

History 495 - Indian Identity and the Ambiguities of Race

Spring 2007 - Mon. 7:10-9:50pm

Dr. Jane T. Merritt

Office: BAL 8022

Telephone: 683-3949 or 3945

e-mail: jmerritt@odu.edu

Office Hours: Mon. and Wed. 1:00 - 2:30 pm, or by appointment

Today, with the social and economic implications of Native American tribal membership and the continuing fight over the allocation of natural resources, the question of what constitutes Indianness has become a politically contested idea. Much of the new historical scholarship, influenced by anthropology as well as cultural studies and literary criticism, questions the presumed essential nature of Native American identity and the concept of race. It is no longer accurate to assume there is one way of being Indian. We will begin to explore and define the concept of Indianness and how it is represented historically. Does Indian identity change over time and how? If Indian cultures and communities incorporate elements of Euro-American cultural practices are they then less Indian? In other words, how does one measure cultural identity? We will also explore the implications this contested and porous concept of identity has for constructions of ethnicity and race in American society.

Required Texts:

The required texts listed below can be purchased in the book store. **In addition, there will be articles and other documents available through the class site on Blackboard.**

1. Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indians from Columbus to the Present* (Random House, 1978).
2. Claudio Saunt, *A New Order of Things: Property, Power, and the Transformation of the Creek Indians, 1733-1816* (Cambridge University Press, 1999).
3. *Black Elk Speaks, Being the Life Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux*, as told through John G. Neihardt (University of Nebraska Press, Bison Books, 1988).
4. Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (The University of Kansas Press, 2004).
5. Philip Dennis Banks and Richard Erdoes, *Ojibwa Warrior: Dennis Banks and the Rise of the American Indian Movement* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2005).

Blackboard:

This course has a web site on Blackboard, where course announcements, reminders, assignments, documents, etc., will be posted. Students are responsible for all information and material made available for this class. Check Blackboard regularly, ideally once a week.

Access Blackboard at www.odu.edu . “Current Students” -- “blackboard” (under “Academic Resources”). Log in by following the directions, then select this course. If you do not have internet access from home, you can access Blackboard from any computer terminal on campus.

E-mail: It is University policy that students maintain and regularly access their ODU e-mail accounts (it’s also free). You are responsible for any course information sent to your ODU e-mail. To activate your account go to <http://occs.odu.edu/accounts/>.

Written Assignments:

1. **Weekly Thought Paper** (1-3 pages, typed, double-spaced) on class readings. Due every week, except those weeks that you hand in a formal essay.
2. **Two 5-page essays.** See CLASS SCHEDULE below for essay questions and due dates. You must complete one essay during the first half of the semester and one during the second half of the semester.
3. **Mid-term examination.** In class, Monday Feb. 26
4. **10 to 15-page Final Paper.** See separate sheet for further instructions. Due Monday April 30.

Grading:

The assignments for this class make up the following proportion of the semester grade:

Thought Papers/class participation	20%
5-page essays (15% each)	30%
Mid-Term examination	20%
Final Paper	<u>30%</u>
	100%

Course Requirements:

YOU MUST COMPLETE ALL ASSIGNMENTS - You will not pass the course if you fail to complete any assignment given.

ATTENDANCE - It is important to attend the class meetings since there will be substantial class discussion and it constitutes a portion of your grade.

LATE PAPERS - All assignments are due on the dates shown on the syllabus or paper guides. For every day a paper is late, the student will lose one plus/minus letter-grade. Late papers must be handed directly to me or be turned into the history department office and signed and dated by one of the secretaries. Please plan your work schedule ahead of time and start assignments early to avoid these consequences.

MAKE-UP EXAMS - Examinations can be made-up only in the case of medical emergencies or major family crises. These circumstances must be verified.

HONOR CODE - The University Honor Code applies to all work done in this course. Students who cheat or plagiarize on any assignment will fail the course.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week One - Introduction

January 8

Week Two

January 15 - Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday

NO CLASS

Week Three - Worlds Collide: Native American Cultures and European Contact

January 22

Reading: Berkhofer, *The White Man's Indian*, to p. 111; excerpts from *The Broken Spears: The Aztecs Account of the Conquest of Mexico* and Colin Calloway, ed., "Voices from the Shore," (handouts)

Essay option #1: How did Europeans conceive of "Indianness" during the early period of contact in North America? In contrast, how did Indians describe their own histories? What are some of the problems associated with reconstructing histories of Native American cultures?

Week Four – Settlers and Missionaries: Remaking Indians in Their Own Image?

January 29

Reading: James Ronda, "We Are Well As We Are: An Indian Critique of Seventeenth-Century Christian Missions," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 34 (January 1977), 66-82; Jane T. Merritt, "Dreaming of the Savior's Blood: Moravians and the Indian Great Awakening," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 54 (October 1997), 723-746. (See Blackboard)

TO THINK ABOUT: How did Indians respond to the introduction of Christianity in their communities? Acceptance, rejection, or adaptation?

Week Five - The Indian Revolution and the New American Nation

February 5

Reading: "Forum: the 'Iroquois Influence' Thesis - Con and Pro," in *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 53 (July 1996), 587-636; Colin Calloway, ed. "The Iroquois Great League of Peace," in *First Peoples: a Documentary Survey of American Indian History* (see Blackboard); "Iroquois Constitution": <http://www.indigenouspeople.net/iroqcon.htm>; and the federal constitution: <http://www.house.gov/Constitution/Constitution.html>

Essay Option #2: What are the arguments for an Iroquois influence on the U.S. constitution of 1787? What are the problems with evidence for this theory? Why do some people want to demonstrate a link between Native American peoples and the founding of the United States as a political entity?

Week Six - The Jeffersonian Indian and Romanticizing the West

February 12

Reading: Berkhofer, *The White Man's Indian*, from p. 112; Daniel H. Usner, Jr., "Iroquois Livelihood and Jeffersonian Agrarianism: Reaching behind the Models and Metaphors," in Frederick Hoxie, et al, eds., *Native Americans and the Early Republic* (Charlottesville, VA, 1999), 200-225 (see Blackboard); Thomas Jefferson's address to Wolf and the Mandan Nation: <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/jeffind5.htm> Thomas Jefferson's address to the Cherokee Nation: <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/jeffind4.htm>

TO THINK ABOUT: How did U.S. Indian policy develop during the Early National period? Were there contradictions between the ideals expressed by President Jefferson and the reality of Indian-white relations?

Week Seven - Indian Removal: Creeks and Cherokees become American

February 19

Reading: Claudio Saunt, *A New Order of Things: Property, Power, and the Transformation of the Creek Indians, 1733-1816*; documents on Cherokee Indian Removal (see Blackboard)

Essay Option #3: How had Creek Indians created a "new order of things" by the early 19th century? How did this transformation impact Creek power internally and externally? Were Creeks becoming American or did they remain Indian? Can we or should we (or Saunt) distinguish between the two?

Week Eight - MIDTERM EXAMINATION

February 26

Spring Break March 5-10 - No class

Week Nine - Plains Indians and the Reservation System

March 12

Reading: Richard White, "The Winning of the West: the Expansion of the Western Sioux in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," *Journal of American History* 65 (September 1978), 319-343; "Two Legging's Quest for Power," in Colin Calloway, ed., *Our Hearts Fell to the Ground: Plains Indian Views of How the West Was Lost*, 78-84 (see Blackboard); George Catlin letters (link on Blackboard);

Explore the following websites: George Catlin paintings of Plains Indians from the 1830s at the

National Gallery <http://www.nga.gov/cgi-bin/psearch?Request=A&Person=4950>; Lakota Winter Counts: <http://wintercounts.si.edu/>

Week Ten - Indian Wars and Indian Heroes: the Basis for the Hollywood Indian

March 19

Reading: Richard White, “Last of the Mohicans;” Gregory S. Jay, “White Man’s Book No Good;” Rennard Strickland, “Tonto’s Revenge, or, Who is that Seminole in the Sioux Warbonnet? The Cinematic Indian!” (See Blackboard)

To Think About: How have American Indians been portrayed on film? How has that popular image shifted from the early 20th century to the present? Do these images mirror Robert F. Berkhofer’s concepts of the Good and Bad Indian—defining, critiquing, or praising Euro-American society?

Tuesday March 20 – Old Dominion University Film Festival: “Coming to Light: Edward S. Curtis and the North American Indian” (2000) and “The Red Man’s View” (1909)

Week Eleven - Wounded Knee and the Last Defense of the West

March 26

Reading: *Black Elk Speaks, Being the Life Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux*

Images of Wounded Knee: <http://www.bigbats.biz/wounded-knee-photos1.html>

National Archives site, plug in “Wounded Knee” on the following search menu (you’ll get list of documents and links to copies): http://arcweb.archives.gov/arc/basic_search.jsp

Essay Option #4: How does Black Elk define his identity as Oglala Sioux? What kinds of internal and external influences helped shape that identity? Why did Neihardt end the story of Black Elk with the Ghost dance and massacre at Wounded Knee?

Week Twelve - Assimilation and Allotment: “the Vanishing Indian”

April 2

Reading: Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places*;

Explore the following websites: Indian children in boarding school:

http://www.english.uiuc.edu/maps/poets/a_f/erdrich/boarding/gallery.htm;

Photos from Edward S. Curtis at the turn of the 20th century: <http://www.curtis-collection.com/>

(visit the “Gallery” to view images, but think about its ultimate goal)

Essay Option #5: How did native peoples at the turn of the 20th century challenge the expectations and stereo-types of them produced by the non-Indian world? What is the relationship between primitivism and modernity and how did that relationship shape these expectations?

Week Thirteen - Return of the Native: Twentieth-century Political Resurgence

April 9

Reading: Dennis Banks, *Ojibwa Warrior* ; Wilcomb E. Washburn, “American Indian Studies: a Status Report,” *American Quarterly*, 27 (August 1975), 263-274; American Indian Movement web site: <http://www.dickshovel.com/AIMIntro.html>

Essay Option #6: What conditions gave rise to new Indian political activism, such as the American Indian Movement (AIM), in the 1960s and 70s? How did Dennis Banks’ experience reflect an uneasy relationship between traditional native lives and modern American culture?

Week Fourteen - Indian Identity at the End of the Twentieth Century

April 16

To Think About: How were Indians becoming “American” between the end of the 19th century and the turn of the 21st century? Are Robert F. Berkhofer’s categories of the Good and Bad Indian still useful in explaining the complex role of Indian peoples in America or how Indian identity is conceived of today?

Week Fifteen - The Future of Native American History

April 23

Reading: Liza Black, “The Predicament of Identity,” *Ethnohistory*, 48 (Winter-Spring 2001), 337-350.