will deduct a ¼ of a grade for each 24 hours an assignment is late (i.e. B+ to B). Assignments submitted later then one week past original deadline without prior approval from me will be given credit at my discretion and generally earn no more than a minimum passing grade. Requests for extensions must be submitted at least 72 hours in advance to the assigned due date and will generally only be granted for extenuating circumstances. Late papers may not receive written comments.

P/NP: If you are taking the course P/NP, you must fulfill all course expectations and complete all assignments in order to receive credit for the course. Please let me know at the beginning of the class if you are taking it P/NP.

Honor Code:
This class will follow the policies as written in the Oberlin College Honor Code. Avoid plagiarism or quoting secondary sources without proper citation. If you have any questions about citations you may see me or a librarian or refer to the MLA or Chicago Style Handbooks.

The honor code requires that for each academic assignment you write the following statement and sign your name. “I affirm that I have adhered to the Honor Code in this assignment.” For more information on the code see: http://new.oberlin.edu/conservatory/academic-resources-and-support/honor-code.dot

Students with Disabilities:

Please let me know if you need disability-related accommodations for this course. Support is available through academic services.

Assignments and Grading

1. (15%) Active participation in class discussions. You are required to discuss the reading material in class and be prepared to address the comments/questions of your peers. The issues raised by the class are almost always complex and it is expected that as a class we will disagree and rarely come to consensus, which is a positive and not a negative aspect of our discussions. Your participation then is key to a process which creates a dynamic learning environment where we learn from each other (what my tribal elders sometimes term “shared mutual learning”). I may also assign small impromptu in-class individual or group assignments (graded on check/check plus/check minus only) which will be included in your participation grade.

2. (20%) Journal/reading responses. These are to be fairly informal and function as space where you can critically engage with the readings as well as your personal reactions to the course readings/topics. You should generate 2-3 paragraphs responding/engaging the day’s scheduled class readings prior to arriving to that class (3 entries a week). It may be useful to take/use reading notes to generate ideas for your paragraph entries. For example you may question the effectiveness of the author’s theory or methods or connect some point in the readings to a contemporary issue or experience of your own. The purpose of these journal readings is to help you contribute/generate class discussion and should not be viewed as exhaustive of the readings. Choose things from the reading that interest you. As journals/responses may be very subjective I will be grading them with check/check plus/check minus only. Students will be required to submit their entries for each day prior to class on the corresponding date of the Journals section under course documents on Blackboard.

3. (30%) Midterm take-home exam. You will be required to write two short midterm essays (4-5 pages total) answering 2 questions from a group of 3 or 4 (provided by me) drawn from the first half of the course materials.
4. **(35%) Final Paper.** A final essay of 7-10 pages due at the end of the semester. This paper will be a longer paper requiring you to utilize some secondary resources (No less than five sources). You will choose a theoretical issue (socio-hist) or analyze a particular text or author that has interested you throughout the semester. Utilizing class materials I will ask you to create/submit a proposal/outline/draft/working bibliography which reflects the interdisciplinary methods of Native Indigenous Studies as related to your desired topic. This may take the form for example of a literary critique or socio-hist essay discussing intersecting topics covered in class. (I will provide more details on the essay early and throughout the semester)

**Course Schedule**

*Note: Schedule is subject to change at instructor’s discretion*

**“Native Americans in the American/Western Imagination”**

**WEEK 1:**

Wed. Sep 3  Introductions, course syllabus overview


**WEEK 2:**


Fri. Sep 12  Scott Richard Lyons (Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe),
“Indigenous Studies Paradigms, cont.”

WEEK 3


“Indigenous Identities—Racial, Cultural, National”

WEEK 4


“Indigenous Identities and Gender”

WEEK 5

Mon. Sep 29  “De/Scribing Squ*w: Indigenous Women and Imperial Idioms in the
United States,” pp. 93-105, from *Unsettling America*, 2013;
Andrea Smith (Cherokee), “Sexual Violence as a Tool of Genocide,”
pp.7-33. From *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian

Wed. Oct 1  Renya Ramirez (Winnebago), “Race, Tribal Nation, and Gender: A
pp. 22-40.
Devon Abbott Mihesuah (Choctaw), “Feminists, Tribalists, or Activists?,”
pp. 159-71. From *Indigenous American Women: Decolonization,
Empowerment, Activism* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press,
2003.)

From *Becoming Two-Spirit: Gay Identity and Social Acceptance in
Indian Country* (Lincoln:University of Nebraska Press, 2006).
Andrea Smith, “Queer Theory and Native Studies: The Heteronormativity
of Settler Colonialism,” pp. 43-63. From *Queer Indigenous
Studies: Critical Interventions in Theory Politics, and Literature

“Identity and Language”

WEEK 6

Mon. Oct 6  Clara Sue Kidwell (Choctaw/Chippewa) and Alan Velie, “Language,”
pp. 83-100. *From Native American Studies* (Lincoln: University of
Nebraska Press, 2005).
James Aronhiotas Stevens (Mowawk), “Iah Enionkwatennahton’s: We
Will Not Lose Our Words,” pp. 149-58; Neil McKay (Dakota),
“The Spirit of Language,” pp. 159-65; Sean Lee Fahrlander
(Ojibwe), “Names By Which the Spirits Know Us,” pp. 177-84.
All from *Genocide of the Mind: New Native American Writing

Wed. Oct 8  Paul V. Kroskrity, “Sustaining Stories,” pp. 3-20; Gus Palmer (Kiowa),
“Kiowa Stories Express Tribal Memory, Ideology, and Being,”
pp. 23-43. Both from *Telling Stories In the Face of Danger:
Language Renewal in Native American Communities* (Norman:

Fri.  Oct 10 Bruce E. Johansen, “Back From the (Nearly) Dead: Reviving Indigenous
Languages Across North America,” pp. 3-47. From *The Praeger
Handbook on Contemporary Issues in Native America. Vol. 1*

*** MIDTERM TAKE-HOME EXAMS ASSIGNED

“Boarding Schools and Education”

WEEK 7


** DVD: “Our Ancestors Don’t Speak English”

NO ORAL PRESENTATIONS


*** MIDTERM TAKE-HOME EXAMS DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS

Oct 18-26  Fall Break—no classes

“Federal Policy, tribal government and Indigenous Nation(s)”

WEEK 9


“Economic Development and Casinos”

WEEK 10


“Land, Identity and Environmental Racism”

WEEK 11


DVD:” Homeland”
“Religious Freedom/Appropriation”

WEEK 12


“Mascots”

WEEK 13


DVD: “In Whose Honor”

Wed. Nov 26 Richard C. King, “On Being a Warrior: Race, Gender, and American

Fri. Nov 28 NO CLASSES-Thanksgiving Break

“Activism/Resistance Movements”

WEEK 14


Wed. Dec 3 DVD: “Alcatraz Is Not An Island”


“Revitalization and Recovery”

WEEK 15


CLASSES END

Sat. Dec. 20, 11:00 AM ***FINAL PAPERS DUE (drop off too be arranged)