

RSOC 91 NATIVE SPIRITUAL TRADITIONS (47566)
Religious Studies, Santa Clara University
Spring Quarter 2009



T TH 8 - 9:45, Kenna 310
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NATIVE SPIRITUAL TRADITIONS (47566)

Course Description:

This course introduces Native American spiritual traditions of the Americas. In the first unit, we'll focus on characteristics of Native spiritual traditions: the relationship of land/sky; sacred time, Native archaeoastronomy; story, song, and ritual. We examine U.S. policies toward Native spiritual practices and raise questions on how in the U.S. context Native peoples have constructed, maintained, changed, resisted, retrieved and adapted their religious spiritual ways. In the second unit, we turn to Native American literature, and examine how Leslie Silko evokes the Laguna spiritual universe in her novel *Ceremony*. Here Tayo, a mixed-blood Laguna returning from the Pacific islands after WW II, learns the "only good cure is a good ceremony." Elements we've examined of Native traditions become transparent as we following Tayo in his quest for healing and wholeness. In the third unit, we will focus on the Maya of the highlands of Guatemala, examining the public emergence of ancestral traditions, including sacred space, the 260-day Maya calendar and ritual practice. Through out the course, we will investigate the underpinnings of Native spirituality, as well as ask questions on cultural and religious intersections of Indian and non-Indian worlds.

This course relates to the second theme, "Global Societies: Methods of Inquiry, Interaction, and Analysis," Religious Studies courses ask, "What is the World Like?" Such courses, predominantly at the second level of the religious studies curriculum, promote the examination of a variety of religious worldviews, spanning ancient traditions, the modern technological world, and east-west interaction. This breadth of exposure helps students realize the complexity and richness of life lived in modern global society. Course meets second level Religious Studies and Ethnic Women/Gender/Ethnic Studies core requirements.

Course Goals:

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Identify characteristics of Native spiritual traditions;
- Recognize Native people's relationship to land and the diverse worldviews of sacred geography, sacred time, archaeoastronomy, ethnoastronomy, story and ceremonial practices;
- Know history of U.S. federal policies and practices toward Native spiritual traditions;
- Recognize, contextualize, and critique how anthropologists, missionaries, scholars, and federal agents have conceptualized native societies and their spiritual traditions, and how these interpretations have shaped western understandings;
- Identify ways in which Native peoples have continued, changed, resisted, retrieved and adapted their religious ways, with an emphasis on their recent reaffirmation of indigenous traditions;
- Discuss diverse perspectives of being Native and Christian.
- Assess student's own intellectual and personal development, recognizing shifts in their own knowledge, affective learning, and questions on Native spiritual traditions.

Required Texts:

Molesky-Poz, Jean. 2006. *Contemporary Maya Spirituality*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
Silko, Leslie. 1977. *Ceremony*. New York: Penguin Books.

These are the basic texts for the course. Further readings, maps, visuals will be posted via ERES.

Password: reciprocity

Attendance and Participation:	15%
Quizzes	10%
Outside Event:	20%
Midterm	25%
Final paper	30%

Requirements:

Attendance & Participation (15%): Class attendance and participation is a critical part of any course. Students are expected to have completed all the readings and be ready to engage in conversation with observations, connections, and questions for each class. Small group work, class conversations and lecture will shape class format. Attendance is taken at the beginning class. Three unexcused absences is a drop in a letter grade; three late arrivals equal one absence. (15%)

Group Work. In groups of two-four, students will assume various processing and facilitating roles. See *. (Evaluation will be considered as part of your participation).

Quizzes: There will be occasional quizzes to chart retention of readings, class discussions and lecture materials. (10%).

Midterm: a mid-term exam, consisting of matching, short-answer and essay questions. This exam assesses the students' knowledge of the material in assigned readings and class notes for the first half of the quarter. (25%)

Papers: There are two papers, one a four-page written reflection on participation at a Native American sponsored event (20%), and the other, a major final paper scheduled for this course, at the end of the quarter, valued at 30%. Paragraphs will occasionally be assigned related to homework readings with the intention of supporting your longer papers.

Outside event. Participation, and written reflection tied to Native Spiritual Traditions, 4-page paper on one outside event sponsored by a Native American community. Events will be posted; guidelines provided. Due May 21.

For outside events:

500 Nations, California: http://500nations.com/California_Events.asp

April 11, Davis powwow *

April 19, UC Berkeley, 10-6:30,

May 8-10, Stanford powwow (great!) *

News from Native California Schedule of Events: <http://www.heydaybooks.com/news/calendar.html>

Maidu Spring Festival, April 26 Roseville, CA *

<http://events.sacbee.com/roseville-ca/events/show/86427486-maidu-spring-celebration>

San Juan Bautista, California Indian Market & Peace Pow wow, May 1-3, check website for NA schedule <http://www.peacevision.net/events.php>

Before you go to a powwow, see websites for history and description; etiquette; dance styles, drums and songs:

<http://powwow-power.com/powwows/index.php>

<http://library.thinkquest.org/3081/indes.htm?tqskip1=1&1qtime=1016>

Final paper: Each student will write a final 8-10 page paper addressing one of these questions:

- "What significance does my neighbor's faith and tradition have for my own?" In this case, your neighbors are contemporary indigenous in North America or Maya in Central America.
- "Identify a perception or characteristic that we have associated with Native Spiritual traditions and demonstrate how that characteristic is expressed in various traditions, including ways Leslie Silko integrates/utilizes this particular aspect of the worldview in her novel. When referring to the text, please identify page numbers.

Incompletes, Plagiarism and Cheating. Late papers, make-up exams, or incompletes are not acceptable except under unusual circumstances and with prior permission. Please speak with me in anticipation of a problem. In accordance with the Student Handbook, plagiarism and cheating of any kind are a serious breach of morality and can lead to expulsion.

Disability Accommodation: To request academic accommodations for a disability, students must contact Disability Resources located in Benson Center, (408) 554 4111; TTY (408) 554 5445.

Academic Integrity: Please see the universities policy regarding academic integrity. <http://www.scu.edu/academics/bulletins/undergraduate/Academic-Integrity.cfm>

Week One
March 31

Introduction: Understanding Native American Religious Traditions
Focus: Land-Based Spirituality.

Basic introduction to the course, requirements and responsibilities. We will identify concepts basic to spirituality, to Native worldviews, belief systems and religious traditions. Identifying diversity of indigenous peoples of the Americas, yet underlying shared characteristics of indigenous spiritual traditions and how they are in relation to the land.

In-class Film: *Honoring Kumat*

FIRST UNIT: NATIVE SPIRITUAL TRADITIONS: LAND-BASED SPIRITUALITIES

April 2

Characteristics of Native Spiritual Traditions

What are characteristics of a land-based spirituality? How does a people's relation to land shape their worldview, creation stories, rituals, silence, song, dance, healing practices?

Sacred Lands and Religious Freedoms, 1-25

Vine Deloria, <http://www.sacredland.org/> (link to Research, to Sacred Lands Reader, click on image), either very thorough note-taking(with page #) or download.

Who is Vine Deloria? What does he say are distinguishing marks of Native Americans and their relations with the land? Choose one idea or one line from the text which you would like to open up for discussion because it puzzles you, challenges you, or leads you to a new "shift" in your own consciousness.

Week Two
April 7

The Land Looks After Us

Sacred Geography: Spiritual Relations with this Land
Protecting Sacred Sites: Native vs. Western Worldviews

Traditional native lives have been entwined with the land. We examine NA relations with land, sacred sites, and geological formations.

Sacred Places of Native America. Peter Nabakov, 27- 37, and

Wintu Sacred Geography, Dorothea Theodoratus and Frank La Pena, 61-70

<http://www.sacredland.org>

(link to research, to Sacred Lands Reader, to image)

How are these perspectives different or are similar to your own sense of land and of spirituality? What questions are raised for you? One-two page reflection, to be shared in class.

* Smith, Interview with Charlotte Black Elk, 59-74. E-RES.

In-class Film: *In the Light of Reverence*

April 9

Relations of Earth and Sky: Sacred Time: "It's all about Time . . ."

Archeoastronomy: Cyclical and Mythic Time

Native peoples learned to organize their lives around the cyclical appearances of the motions of the sun, moon and stars. They used it to schedule their ceremonies, planting and harvest, to draw mythic accounts, to inform their social, religious and political lives. Some Native groups maintain and use their knowledge of the sky actively; others have lost this knowledge, due to encounters, colonial processes, and governmental policies toward Native peoples.

Lecture ppt.: Archeoastronomy in Native Architecture

Ray Williamson, *American Indian Astronomy, An Overview*, 1-13, E-RES

Ron Goodman, *On the Necessity of Sacrifice*, 215-220, E-RES.

Trudy Griffin-Pierce. "The Hooghan and the Stars," In *Earth and Sky: Visions of the Cosmos in Native American Folklore*. Ed. By Ray A. Williamson and Claire R. Farrer. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 110-130. ERES.

In Griffin-Pierce's article, identify the purpose of her chapter, and terms as *Náhookos*, the *hooghan*, *hózhó*, *dinyin dine'é*, Earth Surface People, sandpainting, Polaris, Male Revolver, Female Revolver, Big Digger and Cassiopeia, so you can explain the significance of the *hooghan* and its celestial counterpart.

Week Three

April 14

Ceremony: Purification, Expansion and Identity in Ritual

Navajo Ceremonials: Earth is My Mother, Sky is My Father

The underlying Navajo worldview, of balance, of beauty, of kinship, becomes transparent in rituals. Careful attention to ideas in Griffin-Pierce's article will provide understanding to the ceremonial activities in Silko's *Ceremony*. DVD: *In Beauty I Walk: The Navajo Way to Harmony*, 28.30 SCU 40P

Griffin-Pierce, "The Continuous Renewal of Sacred Relations," in *Native Religions and Cultures of North America*. 121-140. E-RES

When are Navajo ceremonies scheduled? What is the role of the wind, and how is it the underpinning dynamic order of the universe? How are we all related: Earth Surface People, Holy People, the *dinyin dine'é*? What is the importance of thought? of speech? What is the cause of illness? Identify the kinds of ceremonials, the goal of ceremonial practice, and how balancing female and male are necessary for the state of balance and wholeness. What is the role of the Sky and of the Earth in healing? How are male and female paired with the mountains? with the human body? with the sand painting? What is the role of song, of plants and animals, of the stars in ceremonial practice?

April 16

Meet library, 1st floor, Viewing and Taping room:

Film: *The Mystery of Chaco Canyon*

Week Four

April 21

Ceremony: Rituals as Balance, Healing, & Relations

Evoking the Sacred through Language and Song

"Silence, the Word and the Sacred, in Epes-Brown, *Teaching Spirits*, 41-59, E-RES

How do indigenous evoke the sacred through language and through song? How is indigenous epistemology of language distinct from western epistemology?

* Creation stories: earthdiver or emergence, cultural heroes/heroines

Earthdiver account (Great Lakes area)
Emergence account (Navajo, Hopi, Pueblo)
Spider as Creator or First being (southern Ca, Arizona, New Mexico)
Robbery accounts: Raven Steals the Light (Northwest)
Coyote Stories

April 23

Ceremonies "We continue to be connected to the earth"

Plains: The Vision Quest, Sweat Lodge, and Sun Dance

Through examining the Lakota vision quest, sweat lodge and Sun Dance, how have Native peoples constructed, maintained, changed, resisted, retrieved and adapted their religious ways?

In class video: *The Sweat Lodge*

Story of White Buffalo Calf Woman, <http://www.merceronline.com/Native/native05.htm>

Scroll down to *The Story of the White Buffalo Calf Woman*, told by Joseph Chasing Horse, Traditional Leader of the Lakota Nation.

Sullivan, "Wiping the Tears: Lakota Religion in the 21st Century," 104-119. E-RES

Week Five

April 29

Native Americans and U.S. Policies toward Native Religious Rights

Here we examine a chronology of policies and processes, which have impacted Native peoples, and American Indian Religious Rights. Special attention to Indian Religious rights, and the two most recent acts, American Indian Religious freedom Act (1978) and Native American Graves and Protection Act (1990). To see how legislation has played out in one area, we focus on the Native American Church and the use of peyote as sacrament and as medicine.

Kracht. "Kiowa Religion in Historical Perspective," in *Native American Spirituality*, Ed. Lee Irwin, University of Nebraska Press, 2000, 236-255. E-Res. In Kracht, identify the processes and policies of the four historical periods and compare how the trends in Kiowa belief systems and practices are delineated in each.. Craft three questions which can serve as windows into the Kiowa belief system.

Lee Irwin, Freedom, Law and Prophecy, A Brief History of Native America Religious Resistance, 71-80, <http://www.sacredland.org>

- student response group to both articles.

April 30

Midterm

Bring Silko's *Ceremony* to class.

SECOND UNIT: "THE ONLY CURE I KNOW IS A GOOD CEREMONY"

Week Six

May 5

Tayo Undergoing Ceremony: Evoking the Spiritual Universe

Ts'its'nake: Thought Woman is sitting in her room

Silko, *Ceremony*. 1-54

* student response group

May 7

"The only cure I know is a good ceremony, that's what she said."

Story, Sacred Mountains, Sacred Time, and Curing Ritual

Silko, *Ceremony*, 55-108

In-class video: Navaho healing from *Good Medicine*.

Week Seven

May 12

The Vortex of Darkness

Silko, *Ceremony*, 108-176

May 14

"We came out of this land, and we are hers"

Tseh: Woman Veiled in Clouds

Silko, *Ceremony*, 176-214

* student response group

Week Eight
May 19

The pattern of the ceremony was in the stars . . .
Silko, *Ceremony*, 214-261.

THIRD UNIT:

The Public Emergence and Florescence of Maya Spirituality

May 21

Maya Cosmovision and Spirituality: Transformed Continuities
"The Earth is Not Ours, We are only renting our time here"

Here we examine the notion of spirituality as a universal experience and process, then examine the foundational principles and distinct marks of Maya worldview, and ask what they contribute to the human community? What is distinct about Maya spirituality?

Molesky-Poz, Chapter 2, *Portal*, xi-xviii, *Maya Cosmovision and Spirituality*, 34-54.
See Study Guidelines for *Contemporary Maya Spirituality*, on E-RES.

Outside event due.

Week Nine
May 26

Transformed Continuities

Ajq' ijab': Maya Daykeepers: Answerability, Transformation, Responsibility
Molesky-Poz, Chapter 3, *Ajq' ijab'* "To Enter the Mystery is our Reality," 55-89
* student response group

May 28

The Aesthetics of Sacred Geography

Sacred Geography, Sacred Sites, Quatrefoil Mapping,
Molesky-Poz, Chapter 4, *Sacred Geography*, 93-126.
* student response group

Week Ten
June 2

"The Earth is Not Ours, We are only Renting our Time Here"
The Aesthetics of Sacred Time

Sacred Time: The Chol Q'ij, The heart of the wisdom of the Maya
Molesky-Poz, Chapter 5, *The Calendar*, 127-153.

June 4

The Aesthetics of Ritual Practice

Maya Ceremony and Fire Ritual
Molesky-Poz, Chapter 6, *Ceremony: The Fire Speaks*, 154-168;
Chap.7, *The Ancient Things Received from our Parents*, 171-176.

Final paper due, Tuesday, June 10 by noon. Please send as a WORD attachment to:
moleskypo@mac.com.

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Student reports

April 7

Smith, Interview with Charlotte Black Elk, 59-74. E-RES. (3)

Who is Charlotte Black Elk? Ms. Black Elk concludes that it is important to the vitality of the community's religious life that native people be allowed access to their own sacred places. What does she inform you of the importance of *Wakan*, of the Black Hills, of ceremony? What emerges as the clash of worldviews of prayer, place and ceremony?

April 21

Creation stories: earthdiver or emergence, cultural heroes/heroines

Earthdiver account (Great Lakes area)

Emergence account (Navajo, Hopi, Pueblo)

Spider as Creator or First being (southern Ca, Arizona, New Mexico)

Robbery accounts: Raven Steals the Light (Northwest)

Coyote Stories

Student response groups (4)

April 29

U.S. Policies toward Native Religious Rights

May 5

Silko's Ceremony

May 14

Silko's Ceremony

May 25

Maya *Ajq'ijab'*

May 29

Maya: The Aesthetics of Sacred Geography (3)

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING COURSE WORK (written assignments, class conversations and presentations)

1. Demonstration of an empathetic understanding of the content of resources. Your topic should not only be well *researched in the library, through interviews and observations*, and from assigned readings and class discussions, but you should be able to provide a fair description and a clear understanding of the resources. This will be apparent in the ability to describe and discuss precisely and accurately what an author has written or a speaker has said. Evaluation, response, and critique should follow accurate representation of another's ideas -- earn the privilege of criticizing a viewpoint by showing that you really understand it. Underline your thesis statement. 25%
2. Clear critical thinking that provides appropriate specific evidence for conclusions. Use the most precise historical, empirical, or contemporary date to support the claims of your thesis or paragraph. Conclusions should follow from and be supported by evidence. Be sure that your evidence is relevant, accurate, and detailed. Even creative writing requires logical relationships among ideas to assist your readings in following the plot. 25%
3. Creativity that moves beyond reporting some else's ideas. Your creative addition to academic discourse might include questioning, evaluating, applying, criticizing (positively or negatively), developing, or responding. You might see a connection between two or more ideas. You might see information from a unique perspective. The minimal requirement of academic work is correctly repeating what is read or discussed. Excellent work moves beyond repetition to unique insights, organization, correlations, and theses. Work to find your own voice. 25%
4. Flawless grammar, spelling, and form. Excellent written work is conscious of proofreading and good communication. Oral presentations are equally accountable to careful expression. A brilliant thesis can be lost in a paper or project that obscures its ideas with careless communication. Your readers and listeners should not have to guess what you mean -- help them by speaking and writing well. Use footnotes, endnotes or parenthetical notes in a consistent style. Include page numbers. 25%

**5. NATIVE AMERICAN SPIRITUAL TRADITIONS IN CONTEMPORARY LIVES
PARTICIPATION IN AN EVENT RELATED TO THIS COURSE
SPRING QUARTER, 2009**

DUE T MAY 21

STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO ATTEND ONE EVENT SPONSORED BY THE NATIVE AMERICAN COMMUNITY, AND WRITE UP A 4-5 PAGE REFLEXIVE NARRATIVE. (20%)

WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR WRITTEN RESPONSE:

A. IN YOUR REFLECTION, IDENTIFY THE ACTIVITY, PLACE, DATE AND TIME OF THE SERVICE/EVENT, HOW YOU HEARD ABOUT THE EVENT AND THE TYPE OF ACTIVITY IT IS. WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THE EVENT, WHO DID YOU GO WITH, WHAT WERE YOUR PREDISPOSITIONS/EXPECTATIONS/ CONCERNS BEFORE YOU ATTENDED?

**B. IN A BRIEF DESCRIPTION,
WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF THE EVENT
WHAT HAPPENED
WHO SPONSORED THE EVENT
WHO ATTENDED
IS THIS SPONSORED BY OR FOR A PARTICULAR NATIVE NATION OR GROUP?**

C. HOW DOES THIS ACTIVITY RELATE TO WHAT'S GOING ON IN NATIVE SPIRITUAL TRADITIONS?

WHAT CONNECTIONS, DISCONNECTIONS, AWARENESS, CRITIQUES, QUESTIONS DOES THIS ACTIVITY RAISE IN YOU REGARDING NATIVE SPIRITUAL TRADITIONS? CITE APPROPRIATELY.

SUGGESTIONS:

WHAT PROBLEMS, ISSUES, CONCERNS WERE RAISED?

WHAT COMMUNITY OF PEOPLE OR INDIVIDUALS ARE INVOLVED, IMPACTED?

HOW DOES IT HELP UNDERSTAND THE SOCIO-CULTURAL, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PROCESSES IN WHICH FAITH IS SITUATED AND HAS EMERGED?

WHAT DID YOU LEARN OF A PARTICULAR PEOPLE'S WORLDVIEW?"

HOW DOES IT RELATE TO ANY SPECIFIC DISCUSSIONS, ARTICLES, WE'VE CONSIDERED?

WHAT QUESTIONS OR IMPRESSIONS DO YOU LEAVE WITH?

BESIDES THE ABOVE QUESTIONS, WHAT IS THE STRUCTURE OF THE EVENT, WHO SPEAKS, WHO HAS VOICE, WHO IS SILENCED?

WHAT IS THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE SERVICE? SYMBOLS? COLORS? ARCHITECTURE?

ARE STORIES EVOKED? HOW ARE THEY INTERPRETED? TO WHAT END?

WHAT IS THE MESSAGE?

HOW DO NATIVE PEOPLE RELATE TO ONE ANOTHER? TO NON-NATIVE PEOPLE?

WHAT IS THE RESPONSE OF THE COMMUNITY?

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF MEN, WOMEN, CHILDREN, ELDERS? WHAT KIND OF FELLOWSHIP?

D. RELATE, TALK WITH, ENJOY, EXCHANGE WITH OTHERS. LET US KNOW WHO YOU TALKED WITH, WHAT YOU LEARNED, WHAT YOU EXCHANGED.

E. FIND ONE IDEA, COSTUME, DESIGN, CONVERSATION, ISSUE THAT ATTRACTED YOUR INTEREST, AND INVESTIGATE IN SOME DEPTH ITS CONTEXT, TRIBAL AFFILIATION, FUNCTION, SIGNIFICANCE. HERE INTERVIEWS AS WELL AS TEXTUAL RESOURCES WILL BE HIGHLY VALUED, AT LEAST TWO PAGES OF THE FOUR..

F. WHAT DID YOU LEARN OF A PEOPLE'S VALUES AND WORLDVIEWS? HOW HAS THIS EVENT RELATED TO, AFFIRMED OR CONTESTED IDEAS IN NATIVE SPIRITUAL TRADITIONS? WOULD YOU RECOMMEND OTHER STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN THIS EVENT? WHY?

WITHIN YOUR RESPONSE, IDENTIFY YOUR OWN POSITIONALITY: YOUR CLASS, ETHNIC, RACE, GENDER, RELIGIOUS AND ACADEMIC BACKGROUND AND HOW IT SHAPES THE LENS THROUGH WHICH YOU ENGAGE, PERCEIVE, AND INTERPRET THE ACTIVITY