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 2018  

Professor Jerome Levi  
Office: Weitz 239A  
Hours: Tue and Thu 3-4, or by appointment  
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Class Meetings  
Time: T/Th 1:15-3:00 PM  
Place: Weitz Center 133  

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, regular participation in class discussions, and occasional reaction papers (30%), two oral presentations (30%), and a term research paper (40%). If it is evident that people are not sufficiently engaged with the readings, you can expect the possibility of pop quizzes.

Due Dates:   Oral Presentation - day for which you sign up
             Paper abstract and provisional bibliography – Tues. 10/30
             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 30, 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/style
guide.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 Chaboci (“Whiskered Ones”) Came

Tues. 9/11 Introduction


Thurs. 9/13 The Politics Prehistory and the Power of States


Week 2 Indian Images and National Imaginations
Tues. 9/18  The Politics of Representation and the Notion of Nations


Thurs. 9/20  Visual Displays and Museum Strategies  (presentation)


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

Museo Nacional de Antropologia, 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)

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

Week 3  Europe in the Americas

Tues. 9/25  The Search for Silver and the Fur Trade


Thurs. 9/27  Contexts of Political Relations  (presentation)


Week 4  Mexico

Tues. 10/2  Overview


Thurs. 10/4  Major Themes (presentation)


Week 5  United States

Tues. 10/9  Overview


Thurs. 10/11  Major Themes (presentation)


Week 6  Canada

Tues. 10/16  Overview/Incident at Oka and the Meech Lake Accord

Film (in class): "Tribal Wisdom and the Modern World - The Tightrope of Power." Millenium Series #9 (The significance of First Nations for Canada's Constitutional Reforms)

Thurs. 10/18 Major Themes (presentation)


SITUATING NATIVE AMERICAN IDENTITIES

Week 7 The Negotiation of Identity

Tues. 10/23 State Definitions of Groups and Individuals


Thurs. 10/25 The Politics of Persistence and Change (presentation)


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

Tues. 10/30 Strategies of Resistance and Survival in Interethnic Contexts


Thurs. 11/1 Culture and Gender (presentation)
Phillip Round, “‘There was more to it, but that is all I can remember’: The Persistence of History in the ‘Autobiography of Delfina Cuero’”. American Indian Quarterly 21(2): 171-193 (1997).


**Week 9  Reflections on Indigenous Minnesota**

**Tues. 11/6  The 1862 Dakota Conflict**

Film (in class): "The Dakota Conflict." PBS Documentary.


**Thurs. 11/8  The Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Tribal Museum  (presentation)**


**Week 10  Conclusion**

**Tues. 11/13  Some Final Thoughts...**


