

HIST 389: Indigenous Histories of North America, 1835-Present Spring 2024



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Course Description

This course is designed to introduce students to the histories of Indigenous peoples in what became known as North America from the period before encounter, through the creation of the United States, and into the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries. We will focus on the diversity of experiences that different communities and individuals had throughout this period (as well as in the diversity among the peoples who have become known as “Indian” and those who have become known as “Americans”).

Art/Cultural Critic and all-around super-smart guy (who also happens to be Comanche), Paul Chaat Smith argues that

“no reasonably sentient person of whatever background could seriously dispute the overwhelming evidence that Indians are at the very center of everything that happened in the Western Hemisphere (which, technically speaking, is half the world) over the past five centuries, and so that experience is at the heart of the history of everyone who lives here. That sounds like hyperbole, but actually it understates things. Contact between the two disconnected halves of the world five centuries ago changed the planet and created the world we live in today, so, really, the Indian experience is at the heart of, or pretty damn close to, the history of everybody, period.”

I tend to agree, so this is the jumping off point for our class this semester.

Indigenous history is an exciting and dynamic field. In addition to examining historical events and developments, this course will also introduce students to the scholarly field by focusing attention on foundational questions and ideas as well as some of the newest and most interesting debates. Specifically, our goals for this semester are:

- 1) Develop an appreciation for the histories people here experienced prior to encountering non-Indigenous interlopers (in other words, before Columbus in 1492)
- 2) Develop an appreciation for the complexities of encounter (and all the ways encounter functioned--ecologically, epidemiologically, spiritually, legally, socially, economically)
- 3) Recognize the ways exchange, adaptation, resistance, accommodation, and survival worked within and through cultures of colonialism and imperial expansion across time

- 4) Begin to grapple with the history of United States expansion, the continuing existence of Indigenous sovereignty, and the tensions therein 5) Consider the philosophy and practice of “doing history”

Required Texts

There are four primary texts in this course. To supplement these texts we will read additional selections (articles, chapters, and documents). The additional readings, as well as the primary texts, comprise an integral component to the course and should be read thoroughly.

Ella Cara Deloria, *Waterlily* (reprint, 2009)

Thomas King, *The Truth about Stories: A Native Narrative* (2008)

Frederick Hoxie, ed., *Talking Back to Civilization* (2001)

Charles Wilkinson, *Blood Struggle* (2006)

Graded Work

Participation	50 points	Critical Response Essay	50 points
Attendance	50 points	Synthetic Essay	50 points
Book Review Assignment	50 points	Take-Home Midterm Exam	100 points
Thought Journals	50 points	Take-Home Final Exam	100 points
		TOTAL	500 points

**** Late work will be penalized @ 20% per day, but all written work must be submitted.**

Exams

Both exams will be an open-book/open-notes format. I will provide a writing prompt and ask that you answer the prompt as fully and completely as possible. Your responses will vary in length. You will be required to cite your sources.

Book Review

Each student will write a book review (2 full pages), of one of our readings for the semester, Ella Cara Deloria's *Waterlily*. You will submit an initial draft and a revised version that responds to feedback I provide.

The review should:

- 1) Identify the author of the work
- 2) Clearly and accurately summarize the author's argument/point-of-view, or the plot of the novel
- 3) Discuss the manner in which the author supports her argument, or how the plot and characters develop
- 4) Cite specific examples of the evidence used to support her argument, or important moments in the plot of the novel
- 5) Critique the book. What are its strengths and weaknesses

The review should be typed, double-spaced, 12-point font, 1" margins, error-free.

Attendance and Participation

Because this is a lecture/discussion course, attendance and active participation are crucial to its success. Students will miss no more than 2 classes without a College-recognized excuse. If students miss more than 4 total classes without excuses, they will receive an “F” for the course. Active participation is equally important, as we will learn as much from one another as we will from the course materials.

Thought Journals

Students are required to write five, 1-2 page journal entries (typed, double-spaced, 12-point font, 1” margins) throughout the semester. The reading journals are due on the days indicated in the syllabus.

- The reading journal is designed to help you internalize and reflect on the course readings. It is also intended to help you prepare for the in-class discussion, our exams, and our critical response essays.
- The journals should address three main points:
 - 1) Important points from the reading. What specific events, facts, or ideas stood out to you.
 - 2) Questions you have about the author; his/her research or perspective, OR important quotes from the text – did the author state anything in a particularly interesting or poignant way
 - 3) How does the reading connect to the material we have been covering in the course?

Critical Response Essay --- Stories and Doing History

In this paper, I’d like you to select one of the essays we’ve read from *The Truth about Stories*, as well as two other readings from the first month of the course. Construct an essay that provides an answer to this question: What does it mean to “do” Indigenous history? Consider also, these follow-up questions: Is doing Indigenous history different from doing other kinds of history? What are the potential promises and pitfalls of this kind of work?

The paper should 500-750 words--typed, double-spaced, 12-point font, 1” margins, error-free.

Synthetic Essay --- Native Voices and United States Colonialism

For this assignment, students will choose primary documents from *Talking Back to Civilization* and construct an argument about the ways Indigenous people shaped and responded to the expansion of United States colonialism in the nineteenth (and early-twentieth) centuries. The individuals who said or wrote these words came from different places, had different experiences, and sometimes divergent perspectives. Your essay should present a nuanced argument that reflects the complexities of the positions these men and women took. Additional details forthcoming.

The paper should 750-1,000 words--typed, double-spaced, 12-point font, 1” margins, error-free

Schedule

UNIT 1: DIFFERENCE AND DOING HISTORY (AND MAYBE A STRANGE LIKENESS OR TWO)

WEEK 1 - Introduction: The People without History?

Jan. 16: Class Introductions, Goals, and Expectations

Jan. 18: Who are we talking about? How did they get here? Where is here?

Readings: “You’ll Never Believe What Happened” in King, *The Truth about Stories*; “Americans without Tears” in Smith, *Everything You Know About Indians Is Wrong*; “Blazing New Trails or Burning Bridges: Native American History Comes of Age,” *Western Historical Quarterly* (9, no. 1, (Spring 2008)

WEEK 2 - History and “Ethnohistory”

Jan. 23: History and “Two Worlds”

Jan. 25: What is Settler Colonialism? -- **Thought Journal #1 DUE**

Readings: “Preface, Introduction, & Afterward” in Buss & Genetin-Pilawa eds., *Beyond Two Worlds*; “You’re Not the Indian I Had in Mind” in King, *The Truth about Stories*; “Teaching American History as Settler Colonialism” in Sleeper-Smith, et al., *Why You Can’t Teach United States History without American Indians*; Maya Mikdashi, “What is Settler Colonialism?”, *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 37(2) (2013).

WEEK 3 - Stories about Place and “Place-Stories”

Jan. 30: Ethnohistory and “Beyond Two Worlds”

Feb. 1: Wisdom Sits in Places

Readings: “Stalking with Stories” in Basso, *Wisdoms Sits in Places*; “Hauntings as Histories” in Thrush and Boyd, *Phantom Past, Indigenous Presence*; and “What Is a Monument to Massasoit Doing in Kansas City? The Memory Work of Monuments and Place in Public Displays of History” in *Ethnohistory* 61(4)

WEEK 4 - A Strange Likeness

Feb. 6: Race and the Writing of (Hi)Stories

Feb. 8: Watch -- “*We Shall Remain: Geronimo*” -- **Thought Journal #2 - DUE**

Readings: "Race" and "Writing" in Shoemaker, *A Strange Likeness*; "A Million Porcupines Crying in the Dark" in King, *The Truth about Stories*

UNIT 2: U.S.-Tribal Relations and the Nineteenth-Century Assault on Sovereignty

WEEK 5 - Treaties and Tribal Sovereignty

Feb. 13: **No Class Meeting -- Critical Response Essay - DUE**

Feb. 15: After the Trail of Tears

Readings: Genetin-Pilawa, "Ely Parker and Contentious Peace Policy," *Western Historical Quarterly* Vol 41, No 2.

WEEK 6 - Treaties and Tribal Sovereignty

Feb. 20: The Peace Policy Revisited -- **Midterm Exam distributed**

Feb. 22: Allotment and Assimilation

Readings: Work on Midterm

WEEK 7 - Treaties and Tribal Sovereignty

Feb. 27: Western Conquest and Tribal Life

Feb. 29: **No Class Meeting Midterm Exam DUE**

Readings: Deloria, *Waterlily*, 1-114

SPRING BREAK March 4 - March 10

UNIT 3: Fighting Forced Assimilation

WEEK 8 - Talking Back

Mar. 12: Red Progressives

Mar. 14: The Society of American Indians and Reform Efforts -- **Thought Journal #3 - DUE**

Readings: Deloria, *Waterlily*, 115-228

WEEK 9 - The Nadir

Mar. 19: Indian Education

Mar. 21: Federal Policy **Thought Journal #4 - DUE**

Readings: Hoxie, *Talking Back to Civilization*, selections

UNIT 4: The Road to Self-Determination and Decolonization

WEEK 10 - The Nadir, con't

Mar. 26: World War I

Mar. 28: Reservation Leaders Speak Out **Book Review DUE**

Readings: Hoxie, *Talking Back to Civilization*, selections

WEEK 11 - Nadir and an Indian New Deal

Apr. 2: The Deadening Years

Apr. 4: Termination

Readings: Wilkinson, *Blood Struggle*, Introduction and Part One

WEEK 12 - Termination and The Last Stand

Apr. 9: The Making of a Movement

Apr. 11: Leadership on the Reservations

Readings: Wilkinson, *Blood Struggle*, Part Two

WEEK 13 - Red Power

Apr. 16: Turning Points

Apr. 18: Watch -- *We Shall Remain: Wounded Knee* -- **Synthetic Essay - DUE**

Readings: Wilkinson, *Blood Struggle*, Part Three

WEEK 14 - Beyond Red Power

Apr 23: Two Worlds Revisited **Final Exam Distributed**

Apr 25: Watch -- *Two Spirit* -- **Thought Journal #5 - DUE**

Readings: Wilkinson, *Blood Struggle*, Part Four, and Coda

FINAL EXAM: Tuesday, May 2, 1:30pm

Grading Scale:

500-470 = A	384-365 = C
469-450 = A-	364-350 = C-
449-435 = B+	349-335 = D+
434-415 = B	334-315 = D
414-400 = B-	314-300 = D-
399-385 = C+	299-000 = F

A Note about Academic Integrity: Mason is an Honor Code university; please see the Office for Academic Integrity for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. The integrity of the University community is affected by the individual choices made by each of us. Mason has an Honor Code with clear guidelines regarding academic integrity. Three fundamental and rather simple principles to follow at all times are that: (1) all work submitted be your own; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask for clarification. No grade is important enough to justify academic misconduct. Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another person without giving the person credit. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes. Paraphrased material must also be cited, using MLA or APA format. A simple listing of books or articles is not sufficient. Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual robbery and cannot be tolerated in the academic setting. If you have any doubts about what constitutes plagiarism, please see me.

Disability Accommodations If you have a learning or physical difference that may affect your academic work, you will need to furnish appropriate documentation to the Office of Disability Services. If you qualify for accommodation, the ODS staff will give you a form detailing appropriate accommodations for your instructor. In addition to providing your professors with the appropriate form, please take the initiative to discuss accommodation with them at the beginning of the semester and as needed during the term. Because of the range of learning differences, faculty members need to learn from you the most effective ways to assist you. If you have contacted the Office of Disability Services and are waiting to hear from a counselor, please tell me.

A Note about Communication Student privacy is governed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and is an essential aspect of any course. Email is a necessary part of life in the digital age. I will communicate with you via email throughout the semester and will use your Masonlive I do not accept "I did not check my email" as a valid excuse. I check my email frequently and will strive always to respond to your questions and concerns as soon as possible. See <http://masonlive.gmu.edu> for more information.