

American Indians & the Environment
AIS/ENVIR/HSTAA 308

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Overview

Like Indigenous peoples around the world, American Indians possess a special relationship to their local environments, their homelands. How is this historical relationship to their lands and waters—and to the plants and animals that can be found there—unique? This course examines how this relationship has changed over time as American Indians adapted to altered environments and new conditions, including migrations, involvement with markets of exchange, overhunting, dispossession and settler colonialism, petrochemical development, conservation, mainstream environmentalism, and climate change. How and why has the popular view of American Indians’ relationship to the environment changed? What environmental challenges do today’s American Indian nations face, and what are the historical dimensions of these challenges? Through lectures, readings, and discussions, we will investigate several historical and contemporary case studies that explore these themes.

In this course, students will understand:

- The diversity of ways that different Indigenous peoples relate to and interact with the environment.
- How American Indian relationships to the environment have changed over time, particularly in the face of US settler colonialism.
- How stereotypes of American Indians took shape and how non-Natives have drawn upon these assumptions for their own purposes.
- How American Indian peoples and nations have engaged changing relationships with the environment to shape their own identities and futures.
- The continued value of the environment to Indigenous peoples today.

Expectations & Responsibilities

You, the student, can expect the following from me, the instructor, and the teaching assistant:

- Create and foster a safe and stimulating learning environment in which students can take intellectual risks.
- Facilitate historical inquiry.
- Clarify expectations and help students prepare for course assessments.
- Effectively assess student work in a fair and timely manner—we will provide suggestions for improvement and affirm work that is done well.

We, the instructors, can expect the following from you, the student:

- Share ideas and listen to others.

- Respect the learning environment.
- Punctually attend **all** synchronous class sessions.
- Come prepared to learn and participate: read your weekly assignment & review asynchronous lecture content **before** coming to class.
- Alert us to any concerns you may have and seek help when needed.

Course Readings

You may purchase (or order for delivery) the required books at the university bookstore or from online retailers. Please feel free to purchase or rent used copies of these texts. It also appears that electronic versions of most of the books are available through the library. Finally, there are some readings that I will post online to the course Canvas site—these have an (OL) next to them in the weekly reading assignments.

Please understand that there is a fair amount of reading to be done regularly. I will expect you to keep up with the readings and the asynchronous lectures. I will frequently ask you to draw upon the assigned reading and lectures during the weekly synchronous sessions that will be discussion oriented.

The required books are:

- Basso, Keith. *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language among the Western Apache*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996.
- Demuth, Bathsheba. *Floating Coast: An Environmental History of the Bering Strait*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2019.
- Estes, Nick. *Our History Is the Future: Standing Rock versus the Dakota Access Pipeline, and the Long Tradition of Indigenous Resistance*. London: Verso, 2019.
- Spence, Mark David. *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Online Class Sessions: Synchronous and Asynchronous

This is a blended lecture and discussion course. Both the asynchronous and synchronous portions of the class are meant to work together to help us explore the topic of American Indians and the environment. My goal is to record and upload to Canvas the lecture content before each Friday for the following week. Please review these asynchronous lectures and do the assigned readings so that you are prepared for the Thursday synchronous sessions.

I expect you to attend every synchronous class session. We have incorporated discussion activities into nearly all synchronous sessions. These are designed to give you experience with discussing the readings and using primary sources, to think and write historically, and to engage more deeply with course content and major themes. Repeated absences and/or failure to stay caught up on the assigned readings will strongly hamper your ability to excel in this class.

Canvas & Zoom

Due to the continuing pandemic, this is a fully online course, so having reliable and regular access to a computer and the Internet will be necessary. All assignments will be uploaded to Canvas, which will allow us to leave detailed comments helping you to improve your writing and analytical skills. If this is going to be a problem for you, please bring this to our attention

immediately so we can figure out how to support you. Some readings (marked “OL”) will be posted to this site. Lectures, handouts, instructions, and other helpful material will be distributed through Canvas; if, for some reason, you are unable to open or access these, please notify me immediately.

Like nearly every other course being taught this quarter, we will also be relying heavily on Zoom for the synchronous sessions on Thursdays. You can also schedule one-on-one Zoom sessions (office hours) with me and/or the teaching assistant. I prefer if you use Zoom on a laptop, computer, or tablet rather than a smartphone. Sometimes we will need to share screens in order to display something generated during a discussion activity. I do not mind if you want to keep the camera turned off; however, you do need to be heard by the rest of the class and to hear us during the Zoom discussions, so when you use Zoom, be sure to enable your computer’s audio features, including speakers (or headphones) and microphone. The first time you use Zoom, you will probably need to download and install it; and, if you have not used Zoom in several weeks, the university will require you to update it. Installing and updating Zoom is fairly intuitive, but if you are having trouble with this, the university has robust tech support that you can rely on.

Assignments & Evaluation

Each student earns his or her own grade. We assess your work along clearly articulated guidelines and expectations. We also value and reward improvement. Therefore, it is critical that you do all the assignments, attend all the synchronous class sessions, review all the asynchronous content, and engage with the course concepts. It is impossible for us to evaluate what you have not turned in or articulated! Please note that late work will be penalized 5% per day (with a maximum loss of 30%), including weekends and holidays.

Your final grade will be determined by:

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|--|----------------------------|
| • Short Papers* (Jan. 25 & Feb. 8) | 200 points (100 pts. each) |
| • Longer Paper* (Mar. 8) | 250 points |
| • Photo Project: Preliminary Plan (Feb. 3) | 50 points |
| • Photo Project: Presentation (Week 10) | 100 points |
| • Photo Project: Feedback on Presentations (Week 10) | 50 points |
| • Photo Project: Final Paper* (Mar. 15) | 250 points |
| • Online Reflections of Discussions (throughout) | 100 points |

In order to be eligible to earn a passing grade for this course, you must complete all items marked with an asterisk (*).

Short Papers

You will be required to write two short essays during the first half of the course. These papers will be 750-1,000 words long (about 3-4 pages) and will engage the first two books we read, bringing them into conversation with the sets of short readings we will do in the first two weeks. These are designed to practice the analytical writing skills that you will also use in the more formal and longer assignments. Moreover, this will alert us to any writing challenges you may have and will provide you with some examples of what we are looking for when assessing student writing.

We will provide a more detailed set of instructions for each essay well before the due date. These instructions will include the essay prompt, guidelines for writing an effective essay, proofreading checklist, formatting requirements, and any other relevant information.

Longer Paper

You will be required to write one longer, argument-driven paper based on the readings and course material. This paper will be 1,500-2,000 words long (about 6-8 pages long) and will engage the last two assigned books. In this assignment, you will formulate an original argument; structure a formal, academic paper with an introduction, body, and conclusion; and support assertions using substantial and specific evidence that you cite correctly. We also expect you to review the feedback from the short papers, incorporating these recommended improvements into this longer paper. A higher percentage of the overall grade is assigned to the paper assessment in order to reward significant improvement in your writing.

We will provide a more detailed set of instructions for the paper well before the due date. These instructions will include the prompt, guidelines for writing an effective essay, proofreading checklist, formatting requirements, and any other relevant information. I strongly encourage you to set up an online consultation with the TA or me to discuss paper topics as you begin developing your draft.

Photo Project

In lieu of exams, we are assigning a short and engaging research project. Each student will choose a photo from the UW Libraries Digital Collections, and investigate this photo through environmental history-oriented inquiries. The photo needs to relate to the overarching topic of the course: American Indians and the environment. Students should choose photos that interest them, yet ones that they can reasonably research online. This will involve doing some outside reading and referencing primary sources online, among other possibilities. Students will write up their findings in a final paper (1,500-2,000 words long, including footnotes) and present on their photo during the last week of classes.

The first step in this project will be to choose a photo and to draft a preliminary research plan, about one page in length, due Feb. 3. This plan will map out the research questions you will be asking and will identify some potential primary and secondary sources you will use to answer these questions. The plan will also articulate a preliminary argument that you think this photo makes. The presentations during the final week of class are meant to share your findings. Peers will offer constructive feedback, which will help you refine your analysis in the final paper, due Mar. 17, during finals week.

More detailed instructions about this assignment and its constituent parts will be posted later in the quarter. Like the longer paper, I strongly encourage you to set up an online consultation with the TA or me to discuss this project.

Discussion Reflections

Throughout the quarter, there will be several assigned discussion reflections, usually following readings we have discussed during a Thursday synchronous session. For these exercises, you will write a short reflective piece (250-300 words) about the discussion. You can write about one or

two compelling discussion points that emerged, questions you still have about the reading or about a topic raised in the discussion, or a different perspective that struck you after thinking back on the discussion. You might also connect the discussion to other concepts and readings relative to the course. This is meant to be an open-ended exercise encouraging you to think critically about the discussion activity and demonstrate that you learned something from it. Of course, it will be impossible for you to do well on specific reflections if you do not attend section that day, participate, and take notes. **Please note that all reflections are due by noon on the day following the discussion.**

Grading Scale

4.0 980-1,000 pts.	2.8 830-839 pts.	1.6 710-719 pts.
3.9 960-979 pts.	2.7 820-829 pts.	1.5 700-709 pts.
3.8 950-959 pts.	2.6 810-819 pts.	1.4 690-699 pts.
3.7 930-949 pts.	2.5 800-809 pts.	1.3 680-689 pts.
3.6 910-929 pts.	2.4 790-799 pts.	1.2 670-679 pts.
3.5 900-909 pts.	2.3 780-789 pts.	1.1 660-669 pts.
3.4 890-899 pts.	2.2 770-779 pts.	1.0 650-659 pts.
3.3 880-889 pts.	2.1 760-769 pts.	0.9 640-649 pts.
3.2 870-879 pts.	2.0 750-759 pts.	0.8 630-639 pts.
3.1 860-869 pts.	1.9 740-749 pts.	0.7 600-629 pts.
3.0 850-859 pts.	1.8 730-739 pts.	0.0 0-599 pts.
2.9 840-849 pts.	1.7 720-729 pts.	

Plagiarism and Cheating

Please note that plagiarism or cheating will result in a zero for that entire assignment. If a student is caught plagiarizing or cheating repeatedly, further consequences will be applied. For more detailed information on and definitions of plagiarism and cheating, see the Student Governance Policy, Chapter 209, Section 7.C.

Emergencies

In the event of illness, a death in your family, or other catastrophic, personal crisis—especially in the midst of this pandemic—we will be sympathetic and flexible, provided that you alert us as soon as possible and preferably in advance of an assignment's due date. Belated excuses will not account for poorly done or late work. Considering our current situation, we will be even more flexible than usual; however, we ask that you always strive to keep open the lines of communication so that we can best support you.

Communication

Emailing the TA or me or meeting with one of us online through Zoom is the best way to communicate. Feel free to contact either one of us via email to set up a Zoom session.

Every Sunday, I send out a class announcement via Canvas. This reminds everyone what they should be working on for the next week, including lectures, readings, and assignments. Additionally, I will notify you if there are any changes to the schedule. Please be sure to set up your Canvas preferences so that you receive course announcements through your email.

Schedule

Below is the schedule for the quarter. Be sure to pay attention to the readings so that you can finish them in a timely fashion.

Week 1 (Jan. 4-8)

Tuesday: Introductions

Thursday: Indigenous Relationality & Knowledges

- Whyte, Kyle Powys. "On the Role of Traditional Ecological Knowledge as a Collaborative Concept: A Philosophical Study," *Ecological Processes* 2, no. 7 (2013).
- Todd, Zoe. "Fish Pluralities: Human-Animal Relations and Sites of Engagement in Paulatuuq, Arctic Canada." *Études/Inuit/Studies* 38, no. 1/2 (2014): 217-238.

Further Readings

- Cruikshank, Julie. *Do Glaciers Listen? Local Knowledge, Colonial Encounters, and Social Imagination*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005.
- DeLucia, Christine. "Terrapolitics in the Dawnland: Relationality, Resistance, and Indigenous Futures in the Native and Colonial Northeast." *New England Quarterly* 92, no. 4 (December 2019): 548-583.
- Goldberg-Hiller, Jonathan and Noenoe K. Silva. "Sharks and Pigs: Animating Hawaiian Sovereignty against the Anthropological Machine." *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 110, no. 2 (Spring 2011): 429-446.
- Nadasdy, Paul. "The Gift in the Animal: The Ontology of Hunting and Human-Animal Sociality." *American Ethnologist* 34, no. 1 (2007): 25-43.
- Nelson, Melissa K. and Dan Shilling, eds. *Traditional Ecological Knowledge: Learning from Indigenous Practices for Environmental Sustainability*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018. [Note: this edited volume contains some essays by outstanding Indigenous scholars, including Robin Wall Kimmerer, Rebecca Tsosie, and Kyle Whyte, among others.]

Week 2 (Jan. 11-15)

Asynchronous Lecture: Myths & Settler Colonialism

Thursday: Stereotype of the "Ecological Indian"

- Montaigne, Michel de. "Of Cannibals," (ca. 1580). In *Essays of Michel de Montaigne*. Edited by William Carew Hazlitt. Translated by Charles Cotton. 1877. Project Gutenberg, 2006/2016. <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/3600/3600-h/3600-h.htm#link2HCH0030>.
- Krech III, Shepard. *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History*. New York, W. W. Norton & Company, 1999. (excerpts)
- Ranco, Darren J. "The Ecological Indian and the Politics of Recognition: Critiquing the Ecological Indian in the Age of Ecocide." In *Native Americans and the Environment: Perspectives on the Ecological Indian*, edited by Michael E. Harkin and David Rich Lewis, 32-51. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007.

Further Readings

- Garrouette, Eva Marie. *Real Indians: Identity and the Survival of Native America*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.
- Krupat, Arnold. "Chief Seattle's Speech Revisited." *American Indian Quarterly* 35, no. 2 (2011): 192-214.
- Raibmon, Paige. *Authentic Indians: Episodes of Encounter from the Late-Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2005.

Week 3 (Jan. 18-22)

Asynchronous Lecture: Apache History

Thursday: A Sense of Place

- Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places*.

Further Readings

- Brooks, Lisa. *The Common Pot: The Recovery of Native Space in the Northeast*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008.
- Claxton, Nick XEMFOLTW and Carmen Rodríguez de France. "With Roots in the Water: Revitalizing Straits Salish Reef Net Fishing as Education for Well-Being and Sustainability." In *Indigenous and Decolonizing Studies in Education: Mapping the Long View*, edited by Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Eve Tuck, and K. Wayne Yang, 215-223. New York: Routledge, 2018.
- DeLucia, Christine. *Memory Lands: King Phillip's War and the Place of Violence in the Northeast*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018.
- Hillaire, Pauline and Gregory P. Fields. *Rights Remembered: A Salish Grandmother Speaks on American Indian History and the Future*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2016.
- Reid, Joshua L. *The Sea Is My Country: The Maritime World of the Makahs*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015.

Week 4 (Jan. 25-29)

Asynchronous Lecture: The Great Father

Thursday: Introduce Photo Project

Week 5 (Feb. 1-5)

Asynchronous Lecture: US Environmentalism

Thursday: Indian Removal and National Parks

- Spence, *Dispossessing the Wilderness*.

Further Readings

- Cothran, Boyd. "Working the Indian Field Days: The Economy of Authenticity and the Question of Authenticity in Yosemite Valley." *American Indian Quarterly* 34, no. 2 (2010): 194-223.
- Frost, Warwick and Jennifer Laing. "From Yellowstone to Australia and New Zealand: National Parks 2.0." *Global Environment* 6, no. 12 (2013): 62-79.
- Jacoby, Karl. *Crimes against Nature: Squatters, Poachers, Thieves, and the Hidden History of American Conservation*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.

Week 6 (Feb. 8-12)

Asynchronous Lecture: A Brief History of Alaska

Thursday: Arctic Environments & Indigenous Peoples, Sea & Shore

- Demuth, *Floating Coast*, pp. 1-134 (Prologue, Sections 1 & 2)

Further Readings

- Arnold, David F. *The Fishermen's Frontier: People and Salmon in Southeast Alaska*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008.
- Brower, Harry and Karen Brewster. *The Whales, They Give Themselves: Conversations with Harry Brower, Sr.* Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2004.
- Colby, Jason M. *Orca: How We Came to Know and Love the Ocean's Greatest Predator*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018.

Week 7 (Feb. 15-19)

Thursday: Arctic Environments & Indigenous Peoples, Land & Ocean

- Demuth, *Floating Coast*, pp. 137-195 & 257-318 (Section 3 & 5, Epilogue)

Further Readings

- Bockstoe, John R. *Furs and Frontiers in the Far North: The Contest among Native and Foreign Nations for the Bering Strait Fur Trade*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009.

Week 8 (Feb. 22-26): TBA

Week 9 (Mar. 1-5)

No asynchronous lecture this week: work on the photo assignment

Thursday: Indigenous Environmental Activism

- Estes, *Our History Is the Future*

Further Readings

- Estes, Nick and Jaskiran Dhillon, eds. *Standing with Standing Rock: Voices from the #NoDAPL Movement*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2019.

- Gilio-Whitaker, Dina. *As Long as Grass Grows: The Indigenous Fight for Environmental Justice, from Colonization to Standing Rock*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2019.
- Harmon, Alexandra. *Reclaiming the Reservation: Histories of Indian Sovereignty Suppressed and Renewed*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2019.
- Wilkinson, Charles F. *Blood Struggle: The Rise of Modern Indian Nations*. New York: Norton, 2005.
- Wilkinson, Charles F. *Messages from Frank's Landing: A Story of Salmon, Treaties, and the Indian Way*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000.

Week 10 (Mar. 8-12)

Tuesday: Concurrent Sessions 1 & 2 – Photo Project

Thursday: Concurrent Sessions 3 & 4 – Photo Project

I RESERVE THE RIGHT TO EMEND THESE POLICIES AND SCHEDULE AT MY DISCRETION AND WILL GIVE ADEQUATE NOTICE OF ANY CHANGES.