Carleton College  
Department of Sociology and Anthropology  

Comparative Issues in Native North America:  
Indigenous Peoples and the State in the United States, Mexico, and Canada  

Fall 2013

Professor Jerome Levi  
Office: Leighton 227  
Hours: Tue and Thu 1-2, or by appointment  
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Course Description and Objectives

This course develops a comparative framework for an understanding of Native Peoples in North America. It is centrally concerned with the relationship between indigenous nations and contemporary states in Mexico, Canada, and the United States. Why do states act as they do with regard to indigenous peoples? What strategies have indigenous peoples employed in pursuit of political survival, economic sovereignty, and cultural renewal? How is "Native American" an identity that transcends both ethnic boundaries and the frontiers of modern nation-states? To answer these questions, we shall explore the politics of representation regarding "the Indian" as a symbol in national consciousness, the negotiation of identity in interethnic contexts, the impact of European colonial powers and subsequent federal agendas, the growth of intertribal movements, and the maintenance, reformulation, and re-emergence of tradition. The course is divided into three major topics:

1. Origins and Images  
2. Indian Governance, Federal Policies, and The Legacy of Colonial Encounters  
3. Situating Native American Identities

Readings will compare the situation of native peoples in Mexico, Canada, and the U.S. in each of these sections.

At the end of the course we will focus on one of the most important battles in U.S. Indian history, and one which took place only a few miles from Northfield: namely, the Dakota Conflict of 1862 which erupted along the Minnesota River Valley. Through films, lectures and readings we will bear witness to the events from different ethnic and political perspectives.

Course Requirements
The student's grade for this course is based upon the following: attendance, preparedness, and participation in class discussions (10%), oral presentation (30%) and a term paper (60%). I will give pop quizzes if it is evident that people are not doing the readings.

Due Dates: Oral Presentation - day for which you sign up  
Paper abstract and provisional bibliography – Tues. 10/29  
Term paper – last day of term, at my office by 5 PM

Class Participation

Daily class attendance is expected; dates when papers or presentations are due are no exception. Students are also expected to enter into the discussion of course topics. The amount one speaks, however, is less important than the quality of things that are said. At the same time, please don't feel that pearls of wisdom are expected to drop from your mouth every time you open it. Literally, the dumbest question is the one left unasked. Often times many people are wondering the same things. In short, I strive to generate an atmosphere in which you feel free to think creatively, hash out ideas, and challenge -- each other as well as me.

Oral Presentation

Because this course will be run according to a lecture/discussion format, each student will be required to do two oral presentations sometime during the term. Presenters should confer with each other and divide the readings accordingly. I encourage the presenters to plan together in advance how they would like to conduct the session. Each presenter will give an oral presentation for about 30 minutes pertaining to the readings. They will also write a 1-2 page précis or abstract of the readings that will be emailed to the class before the presentation. The précis should also include a critique and several discussion questions for the class. The rest of the class will have read these questions and be prepared to answer them in class.

Term Paper

Your term paper can be on any topic you choose that directly relates to the course. By Tues. October 29, you will hand in an abstract of your paper and provisional bibliography so that I can approve your topic. It is departmental policy to mark down late papers one grade for each day they are handed in after the due date. Rather than footnotes, use in-text citations, e.g. (Doe 1968) if you are referencing the entire work, or (Doe 1968:115-119) if you are quoting or referencing specific pages. The format to use for the references cited in your bibliography is the Style Guide of American Anthropological Association which can be found on the AAA web site http://www.aaanet.org/pubs/styleguide.htm or in American Anthropologist 97(1): 191-194. For all other questions regarding style, consult this same source. Be sure to use the periodical literature and select a sufficiently focused topic that can be adequately covered in about 15 pages.

Note: If you have any special needs that may affect your performance in the course, please see me early in the term.
Texts

The following books will be used for this course. They are available at the Bookstore.

**Required**


Readings not in the above texts are on the Moodle page for this course.

**ORIGINS AND IMAGES**

**Week 1**

**Before The Chabochi (“Whiskered Ones”) Came**

Tues. 9/17  **Introduction**

Film: “Ishi, The Last Yahi”


Thurs. 9/19  **The Politics Prehistory and the Power of States**


**Week 2**

**Indian Images and National Imaginations**

Tues. 9/24  **The Politics of Representation and the Notion of Nations**


Thurs. 9/26  Visual Displays and Museum Strategies  (presentation)


National Museum of the American Indian, Washington DC
http://nmai.si.edu/home/
(examine the website, especially the virtual exhibitions)

Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City, Mexico
http://www.mna.inah.gob.mx/ (explore the salas de exhibición, especially the permanent exhibits)

Museum of Civilization, Gatineau, Quebec (across the river from Ottawa), Canada
http://www.civilization.ca/home (explore the First Peoples of Canada virtual exhibit)

Recommended:

INDIAN GOVERNANCE, FEDERAL POLICIES, AND THE LEGACY OF COLONIAL ENCOUNTERS

Week 3  Europe in the Americas

Tues. 10/1  The Search for Silver and the Fur Trade


Thurs. 10/3  Contexts of Political Relations  (presentation)


Week 4  Mexico
Tues. 10/8  Overview


Thurs 10/10  Major Themes  (presentation)


**Week 5  United States**

Tues. 10/15  Overview


Thurs. 10/17  Major Themes  (presentation)


**Week 6  Canada**

Tues. 10/22  Overview/Incident at Oka and the Meech Lake Accord


Explore the website about Nunavut, Canada's newest Territory
Film: "Tribal Wisdom and the Modern World - The Tightrope of Power." Millenium Series #9 (The significance of First Nations for Canada's Constitutional Reforms)

Thurs. 10/24  Major Themes (presentation)


Showing some night this week (time and place TBA): the internationally acclaimed Canadian feature film “Atanarjuat – The Fast Runner” (172 minutes). It is the first feature film ever to be written, directed, and acted entirely in Inuktitut (“Eskimo”). Will also try to arrange to have Alessandra Vitrella, former SOAN major currently in law school who did her comps research among the Inuit, come and give us an orientation to the film and her work in the arctic.

SITUATING NATIVE AMERICAN IDENTITIES

Week 7  The Negotiation of Identity

Tues. 10/29  State Definitions of Groups and Individuals


Thurs. 10/31  The Politics of Persistence and Change (presentation)


Week 8  Contexts of Negotiation: Ethnicity, Gender, and Place

Tues. 11/5  Strategies of Resistance and Survival in Interethnic Contexts


Thurs. 11/7  *Culture and Gender*  (presentation)


**Week 9  Reflections on Indigenous Minnesota**

Tues. 11/12  *The 1862 Dakota Conflict*

Film: "The Dakota Conflict." PBS Documentary.


Thurs. 11/14  *The Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Tribal Museum*  (presentation)


Will try to arrange for this weekend to have an overnight field trip to the Mille Lacs Reservation and Tribal Museum.

**Week 10  Conclusion**

Tues. 11/19  *Some Final Thoughts...*


