

RSOC 91 NATIVE SPIRITUAL TRADITIONS

Religious Studies, Santa Clara University
Spring 2015
01-(19715) T/TH 8:30-10:10 Kenna 304
02 (19716) T/TH 12:10 – 1:50, Kenna 304

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NATIVE SPIRITUAL TRADITIONS

Course Description:

This course introduces Native American spiritual traditions of the Americas. In the first unit, we'll consider the relationship of land/sky, how the Kiowa and Lakota (Plains) understand the Sacred, as expressed in their relation to land, their creation account, ceremonies and persistence and transformed continuity of their worldview over time. Here we also examine U.S. policies, prohibiting 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. The second unit focuses on California natives, their rituals, stories, dance as expressions of the sacred, and ways native Californians today are reclaiming their practices. In the third unit, we examine ceremony, and ways Maya peoples relate with land, sky, sacred calendars and ritual to balance the world, and "to connect to the Mystery in which they trust." In the fourth 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. 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 Religion, Theology and Culture 2 Core Curriculum requirements. Students seeking RTC 2 credit must have completed an RTC 1 course. Recommendation is that you have completed 44 units.

"This course is associated with the following Pathways: American Studies; Beauty; Race, Place & Social Inequalities; Paradigm Shift and the Nature of Human Knowledge; Politics & Religion.

PATHWAYS: EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT PATHWAYS You can find information about Pathways on the Core Curriculum website <http://scu.edu/core> including specific Pathways, all courses associated with them, and the Reflection Essay prompt and rubric used to evaluate the final essay you will submit. <http://www.scu.edu/provost/ugst/core/pathways/resources/>

SAVE YOUR WORK FROM THIS CLASS

If you declare this Pathway, you may use a representative piece of work from this course as one of the Pathway materials you will upload via eCampus during your junior or senior year. Therefore, we recommend that you keep electronic copies of your work using Dropbox or Google Docs, in addition to saving copies on your own computer or flash drives. This may ensure you will have a range of choices for retrieving your saved files when you analyze and assemble your Pathway materials in preparation to write the Pathway reflection essay.

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.

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. (ISBN10 0-292-71309-6)
Momaday, N. Scott. 1969. *The Way to Rainy Mountain*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press. (1-800-249-7737)
Silko, Leslie. 1986. *Ceremony*. Penguin Books. (ISBN 1 14 00.8683 8)
Postings on CAMINO.

Evaluations:

Class Attendance / Engagement 30
(includes one panel / class facilitation @ 15%)
Midterm Exam 25
Midterm Reading Response 20
Final exam 25
Extra Credit options (2-3)

Requirements:

Attendance & Engagement (30%): 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.

Class Preparation: Occasionally, students will be asked at the beginning of class to identify on note-cards, author's main arguments / contributions / key concepts, or your questions raised. Questions will be drawn from reading guidelines posted on CAMINO. This works toward your attendance and engagement grade.

Midterm: (25%) based on course texts and lecture material, Thursday, April 30th. Exam will include objective identification and essay formats.

Papers: There are two major papers, one a reading response (3-4 pgs.) to Maya spirituality, due Tuesday, May 19th. The second, your final, examines an aspect of a native religious tradition (or compares one aspect in two traditions) through at least three of the following fields: archaeoastronomy, ethnoastronomy, literature, art history, theology, history, anthropology, ritual studies or ethnography. This final comprehensive and comparative project is 25% of your grade. Paragraphs will occasionally be assigned, but not collected, related to homework readings with the intention of supporting your longer papers. Suggestion that you choose paper topics, which will further and deepen your Pathway interests.

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>

No electronics are permitted in class: (laptops, "hidden" ipads, cell/smartphones, pagers, mp3 players, etc).

Grading Scale:

A 100-93.5; A- 93.4-90.0 excellent ;B+ 89.9-87.6 very good; B 86.6-83.3 good; B- 83.2-80.0 solid performance;
C+ 79.9-76.7; C 76.6-73.3; C- 73.2-70.0; D+ 69.9-66.7; D 66.6-63.3; D- 63.2-60.0;F <59.9

Week One (March 31 and April 2)

T Introduction to Course: Native American Spirituality

Overview of course content, procedures and expectations

First Unit:

Relations Between Earth and Sky in Story among the Plains

TH Constructing Religious Identity: Place and Story

Read: N. Scott Momaday, *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, Introduction, The Setting Out, 1-39.

Reading guidelines are posted for each class on CAMINO.

Week Two (April 7 & 9)

T. Kiowa Emerging, Gaining Power, Creating Identity, and Memory: The Sun Dance and Peyote

Read: N. Scott Momaday, *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, The Going On, The Closing In, 44-86

TH Lodge of the Bear: The Land is Sacred

Read: Charlotte Black Elk: The Homelands: Clash of Worldviews over Prayer, Place and Worldviews, 59-74.

from Smith, Houston, *A Seat at the Table*. Berkeley: UCP. 2006. CAMINO (copy) To prepare: Identify, type up and bring to class three specific quotes from Charlotte Black Elk which are "windows into the Lakota worldview." What is significant to you about each quote? Write out questions/insights this interview raises in you about religious experience, about a faith tradition, about Native vs. white understandings? (Refer to Bloom's taxonomy: CAMINO)

In class: Selections from, *In the Light of Reverence*. See Sacred Land Film Project: <http://www.sacredland.org/>

Week Three (April 14 & 16)

T Plains Rituals: Lamenting for a Vision, the Sweat Lodge, the Sun Dance, Peyote Ritual

Read: Hanblecheyapi: Crying for a Vision In *Teachings from the American Earth*, Dennis Tedlock and Barbara Tedlock, Eds. NY: Liveright, 1975, 21-41. CAMINO.

Powers, William. Wiping the Tears: Lakota Religion in the Twenty-First Century in *Native Religions and Cultures of North America*, 104-119. CAMINO. (Copy)

In class: Selection from *Good Medicine*.

TH Kiowa Belief Systems and Practices 1832-present: The Ghost Dance, the Native American Church, Pentecostalism

Read: Benjamin R. Kracht. Kiowa Religion in Historical Perspective, from Irwin, Lee, (Ed).

Native American Spirituality: A Critical Reader, Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 2000, 236-55. CAMINO (copy)

Reading guidelines for Kracht article on CAMINO.

In-class: Inculturation: Catholic parishes and Plains Theology/Culture

**Second Unit:
Peoples of California**

Week Four (April 21 & 23)

T Native Californians:

View (2):

Ishi: The Last Yahi (1992) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CyDAnBwLs1M> (56 minutes),

California Indian Memorial: <http://www.csus.edu/indiv/t/tumminia/MEMORIAL.HTM>

Where are Native Californians? Why? What major policies/ laws impacted Native peoples in Alta California? Also, read link: The Act for the Government and Protection of Indians passed by the First State Constitutional Convention (1850). See next page of syllabus for directions.

While we will not meet this day, you are to post a five-minute written response by end of class period on CAMINO to what you have learned from these readings/viewings: Ishi or the California Indian Memorial, particularly a response to the Act for the Government and Protection of Indians passed by the First State Constitutional Convention (1850), identifying specific provisions which surprised you. Then respond to one of your team's posts.

TH Peoples of California: The World of the Spirit

Read: Selections, The Deer Hunter (copy), Shaman, the Acom Harvest, Dancing, from Margolin, *The Ohlone Way*. CAMINO.

Parrish: Essie Parrish Healer: Visionary of Our Time, CAMINO, 6-7 (copy); Reading guidelines on CAMINO.

October 18 Last day to withdraw from classes without a W; Last day to declare P/NP grading option

Week Five (April 28 & 30)

T Contemporary California Peoples

Read: La Pena, My World is a Gift of My Teachers, CAMINO. (4 pgs) (copy)
Klasky and Nelsen, The Salt Song Trail, CAMINO (3 pgs)
Dorothea Theodoratus and Frank LaPena, Wintu Sacred Geography, in Sacred Lands Reader, 61-70. CAMINO.

In class: La Pena's paintings/ Salt Song Trail/ Journey to Spirit Mountain

TH Midterm: in-class

Bring to class: *Contemporary Maya Spirituality*, Molesky-Poz

**Third Unit:
Contemporary Maya of Guatemala Highlands**

Week Six (May 5 & 7) Reclaiming the Maya Worldview after the Civil War

This section situates the reclamation of Maya traditional ways and identity during and the U.S. backed civil war in Guatemala (1960—1996), during which 200,000 were killed, hundreds of thousands fled their villages and country. Lecture raises complex issues of U.S. policies in Guatemala (ownership of land and means of production since 1830; training of Guatemalan military; the flood of U.S. evangelical and Pentecostal missionaries into Guatemala during and after the war, and the consequences on the indigenous population.

T. Philosophies and Worldviews of Traditional Contemporary Maya

Read: Molesky-Poz, Portal xi-xviii, 2 Maya Cosmovision and Spirituality, 34-54.

TH Sacred Geography: "The Face of the Earth is Not Ours," and Ceremony

Read: Molesky-Poz, 4 Sacred Geography, 93-126; 6 Ceremony, 154-167.
Selections from *Heart of Sky*, *Heart of Earth* in class.

*** **EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITY: Mother's Day Weekend, Stanford Powwow** : <http://powwow.stanford.edu/>

Week Seven (May 12 & 14)

T Why Contemporary Maya Become Calendar Keepers/ Shaman-Priests

Read: Molesky-Poz 3 *Ajq'ijab*: To Enter the Mystery is our Reality, 57-90.

In-class Film: Selection from Popol Vuj

TH Maya Calendars: "The Heart of the Wisdom of the Maya"

Read: Molesky-Poz, Chapter 5, The Calendar, 127-153

Nov 8 Last Day to withdraw from classes.

**Fourth Unit:
"THE ONLY CURE I KNOW IS A GOOD CEREMONY"**

Week Eight (May 19 & 21)

T Pueblo Archaeoastronomy: Chaco Canyon

Read: Griffin-Pierce, The Hooghan and the Stars, CAMINO, 110-127
Bring Silko's *Ceremony* to class. In-class: The Mystery of Chaco Canyon DVD 00587

Reading Response to Contemporary Maya Section due. (Guidelines on CAMINO)

TH Tayo Undergoing Ceremony: Evoking the Spiritual Universe

Read: Silko, *Ceremony*. 1-55

Week Nine (May 26 & 28)

T. "The only cure I know is a good ceremony, that's what she said."

Read: Silko, *Ceremony*, 55-108

TH The Vortex of Darkness

Read: Silko, *Ceremony*, 108-176

Week Ten (June 2 & 4)

T "The pattern of the ceremony was in the stars. . . ."

Read: Silko, *Ceremony*, 177-261.

TH Pulling things together

TAKE-HOME FINAL EXAM DUE DURING EXAM WEEK