

NATIVE AMERICAN RELIGION, Fall 2015

NAT 142—M001 (28018); REL 142—M001 (27924)

202 Hall of Languages, MW 5:15-6:35 PM

All class materials on Blackboard (<http://blackboard.syr.edu>)

Professor Philip P. Arnold (pparnold@syr.edu) phone: 443-3861
Office hours: M W 4-5 PM, and by appointment. Office 508 HL

Teaching Assistants: Adam DJ Brett (adbrett@syr.edu) phone: 443-3861
Office hour: M 4-5 PM and by appointment, office 514 HL

Dai Newman (dnewma03@syr.edu) phone: 443-3861
Office hour: W 4-5 PM and by appointment, office 514 HL

Introduction:

It has been over 500 years since Europeans encountered America's indigenous inhabitants. These interactions were occasionally friendly but most often contentious and bloody. In spite of this long history many Native Americans claim they are still misunderstood and disrespected by the culture that surrounds them. The genocides of the past have still not been acknowledged or diminished. We will learn about the religious life of Native Americans as it is revealed through the contact between various European and Indigenous cultural groups throughout the Americas focusing particularly on their distinctive understandings of land. Readings focus on Mesoamerican (Olmec, Maya, Aztec), Lakota (i.e., Sioux), and Haudenosaunee (i.e., Six Nations Iroquois Confederacy) traditions written by an historian of religions, a poet, and Native American writers. We conclude with a book by the noted historian of religions, Huston Smith, who asks the question, "Why hasn't the freedom of religion ever applied to Native American people?" At the end of the class we look at the crisis points between Native American traditions and American culture.

Native American religions present to us a variety of challenges having to do with our Modern American identity. As such, my objectives are that by the end of the course you be able to seriously ask and reflect on a series of questions of deep significance. By the end of the class we will begin to wonder what it really means to be an American. Our highly individualistic understanding of "religion" will begin to be challenged when confronted with Native American traditions. For example, can we really say that land, as well as other aspects of our material life, are just "natural resources" or do Native people have a more viable way of thinking and expressing the full range of humanity by referring to the land as *Pachamama*, *Turtle Island*, or *Mother Earth*?

Required Texts (available at the University Bookstore and also at the Reserve Desk of Bird Library):

José Barriero, [Indian Roots of American Democracy](#) (pdf)

David Carrasco, [Religions of Mesoamerica](#)

Ronald Goodman, [Lakota Star Knowledge](#)

John Neihardt, [Black Elk Speaks](#)

Huston Smith and Phil Cousineau, [A Seat at the Table](#)

NOON Booklet: [Nation to Nation, Neighbor to Neighbor](#)

Recommended Text: Tom Porter, [And Grandma Said...Iroquois Traditional Teachings](#)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Reading Assignments</u>
<u>August</u>		
31	Introductions	
<u>September</u>		
2	What is Religion?	Preface "Urgency of Indigenous religions" (pdf)
4	Six Nations Day at the Great New York State Fair	
7	Labor Day—no class	
9	Native American religions	Intro. "Urgency of Indigenous religions" (pdf) Smith & Cousineau, Intro, chs. 1 & 2
13	Paper #1 Due on the Discussion Board	
14	What are people for?	Carrasco: Preface and Chapter I
16	Mesoamerican world renewal	Carrasco: Chapter II
18-27	World Indoor Lacrosse Championship—volunteers needed!	
21	The Aztec world	Carrasco: Chapter III
23	The Maya	Carrasco: Chapter IV
28	Post-colonial religion	Carrasco: Chapter V
30	EXAM #1	
<u>October</u>		
5	The Great Vision	BES Intro. & chs. I-VI
7	Long Hair and Crazy Horse	BES chs. VII - XIII
12	Performing vision	BES chs. XIV - XVIII
14	Ghost Dance and Wounded Knee	BES chs. XIX - XXV
19	The Lakota sky	Goodman, Preface & chs. 1- 4

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Reading Assignments</u>
<u>October</u>		
21	Sacrifice and Life	Goodman, chs. 5--8 & Appendices
25	Paper #2 due on the Discussion Board	
26	Words before all else	Intro—NOON Booklet
28	Onondaga Nation Territory	NOON Booklet—Haudenosaunee Indian Roots, pgs. 1-19
<u>November</u>		
2	Whose story is it?	NOON Booklet—Hidden History Indian Roots, pgs. 20-46
4	Sovereignty	NOON Booklet—Sovereignty Indian Roots, Venables
9	Sacred and Sick places	NOON Booklet—Onondaga Lake Indian Roots, Roesch-Wagner
11	Water	NOON Booklet—Sanctity of Water Indian Roots, pgs. 135-175
16	Urgency of our times	NOON Booklet—Closing Epilogue “Urgency of Indigenous religions” (pdf)
18	EXAM #2	
21	Opening of the Skä·noñh—Great Law of Peace Center	
23-25	Thanksgiving Break—no classes	
30	Sacred places and cultural crisis	Smith & Cousineau, chps. 3 & 4
<u>December</u>		
2	Native Languages and religion	Smith & Cousineau, chps. 5 & 6
7	Prisons and Human Genome Project	Smith & Cousineau, chps. 7 & 8
9	lessons of Mt. Graham	Smith & Cousineau, chps. 9 & 10

PAPER #3 due to be posted by Friday, 11 December.

Grading:

Final grades will be based on papers, exams, attendance and class participation.

Papers: You are required to post 3 papers on the Blackboard website (<http://blackboard.syr.edu>). Due dates are on the syllabus. The papers should be from 750 to 1000 words long (about 3 to 4 pages). Each paper is to be on a topic posted on the Discussion board forum on Blackboard a week before the paper is due. The papers are intended to generate discussion so **you are required to read the papers of other students and respond to at least two other papers.**

Your papers will be graded on a sliding scale. Exceptionally well crafted papers that are equivalent to the letter grade 'A' are worth 12-15 points each; 'B' papers are worth 8-11 points; 'C' papers are worth 4-7 points; and 'D' papers are worth 1-3 points; and failing papers are worth 0 points. You will receive 0 points, if you do not hand the papers in on time or if your paper fails to address the issues presented in the assigned topic. In addition, you are required to respond to two other papers on the discussion board for which you will receive 5 additional points. Responses to other papers are due a week after the papers have been posted. You can receive up to 20 points for each paper for a total of 60 points for the semester. Both papers are due to be posted on a Monday. You will have up until a week after posting your paper to respond to two other papers.

Below are three criteria that we will use when grading your written work:

- 1) **Clarity.** The viewpoints you present in your writing must be clearly conceived and well argued. Your writing style should be straight--forward, easy to read and should be clearly related to the issues you wish to address. Topic sentences at the beginning of each paragraph are helpful in establishing the issue and argument for the reader at the outset. (40%)
- 2) **Engagement with the material.** Entries are to be related to the reading material. They are *not reviews* of what has been stated in the book but are your *critical analysis* of the reading. Avoid direct quotes. Instead seriously take--up what you consider to be the 'key' issues for the study of religion in the reading. An analysis of the issues discussed in the course become clearer the closer your writing is to the texts used in class. (40%)
- 3) **Creativity.** The 'work' of Religious Studies, and perhaps the Humanities in general, is essentially creative. Interpretation of religious phenomena requires that you come to some meaningful relationship with your object of study. This is one of the defining characteristics of creativity. You have a unique and important contribution to make to our collective understandings. There are no predetermined experts in the area of interpretation, only well refined and well argued positions. Your interpretations will be dealt with as importantly as you regard them yourself. (20%)

Exams: There are 2 exams for this class. These are in-class exams and the date and time of the exams are clearly marked on the syllabus. Both exams will be a combination of True/false, multiple choice, short identifications and/or essay questions. They will cover aspects of the class based primarily on the reading

Attendance and class participation: Attendance is mandatory for this class. Role will be taken. After two unexcused absences you will be deducted two points for every unexcused absence. Lectures and reading will be intimately related to each other but quite different. It is therefore in your own best interest to do the reading and attend class as both will reflect on your performance on discussion topic papers and the final. You will be given regular opportunities to participate in class either by asking questions, making comments, and interacting with other students.

Final grades will be determined as follows:

Papers	60 points
Exams	30 points
Attendance and class participation	<u>10 points</u>
Total	100 points

Extra credit: There are a number of events during this semester that you may use as extra credit opportunities. If you attend one or more of these events and write about your experience of these events and post these short papers on Blackboard you will receive up to 3 points each. There will be a maximum of 2 extra credit opportunities for each person. Several of these events are marked on the syllabus but there may be other events too. Please inform the class if you know of additional events not announced.

Final grades will be calculated as follows:

A	94-100 points
A-	91-93 points
B+	87-90 points
B	84-86 points
B-	81-83 points
C+	77-80 points
C	74-76 points
C-	71-73 points
D	60-70 points
F	59 points and below

Course Goals, Academic Integrity and Disabilities Services

The Department of Religion has articulated three goals that shape its teaching and its expectations of what students in its courses and programs may expect to gain from this study:

1. To understand better the nature and diversity of religious expressions in the contemporary world and in history, and their power in peoples' personal and collective lives;
2. To think more deeply and critically about religious experience and its modes of expression and forms of interpretation;
3. To recognize and appreciate the difficulties and possibilities in a disciplined study of religion; and to become aware of a diversity of approaches and methods within that study.

Faith Traditions Observances

Syracuse University does not have non-instructional days for any religious holiday and students must notify instructors by the end of the second week of classes when they will be observing their religious holiday(s). SU's religious observances policy, found at http://supolicies.syr.edu/emp_ben/religious_observance.htm, recognizes the diversity of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holy days according to their tradition. Under the policy, students are provided an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance provided they notify their instructors no later than the end of the second week of classes. Student deadlines are posted in My Slice under Student Services/Enrollment/My Religious Observances/Add a Notification.

Academic Integrity

Syracuse University's academic integrity policy reflects the high value that we, as a university community, place on honesty in academic work. The policy defines our expectations for academic honesty and holds students accountable for the integrity of all work they submit. Students should understand that it is their responsibility to learn about course-specific expectations, as well as about university-wide academic integrity expectations. The university policy governs appropriate citation and use of sources, the integrity of work submitted in exams and assignments, and the veracity of signatures on attendance sheets and other verification of participation in class activities. The policy also prohibits students from submitting the same written work in more than one class without receiving written authorization in advance from both instructors. The presumptive penalty for a first instance of academic dishonesty by an undergraduate student is course failure, accompanied by a transcript notation indicating that the failure resulted from a violation of academic integrity policy. The presumptive penalty for a first instance of academic dishonesty by a graduate student is suspension or expulsion. SU students are required to read an online summary of the university's academic integrity expectations and provide an electronic signature agreeing to abide by them twice a year during pre-term check-in on MySlice.

For more information and the complete policy, see <http://academicintegrity.syr.edu>.

Disability Services:

Our community values diversity and seeks to promote meaningful access to educational opportunities for all students. Syracuse University and I are committed to your success and to supporting Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended and the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990). This means that in general no individual who is otherwise qualified shall be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity, solely by reason of having a disability.

If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability, please contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), <http://disabilityservices.syr.edu>, located at 804 University Avenue, room 309, or call 315-443-4498 for an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations. ODS is responsible for coordinating disability-related accommodations and will issue “Accommodation Authorization Letters” to students with documented disabilities as appropriate. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact ODS as soon as possible.

Class Courtesy

All students are expected to follow simple rules of academic courtesy with respect to fellow students and instructors. Please come to class on time to avoid disrupting the class. Once class begins, you must refrain from personal conversations. You must put away all non-course reading materials (e.g. newspapers). Turn off and put away all cell phones and electronic devices. **No laptops will be allowed in class unless cleared as part of a disability accommodation.** Notes need to be taken with pen and paper. Please avoid premature preparations to leave class; your instructor will let you know when class is over. Eating is not allowed during class. You may be asked to leave the class for the day if you do not follow these rules.