



INDIGENOUS RELIGIONS (ANT 273; NAT 244; REL 244)

Fall 2016 (sec M001: 26530; 27943; 26415)
MW (5:15-6:35 PM), Newhouse I, rm. 102

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Introduction:

This course explores a long neglected aspect of the world's religions--Indigenous religions--that is religions that are primarily defined as oriented toward particular landscapes. Because the category of "Indigenous" encompasses a tremendous cultural variety, our first task must be to discuss the category itself. What does "Indigenous Religions" mean? On one hand Indigenous religions are in contact with, yet distinct from, the 'great,' or global religions such as Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, etc. On the other hand there are indigenous elements in all of religious life. Indeed we will consider how being indigenous is directly connected with religious creativity. Our second task will be to investigate this complicated topic by looking at particular cases and issues confronting indigenous peoples. These will be largely taken in our reading from the Americas. For our third task we is to look at the religious forces that are contrary to indigenous traditions. For this we will look at the Doctrine of Discovery and also read what Indigenous Peoples are communicating to the world in their work through the United Nations. At each of these three turns in the course we will self-consciously reflect on the cultural distances between the world views which constitute modernity (and the university) and the world views which constitute Indigenous peoples.

Required Texts:

Philip Arnold, [The Urgency of Indigenous Religions](#) (pdf on Blackboard)
Joseph Bastien, [Mountain of the Condor](#)
Robin Kimmerer, [Braiding Sweetgrass](#)
Lauret Savoy, [Trace: Memory, History, Race, and the American Landscape](#)
[Basic Call to Consciousness](#) (pdf on Blackboard)
[Nation to Nation, Neighbor to Neighbor](#) Nation (NOON) Booklet

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Assignments</u>
<u>August</u>		
29	Introductions and definitions	
31	Onondaga Nation Territory	Arnold, pgs. 3-19 (Blackboard) Intro—NOON Booklet
<u>September</u>		
5	Labor Day—no class	
7	Collaboration	Arnold, pgs. 19-34 (Blackboard) NOON Booklet—Haudenosaunee
12	Intro to a category	Arnold, pgs. 35-48 (Blackboard) NOON Booklet—Hidden History
14	What's your story?	Arnold, pgs. 48-76 (Blackboard) NOON Booklet—Sovereignty
Paper #1 “What are Indigenous Religions?” due to be posted on Blackboard by Wednesday 21 September by 11:59 PM		
19	Paying Attention!!	Arnold, pgs. 77-89 (Blackboard) NOON Booklet—Onondaga Lake
21	Religion in the Modern World	Arnold, pgs. 90-116 (Blackboard) NOON Booklet—Sanctity of Water
26	Introduction to the Mountain	Bastien, Chapters 1-2 NOON Booklet—Closing
28	Earth metaphor	Bastien, Chapters 3-4 Arnold, pgs. 117-122 (Blackboard)
<u>October</u>		
3	Birth	Bastien Chapters 5-6 Arnold, pgs. 122-132 (Blackboard)
5	Death	Bastien Chapters 9-10 Arnold, pgs. 132-142 (Blackboard)
Paper #2: “Discuss religion as habitation” due to be posted on Blackboard by Wednesday 12 October by 11:59 PM		
10	Religion as Exchange	Kimmerer, pgs. 3-32 Arnold, pgs. 142-157 (Blackboard)
12	Ceremonial Gift Economies	Kimmerer, pgs. 33-60 Arnold, pgs. 158-170 (Blackboard)
17	Sap rising	Kimmerer, pgs. 63-71 Arnold, pgs. 170-182 (Blackboard)

Date	Topics	Assignments
<u>October</u>		
19	Gratitude	Kimmerer, pgs. 72-120 Arnold, pgs. 183-197 (Blackboard)
Project Outline due to be posted on Blackboard by Wed. 22 October 11:59PM		
24	Three Sisters	Kimmerer, pgs. 121-155 Savoy, pgs. 15-30
26	Honoring the Harvest	Kimmerer, pgs. 156-204 Savoy, pgs. 31-48
31	Becoming Indigenous	Kimmerer, pgs. 205-240 Savoy, pgs. 49-68
<u>November</u>		
2	Putting down roots	Kimmerer, pgs. 241-302 Savoy, pgs. 69-87
Paper #3: “Discuss religion as exchange” due to be posted on Blackboard by Wednesday 9 November by 11:59 PM		
7	Returning the Gift	Kimmerer, pgs. 303-384 Savoy, pgs. 89-114
9	Doctrine of Christian Discovery	Deloria on Blackboard Arnold, pgs. 198 216 (Blackboard)
14	Consequences of Colonialism	Arnold, pgs. 216-227 (Blackboard)
16	Basic call to consciousness	<u>Basic Call</u> , Intro, Preamble, pp. 80-102 Arnold, pgs. 228-239 (Blackboard)
21 & 23 Thanksgiving Break—no classes		
Paper # 4: “Discuss the DoD and Indigenous Religions” is due to be posted on Blackboard by Wednesday 30 November by 11:59 PM		
28	Survival	<u>Basic Call</u> , pp. 103-125
30	Urgency of Indigenous Religions	Arnold, Epilogue
<u>December</u>		
5	Project presentations and responses	
7	Project presentations and responses	
FINAL PROJECT DUE to be posted by Monday, 12 December 2016		

Grading

Final grades will be based on four discussion papers, the outline, presentation and submission of a final project, and class attendance and participation.

Papers and responses: At four times during the semester you are responsible for writing a short paper on the assigned topic and readings. The paper is to be 750 to 1000 words (3 to 4 pages, double spaced) and posted on the class Blackboard site (<http://blackboard.syr.edu/>). Papers must be copied and pasted into the dialogue box and **not as an attachment**. Often attachments do not download from Blackboard and you will not receive credit for your paper if we cannot read it. You will receive up to 10 points for your paper depending on its quality. You will also be asked to respond to at least 2 other papers of your peers for which you will receive an additional 5 points. Responses are due no later than a week after the discussion paper is due. You can get up to 15 points for each paper for a possible total of 60 points.

The criteria listed below are used when assessing your written work. Percentages are only to demonstrate the relative weight of each of the criteria in any given assignment.

- **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%)
- **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. Look for key concepts in the course materials and utilize them in your written assignments. (40%)
- **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%)

Group Presentations: The group presentations will take place during the last week of the semester. Your group will present on an Indigenous group and/or tradition that we have not already discussed in class. Your group will be selected randomly from the students in the class. Your group will have **exactly 10 minutes** to present your project to the class. You will receive up to 10 points for your group presentation. A good presentation will include all members of your group participating together in a coordinated way. You may use all sorts of media in your presentations. Be creative.

Outline and Final Project: You will be responsible for developing an outline, and handing in a final project of your choosing. It can be on any aspect of the reading or your independent work. The date for posting an outline is marked on the syllabus. You will get up to 5 points for the outline. These are to be more than just a 'bare-bones' outline. They should be an explanation **in narrative form** of what you will be doing for the final project, how you are doing it and why it is important. The group presentation be connected or not to your individual final

project. As with the papers you will be required to respond to at least 2 other outlines a week after the posting date for which you will get another 5 points.

The final project is due to be posted on Blackboard on the day of our final exam. It is to be 750 to 1000 words (3-4 pages long, 12 point, double-spaced). In addition to the narrative you may want to include photos, videos or other media in the project. This may be on the topic of your group presentation or can be on your own independent work. You will receive up to 10 points for your final project. All totaled the final project outline and final project worth up to 20 points. I encourage you to contact me or the TA via email with ideas for the final project as soon as possible. We can make suggestions on how to do an effective final project. Good luck!

Attendance and class participation: Attendance is mandatory for this class. Lectures and reading will be intimately related 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 papers, responses and your final paper. You will have two unexcused absences. You will be given regular opportunities to participate in class either by asking questions, making comments, and interacting with other students in discussion in class or on Blackboard.

Grades will be calculated on the following basis:

4 discussion papers and responses	60 points
Outline and responses	10 points
Group Presentation	10 points
Final project paper	10 points
Attendance and class participation	<u>10 points</u>
	100 points

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

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.

Disability-Related Accommodations

If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability, please contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), <http://disabilityservices.syr.edu>, located in Room 309 of 804 University Avenue, or call (315) 443-4498, TDD: (315) 443-1371 for an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations. ODS is responsible for coordinating disability-related accommodations and will issue students with documented Disabilities Accommodation Authorization Letters, as appropriate. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact ODS as soon as possible.

Academic Integrity Policy

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/>.

Religious Observances Notification and Policy

SU religious observances notification and policy, found at <http://hendricks.syr.edu/spiritual-life/index.html>, recognizes the diversity of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holidays 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 before the end of the second week of classes for regular session classes and by the submission deadline for flexibly formatted classes.

For fall and spring semesters, an online notification process is available for students in **My Slice / StudentServices / Enrollment / MyReligiousObservances / Add a Notification**. Instructors may access a list of their students who have submitted a notification in My Slice Faculty Center.

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 MP3 players. **No laptops will be allowed in class.** 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.