

RELS 260 Native America Religions

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Office Hours: Mon & Weds 3:00-5:00
(or by appointment)

Course Description: For the last five hundred years native peoples have struggled to maintain their cultural and religious heritage in the face of invasion, exploration, colonization, lost of land, and the denial of their spiritual values. This course is designed to introduce you to Native American religions of North America and to discuss the consequences of invasion and the oppression of the native way of life. We will survey five representative native traditions: the Nahaul (Aztec), the Lenni Lenape (Delaware), the Ani Yun'wiya (Cherokee), the Lakota (Sioux), and the Diné (Navajo). We will study these traditions in terms of the general history of discovery, trade, settlement, warfare, government control, land loss, and reservation life in the present. In each religious tradition, we will discuss cosmology, rituals, belief in spirits, life after death, sacred stories, symbols, the importance of place and naming, and the ethnohistory of each community. We will also discuss the pan-national traditions of peyote, ghost dance, and spiritual ecology, and review some of the primary laws passed in the 20th century with regard to Native American religious practices.

Books:

Cousineau, Phil, ed. A Seat at the Table: Huston Smith in Conversation with Native Americans on Religious Freedom (University of California Press, 2006). SAT
Deloria, Vine, Jr. The World We Used to Live In: Remembering the Powers of the Medicine Men (Fulcrum Press, 2006). WWUL
Knab, Timothy. A War of Witches: A Journey into the Underworld of the Contemporary Aztecs (Westview Press, 1995).WW
Young, William. Quest for Harmony: Native American Spiritual Traditions (NY: Seven Bridges Press, 2003). QH
E-Reserve: 3 articles, ON-LINE at, Library Homepage (click on) * E-reserves *
Electronic Reserves * RELS 205 or Irwin (password = powwow).

Requirements: Students are expected to attend all classes and participate in class discussions, missing more than two classes can result in a lower grade. The assignments in this course include the following: FIVE 30 minute exams (15% each = 75%) and ONE 6-8 page research paper comparing a similar topic in two different Native American religions (5% for the proposal with bibliography + 20% for finished paper).

No excuses will be accepted for missed assignments or exams, such as oversleeping, lost books, or being stuck out of town. If you have a legitimate excuse, please talk to me before the scheduled assignment. All missing assignments will receive a failing grade. All Honor Code rules apply in this course; plagiarism can result in expulsion from the College.

Honor Code: Lying, cheating, and plagiarism are violations of the Honor Code and are not permitted at the College. Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported directly to the Dean of Students. A student found responsible for academic dishonesty will receive a XF in the course, indicating failure of the course due to academic dishonesty.

Grading Scale:

Numerical and letter grades: A = 95-92; A- = 91-89; B+ = 88-86; B = 85-82; B- = 81-79; C+ = 78-76; C = 75-72; C- = 71-69; D+ = 68-66; D = 65-63; D- = 62-60; F = 59 or lower.

Reading Assignments:

- I. Week One: January 9, 11 Introduction to Native American Religions
 - A. Reading Assignment: **Young** QH: 1-8; "The Flower World of Old Uto-Aztecan." Jane H. Hill *Journal of Anthropological Research* Vol. 48, No. 2 (Summer, 1992), pp. 117-144
- II. Week Two: January 16, 18 Aztec and Nahaut Religion
 - A. Reading Assignment: **Young** QH: 8-19; "Learning through the Soul: Concepts Relating to Learning and Knowledge in the Mayan Cultures of Mexico." **Linda King** *International Review of Education*, Vol. 45, No. 3/4, Learning, Knowledge and Cultural Context. (1999), pp. 367-370.
 - B. AND "The Flowering of the Dead: An Interpretation of Highland Maya Culture." **Robert S. Carlsen**; Martin Prechtel *Man*, Vol. 26, No. 1. (Mar., 1991), pp. 23-42.
- III. Week Three: January 23, 25 Colonizing North America
 - A. Reading Assignment: **Knab** WW: 1-65; **Young** QH: 19-38.
 - B. **EXAM ONE, January 23**
- IV. Week Four: January 30, February 1 Native Ethnohistory
 - A. Reading Assignment: **Young** QH: 38-59, **Deloria** xvii-xxxii.
- V. Week Five: February 6, 8 Lenni Lenapi Religious Worldview
 - A. Reading Assignment: **Young** QH: 61-89; **Deloria** WWUL: 1-28
 - B. **EXAM TWO, February 8**
- VI. Week Six: February 13, 15 Lenni Lenapi Religious Worldview
 - A. Reading Assignment: **Young** QH: 89-104; **Deloria** WWUL: 28-59
- VII. Week Seven: February 20, 22 Ani'Yun'wiya Religious Worldview
 - A. Reading Assignment: **Young** QH: 105-130; **Deloria** WWUL: 60-88.
- VIII. Week Eight: February 27, March 1 Ani'Yun'wiya Religious Worldview
 - A. Reading Assignment: **Young** QH: 130-154; **Deloria** WWUL: 88-116.
 - B. **EXAM THREE, February 27**
 - C. SPRING BREAK MARCH 5-9

- IX. Week Nine: March 13, 15 Lakota Religious Worldview
 - A. Reading Assignment: **Young** QH: 155-184; **Deloria** WWUL: 116-146.
- X. Week Ten: March 20, 22 Lakota Religious Worldview
 - A. Reading Assignment: **Young** QH: 184-220; **Deloria** WWUL: 146-166.
 - B. **EXAM FOUR, March 22**
- XI. Week Eleven: March 27, 29 Dine Religious Worldview
 - A. Reading Assignment: **Young** QH: 221-245; **Deloria** WWUL: 167-214.
 - B. **PAPER PROPOSAL DUE, March 29**
- XII. Week Twelve: April 3, 5 Dine Religious Worldview
 - A. Reading Assignment: **Young** QH: 246-271; **Cousineau** SAT: 7-38.
- XIII. Week Thirteen: April 10, 12 Ghost Dance, Peyote Church, Prisoners Rights
 - A. Reading Assignment: **Young** QH: 274-328; **Cousineau** SAT: 98-129.
 - B. **PAPER DUE, April 10**
- XIV. Week Fourteen: 17, 19 Ecology and the Future
 - A. Reading Assignment: **Young** QH: 329-386; **Cousineau** SAT: 40-74.
 - B. **EXAM FIVE, April 19**

