

RSOC 91 NATIVE SPIRITUAL TRADITIONS
Religious Studies, Santa Clara University
Fall 2009

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NATIVE SPIRITUAL TRADITIONS (51295)

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, particularly the visionary and prophetic experience through *Black Elk Speaks*, and develop critical skills in reading texts on Native ways. In the second unit, we consider the relationship of land/sky, how humans understand sacred geography, sacred time, archaeoastronomy, story, song, and ceremony to walk in a balanced, in a sacred way. 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 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.

Learning Objectives for core area:

- Students will be able to analyze complex and diverse religious phenomena (such as architecture and art, music, ritual, scriptures, theological systems, and other cultural expressions of religious belief).
- Students will be able to integrate and compare several different disciplinary approaches to a coherent set of religious phenomena.
- Students will be able to clarify and express beliefs in light of their critical inquiry into the religious dimension of human existence.

Course Goals:

After completing this course, students should be able to:

- **Discuss** ways indigenous peoples in the Americas have understood relations of land/sky and constructed sacred geography, sacred time, and ritual practice in diverse geographies, (*Focus on complex and diverse religious phenomena*)
- **Identify, discuss and amplify** characteristics of indigenous spiritual belief, religious experience, and practices of reciprocity, built up over time; (*Focus on complex and diverse religious phenomena*)
- **Integrate and compare** various approaches to indigenous religious belief and ritual practices from the disciplinary fields of: archaeoastronomy, ethnoastronomy, literature, art history, theology and ethnography. (*multidisciplinary/interdisciplinary approaches to study of religious phenomena*);
- **Identify** processes of 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. (*Focus on complex and diverse religious phenomena*)
- **Clarify and express** beliefs in light of students' critical inquiry into the religious dimensions of human existence as understood by indigenous peoples of the Americas. (*Integrate critical inquiry and reflection on beliefs*).

Required Texts:

Molesky-Poz, Jean. 2006. *Contemporary Maya Spirituality*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Neihardt, John G. *Black Elk Speaks*. SUNY, Albany, New York: Excelsior Editions, 2008.

Smith, Houston. 2006. *A Seat at the Table: Conversations with Native Americans on Religious Freedom*. University of California Press.

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

Attendance and Participation:	15%
Includes fishbowl or storytelling	
Outside Event:	10%
Quizzes (3 @10% each)	30%
First reflection paper	20%
Final comparative paper	25%

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. A student's participation is measured and assessed in two settings: regular in-class, small-group discussions, and one group panel discussion.

Papers: There are two major papers scheduled for this course, one after the first section, the second at the end of the quarter. The first paper is 20% of your grade; the final paper is 25%. Paragraphs will occasionally be assigned related to homework readings with the intention of supporting your longer papers.

Outside event: Participation and written reflective tied to Native Spiritual Traditions, 2-3 page paper on one outside event sponsored by a Native American community. Events are posted; guidelines provided. Due 11/9.

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 receive academic accommodations for a disability, students must contact Disability Resources located in Benson 216. The phone number is 408-554-4109 or inquiries can be emailed to Robin Cole, Administrative Associate, rcole@scu.edu. Students must register with Disabilities Resources and provide documentation of a disability to Disabilities Resources prior to receiving academic accommodations.

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

Week One
Sept 21

Introduction: Understanding Native American Religious Traditions
Basic introduction to the course, requirements and responsibilities. Student inventory.
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.

FIRST UNIT: BLACK ELK SPEAKS

Sept 23

The Aesthetic Pleasure of reading *Black Elk Speaks*:
Vine Deloria, Jr. writes that the aesthetic pleasure of reading *Black Elk Speaks* for the first time is "That it speaks to us with simple and compelling language" (xvii).

From my perspective, what is spirituality? 2 pages written.

- Black Elk Speaks*, Prefaces, and Chapter 1 Offering of the Pipe, Chapter 2 Early Boyhood.
- Sept 25 Childhood and "The Great Vision": Text and Texture
- Black Elk Speaks*, Chapters 3. Diagram dream; create questions based on Bloom's taxonomy.
- Week Two
Sept 28 The Historical Context, Lakota spiritual ways and the Wasichus projects
- Black Elk Speaks*, Chapter 4 (pgs. 37-39), Chapters 7-13
- Identify 1) markers of the historical context; 2) three Lakota spiritual traditions, (pg. number, generate questions (Blooms taxonomy) to address each tradition); 3) note how Black Elk reflects on his vision manifesting itself as he matures; 4) what question or idea is emerging in you?
- Sept 30 Ceremony, Lamenting, Performance of the Vision
Black Elk Speaks, Chapters 14-18, 129-169
- Close readings: identify two events/tellings you are prepared discuss as "windows into the text" to the Lakota worldview. Prepare four questions using different levels of Bloom's model.
- Oct 2 The Ghost Dance, The Butchering at Wounded Knee, The Vision
Black Elk Speaks, Chapters 19-26, 171-221
- Identify six different reflections Black Elk has, demonstrating the various relations he had to his dream, to his hopes, to the reality he and his people find himself/themselves in.
- Week Three
Oct 5 The Context: Issues of Authenticity and Christianity in *Black Elk Speaks*.
Black Elk Speaks, Essay by Raymond J. DeMallie, 289-316.
- * student fishbowl: From your social/religious position, comment on Vine Deloria's statement, that *Black Elk Speaks* is "a religious classic, perhaps the only religious classic of this century"(302).

SECOND UNIT: SACRED GEOGRAPHY & SACRED TIME
"To live in a sacred way"

- Oct 7 Sacred Geography: Spiritual Relations with Land Native vs. Western Worldviews
Traditional native lives have been entwined with the land. Identify specific perceptions of Peter Nabokov, Vine Deloria and Charlotte Black Elk regarding humans and our relation to land? In what ways do they provide you alternative ways to understand land, sacred sites, and geological formations. Is there a logic and an ethic underlying these perceptions? If so, what is implicit in their statements?
- Peter Nabokov, Sacred Places of Native America, pg. 27-37
<http://www.sacredland.org/index.php/home/resources/research/reports-guides-and-articles/sacred-land-reader/> Who is Peter Nabokov? What are the most significant understandings of Native land-based spiritualities that Peter Navokov leads you to and why? Write out different four lines/paragraphs that are significant contributions that Navokov makes regarding Native land-based spiritualities, and develop a question for each, using various levels of Blooms's taxonomy.
- In-class Film: *In the Light of Reverence*
- Oct 9 The Great Divide: Indigenous and Western religious thinking
- Smith, Chapter 4, The Homelands of Religion, Interview with Charlotte Black Elk, 59-74.
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?

Smith, Chapter 11, The Healing of Indian Country, interview with Deloria, 185-199.
 In "The Healing of Indian Country," Deloria says one of the central issues facing Indian people in North America is the great divide between indigenous and Western religious thinking. Identify specific examples of indigenous epistemology, and how you find yourself engaging with these metaphors and symbols? What shifts do you find going on? Use template: they say, I say, choose two quotes from each writer.

* Student fishbowl. The Great Divide: Indigenous and Western religious thinking / In what ways does our consideration indigenous spirituality contribute a new understanding of the religious dimension of human existence?

Week Four
 Oct 12

Relations with all the Living: Ecology and Spirituality
 Creation Stories: Animals and Plants as relatives, teachers, guardians and messengers

Smith, Interview with Vine Deloria, "The Spiritual Malaise in America," 7-23. Quiz 1
 Smith, Interview with Winona LaDuke, "Ecology and Spirituality," 40-57.
 Do LaDuke and Deloria philosophies present you with alternative worldviews of relations with the land? What specific statements do you want to discuss with others?

Oct 14

Evoking the Sacred through Language and Song and Dance

"Silence, the Word, and the Sacred" in Epes-Brown, Teaching Spirits, 41-59, E-RES.
 How is the sacred evoked through language and through song? What does indigenous epistemology of language teach about human responsibility? How is distinct from western epistemology?

Oct 16

Perceptions of Time, Life Cycles, Mythic Time

Traditional time is oriented toward cyclical time, to patterns, which continue to revolve, in which opportunities for life cycles to be renewed continues. As cycles of nature rotate and return, the time of myth, of sacredness, is continually re-experienced within NA rituals.
 Brown, "Changeless at the Heart of Change," 9-21. E-RES
 Fishbowl: on Native time

Week Five
 October 19

Sacred Time: "It's all about Time . . ." Cosmic and Ritual Cycles at Chaco Canyon
 Ancient observatories for ritual practice include solstice, equinox markers, as well as calendars for the helical rise of stars include sites as medicine wheels, Chaco Canyon, kivas, and the natural landscape.
 In class Film: The Mystery of Chaco Canyon 1st Paper due.

October 21

"There is not word for art"
 The vision experience and its relation to material constructions..

Irwin, "The Visionary Arts," 211-234, E-RES.

Oct 23

Guest Speaker: Orlando Gushoney, White Earth Apache

Week Six
 Oct 26

Archeoastronomy and Architecture: Cyclical and Mythic Time
 The Navajo Hooghan: a window into celestial cycles and ethnoastronomy

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.

Oct 28

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

The underlying Navajo worldview, of balance, of beauty, of kinship, becomes transparent in rituals.

Sullivan, 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?

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

Oct 30

Native Americans and U.S. Policies toward Native Religious Rights: Processes & Survivals:

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).

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.

Week Seven
Nov 2

Native American Church: Peyote as Medicine, as Sacrament

To see how legislation has played out in one area, we focus on the Native American Church, on peyote as medicine,

Quiz 2

Morgan. Recollections of the Peyote Road: <http://www.lectlaw.com/files/drg29.htm>

Smith. Interview with Frank Dayish, "The Triumph of the Native American Church," 97-112.

Nov 4

Native and Christian

Haskell, *The Sacred Center*, 99-103, E-RES.

Others TBA

Nov 6

No class.

Week Eight
Nov 9

Maya and Introductions

Molesky-Poz, 57-62; Portal, xi-xviii, 11-25

Outside events due.

Selections from film: *Popul Vuh*

THIRD UNIT:

The Public Emergence and Florescence of Maya Spirituality

Nov 11

Maya Cosmovision and Spirituality: Transformed Continuities

What are the foundational principles and distinct marks of Maya worldview, and ask what they contribute to the human community? What is distinct about Maya spirituality? Amlin.

Molesky-Poz, Chapter 2, *Maya Cosmovision and Spirituality*, 34-44

- Nov 13 "To Connect to the Center in Which We Trust"
Molesky-Poz, Chapter 2 cont., 44-54.
See Study Guidelines for *Contemporary Maya Spirituality*, on E-RES.
- Week Nine
Nov 16 "The Earth is Not Ours, We are only Renting our Time Here"
Ajq'ijab': Maya Calendar-Keeper: Answerability, Transformation, Responsibility
Molesky-Poz, Chapter 3, *Ajq'ijab'* "To Enter the Mystery is our Reality," 55-89 Quiz 3
- Nov 18 Sacred Geography, Sacred Sites, Quatrefoil Mapping,
Molesky-Poz, Chapter 4, Sacred Geography, 93-126.
- Nov 20 Sacred Time: The *Chol Q'ij*, The heart of the wisdom of the Maya
Molesky-Poz, Chapter 5, The Calendar, 127-153.
- Week Ten
Nov 30 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.
Fishbowl: Responses to Maya ways of knowing . . .
- Dec 2 Life and death in the North West: *I Heard the Owl Call My Name*
This film is based on Margaret Craven's novel and follows Mark Bryan, a young Anglican priest, from Vancouver to his mission at the outpost of Kingcome Village, a small Kwakiutl village on the coast.
In class film: *I Heard the Owl Call My Name*
- Dec 4 Pulling Things Together; Perspectives now on spirituality

Student Groups

- Oct 5 Fishbowl *Black Elk Speaks* is "a religious classic, perhaps the only religious classic of this century"
Oct 9 Fishbowl: The Great Divide: Indigenous and Western religious thinking
- Creation Stories: (geographical and cultural context, tell the story, visuals of the story, response from your social position, and questions (2-5 level thinking)
Earthdiver account (Great Lakes area)
Emergence account (Navajo, Hopi, Pueblo)
Origin of the Sacred Pipe and of Peyote: White Buffalo Calf Woman and Peyote Woman
Robbery Accounts, Raven Steals the Light (Northwest)
Trickster Stories: Coyote stories
- October 16 Fishbowl: On native time
October 21 Fishbowl: the Visionary Arts
Nov 16 Fishbowl: Maya *Ajq'ijab'*
Nov 18 Fishbowl: Maya: The Aesthetics of Sacred Geography
Nov 30 Fishbowl: Maya ceremony and ways of knowing

Native American Spiritual Traditions
Participation in an Event related to this course
Fall Quarter, 2009 Due Monday, November 9

Students are required to attend one Event sponsored by the Native American community, and write up a 2-3 page reflexive narrative. (15%)

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?

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. What did you learn of a people's values and worldviews?

F. 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 social position: your class, ethnic, race, gender, religious and academic background and how it shapes the lens through which you engage, perceive, and interpret the activity

Events sponsored by Native Communities, Fall 2009.

September 25 *Chaw'se Big Time*, Indian Grinding Rock State Historic Park, 14881 Pine Grove-Volcano Rd., Pine Grove. Dancing, hand games, singing and storytelling, food, and vendors. (209) 296-7488.

September 26 *21st Annual West Valley College Pow Wow* 14000 Fruitvale Ave. Saratoga CA, noon to midnight <http://www.westvalleypowwow.org>

October 3 - 4 *18th Chukchansi Powwow Coarsegold Historic Village*, 35300 Highway 41, Coarsegold, CA 93614 Contest powwow, gates open at 10am both days, rv & tent camping, native arts & crafts booths, Indian taco & other food booths, bring your own chairs and shade, hand games. head staff, MC - Val Shadowhawk, AD - Monty Williams, HM - Gabe Hardin, HW - Alorha Baga, HTB - Justin Long, HTG - Samantha Rivera, HJB - Ivan Barrios, HJG - Gabriella Lira, HTLB - Donny Matoud, HTTG - Tehya Perez. Host Southern Drum: Humming Bird Singers, Host Northern Drum: Secret Cooley. Juanita 559 683 6633 46575 Road 417, Coarsegold, CA 93614 prci.info@chukchansi.com <http://www.chukchansi.net/>

October 4 *Gathering of Ohlone Peoples*, Coyote Hills Regional Park, Fremont, 10 am to 4:30, Celebration of history, culture and traditional skills of Ohlone Peoples.
<http://www.ebparks.org/node/1176>

October 5 *Premiere of the feature length film: "For the Next 7 Generations: The Grandmothers Speak"* Grace Cathedral 1100 California Street. San Francisco, 5-6 pm reception, 6:30 film. Sponsored by The International Council of the 13 Indigenous Grandmothers.

October 9, 10, 11, 12 *Indigenous Peoples Days 2009* Nevada City, California Tenth Annual Indigenous Peoples Days 2009, celebration and healing event, Nevada City, California. 530-477-0711 or www.indigenouspeoplesdays.org

- Friday, 10/9: Opening Ceremony, Union & Broad Streets, Nevada City, California.
- Saturday, 10/10: Calling Back The Salmon. Begins at sunrise at Parks Bar. Afternoon at Bridgeport State Park.
- Sunday, 10/11: All day celebration at the Maidu Active Cultural Center (MACC), 16200 Lake Vera-Purdon Road, Nevada City, California. Music, drums, dance, singing, feasting healing and gathering of descendents of famous indigenous ancestors. Broadcast live on community radio: KVMR 89.5 FM/105.1 FM, KFOK 95.1 FM and KZFR 90.1 FM.
- Monday, 10/12: Indigenous Peoples Days. Continued celebration with music, presentations, and panel discussions, at the Miner's Foundry, 325 Spring Street, Nevada City, CA

Saturday, October 10 *Berkeley Indigenous Peoples Day Powwow & Indian Market 18th Annual Celebration* Martin Luther King, Jr. Civic Center Park, Berkeley CA Martin Luther King, Jr Way, between Alston Way & Center Street; (2180 Milvia St) 1-1/2 blocks west of the Berkeley BART Station. Free Admission. Exhibition Dancing 10:00 am; Gourd Dancing 11:00 am; Grand Entry 12:00 noon; Closing Ceremony 6:00 pm; Rocking Horse Coordinator: Gino Barichello; Vendors Coordinator: Hallie Frazer. Sponsored by the City of Berkeley * Wheelchair Accessible Indigenous Peoples Day Committee: Box 97, 1700 Shattuck Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94709 510-595-5520 info@ipdpowwow.org

October 29-31 *24th Annual California Indian Conference*, California State University, East Bay, 25800 Carlos Bee Blvd., Hayward.

November 6-14, *American Indian Film Festival*, <http://www.aifsf.com/home.php>

Once schedule of films is posted, please select films related to course topic, (confirm with me first) or final event on Saturday, November 14, 2009, Legion of Honor, SF

Check Calendar of Events (Fall TBA): <http://www.heydaybooks.com/news/calendar.html>

Before you go to a powwow, see websites for history and description; etiquette; dance styles; drums and songs: http://www.visitmariposa.net/powwow/about_powwows.html