ES/PHL/REL 448/548: Native American Philosophies
(Spring 3 credits)

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Welcome to Native American Philosophies. The course will provide a place where Native voices will be heard and carefully considered, and where many ways of knowing --- poetry, music, story-telling, scholarship, lectures --- will lead us to examine what we most deeply believe about who we are in the world and what sustains us, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. We will be learning about Native American perspectives on ways of knowing, sources of meaning and ethics, the nature of reality, self, community, and cosmos.

The purpose of the course is to provide a forum and course of study that will further students’ understanding of the ideas of some leading Native American thinkers, and thus to think more deeply about their own place on Earth, their relation to the natural world, their sources of strength and wisdom, the nature of time and place and spirit, right ways of acting in communities, both civic and biotic, and the place of beauty in a well-lived life.

REQUIRED TEXTS:


American Indian Thought, edited by Anne Waters (Blackwell Publishing, 2004), also available at the OSU Bookstore.

There will likely be a few additional on-line readings as the term develops.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING:

Portfolio Part 1: Weekly Discussion of readings
Portfolio Part 2: Weekly Discussion of Speakers/Videos
Combined portfolio: possible 50 points (25 possible points each time the portfolios are collected; I will collect them twice during the term – see discussion below)

Term paper: possible 30 points

Report on Three Outside Class Speakers: possible 20 points

Total: 100 possible points

Students with 90 total points and higher will earn A’s; 80 total points and higher will earn B’s; 70 total points and higher will earn C’s; and 60 total points and higher will earn D’s.
Discussion of Course Requirements:

**Portfolio Part 1:** At the conclusion of each week, students will complete a typed two page (minimum) discussion of the readings for that week. At the top of your discussion/ response, please include your name, the week you’re discussing (Week One, Week Two, etc.) and the titles of the readings for that week. Your discussion/ response should address all the readings. Your discussion should demonstrate that you’ve not only completed the readings but thought about them, you should identify any connections you see between the readings.

**Portfolio Part 2:** At the conclusion of each week, students will complete a typed two page (minimum) discussion of the speakers and videos (if any) for that week. At the top of your paper, please include your name, the week (Week One, Week Two, etc.) and the speakers/ videos for that week. Your discussion/ response should address all speakers and/or videos for that given week.

**Combined portfolio:** Please organize your portfolio or binder clearly by week. Include both Part 1 and Part 2 discussions together in the relevant week.

**Note:** During the term, you should use at least four different genres, forms of writing, or formats for your discussions/ responses (I will post a description of available forms/ genres on our CANVAS site).

I will collect the portfolios twice during the term: on May 1 at the beginning of class, and on June 5, the last day of class, at the beginning of class. You cannot add entries to the earlier half of the portfolio later. The best strategy, and one I strongly encourage, is to develop a practice of completing the discussions each week, rather than waiting to complete them all at once. Not only will this be less stressful in the long run, but it will also deepen your familiarity with the insights and ideas you are encountering, and allow you to develop your understanding accordingly. Completing the portfolio all at one time defeats the purpose. Please develop a practice of regular weekly writing.

**Term paper:** Term papers are due on Wednesday, May 29, in hard copy, stapled, printed, hand in during the first minutes of class. I will accept no late papers, papers emailed as attachments, or papers left for me at my office. They should be a minimum of seven typed pages for those taking the course for undergraduate credit, or twelve typed pages for those earning graduate credit. I will post more guidelines on our CANVAS site.

**Reflections on Outside Class Speakers:** Students will attend the talks/ performances/ presentations of three relevant outside speakers from among those events listed on the syllabus, and reflect upon the talk in the context of class readings and discussions. The report should be more than impressionistic – you should relate the talks to readings, discussions, and videos you’ve encountered through this course. I will collect the Reflections on Wednesday, May 22, at the beginning of class. I will accept no late papers.

**Learning Outcomes:**

Students will become meaningfully acquainted with the ideas of some leading Native American thinkers and writers. Students will acquire new perspectives from which they will examine their own beliefs about the meaning of their lives and their relation to social and natural communities. Students shall gain experience in many ways of knowing and writing, learning how to listen to
poetry, cultural analysis, story, and music. Students will learn to consider views carefully and respectfully. Students will have an opportunity to learn and listen with open minds and open hearts to ideas likely different from their own, presented in forms and genres that may not be familiar.

**COURSE POLICIES:**

YOUR CONSISTENT ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY. Since this is not an on-line class, and is a forum for Native perspectives, much of the course depends directly on guest speakers and videos, so I am serious about attendance. It is not enough to simply read the texts, which is something you could do without taking this course. Participation is expected and required. Please be on time, Your attendance and participation will make a difference to me when I am tabulating your final grade. If you cannot commit yourself this term to consistent attendance, please take the course when you can.

** * * Here are some minimum expectations: 1) that you bring the text to class; 2) that you complete all the readings before class begins, including any assigned readings on CANVAS; 3) that if you consider yourself quiet in classes, you will still attempt to share your perspectives in this class; 4) that the more confident speakers among you attempt to include the less confident; 5) that you complete all assignments on time; 6) that everyone practices respect and courtesy, and 7) that you arrive to each class promptly; and 8) that there be no texting or checking for messages in class on laptops, cell phones, or any other device. Please turn off and put away all cell phones before entering the classroom.

** Statement Regarding Disability Accommodation**
Accommodations are collaborative efforts between students, faculty and Disability Access Services (DAS). Students with accommodations approved through DAS are responsible for contacting the faculty member in charge of the course prior to or during the first week of the term to discuss accommodations. Students who believe they are eligible for accommodations but who have not yet obtained approval through DAS should contact DAS immediately at 541-737-4098.

**Academic Integrity and Student Conduct**
Please review the Oregon State University code for student conduct at the following link: http://studentlife.oregonstate.edu/studentconduct/offenses-0

**SCHEDULE OF READING AND (SOME) EVENTS:**

The schedule below consists largely of readings and scheduled events outside the classroom (your attendance of these is not only encouraged, but required as outlined in the assignments section). I have invited a number of guest speakers to our class, and I also will be incorporating videos into our weeks together as a way to bring people and perspectives into our classroom that we may not otherwise be able to consider. Because our guest speakers all have busy schedules that in some cases will mean re-arranging dates, I have not listed guest speakers or videos below, though both are central to this course, and constitute an important part of your assignments for credit. I will let you know about guest speakers as I am able to confirm dates.
Please turn off all cell phones and put them away before class. Please practice very consistent attendance. Please do not be late, in respect for our learning community and for the people who are giving their time to visit with us.

APRIL

4/1 Introduction

4/3 From Cordova, How It Is: Foreword by Linda Hogan, pp.vii – xi; Editors’ Introduction, pp. xii – xvii; Author’s Introduction, and Biographical Essay, pp. 1 – 7; “The Bridge to America,” and “America,” pp. 30 – 45.

4/8 Cordova: all of the section titled “Windows,” pp. 49 – 83. As always, please complete the entire reading before class.


*** Thursday, April 11, 4 pm. In MU 208 - Kyle Powys Whyte (Citizen Potawatomi Nation): "Justice Forward: Native Americans and Climate Change"


4/17 Read the first four essays in the section titled “What Is It to Be Human” in Cordova, pp. 133 – 165.


4/24 Read the essays “Bounded Space” and “Biodiversity” in Cordova, pp. 186 – 207.

4/29 Read the final essays in Cordova, pp. 208 – 232.

MAY

All readings below are from American Indian Thought edited by Anne Waters, except where noted. Toward the end of the term, there will be a few additional readings on-line (access through our Blackboard course site).


*** Thursday, May 9, 6:30 PM, writer, poet, and musician Joseph Bruchac (Abenaki): "Keepers of the Earth: Native American Stories and Music." Corvallis-Benton County Public Library


*** Thursday and Friday, May 16 & 17, Traditional Ecological Knowledge symposium, keynote by scientist and writer Robin Kimmerer (Citizen Potawatomi Nation) and many other speakers. We will discuss the symposium and schedule of speakers beforehand.


5/22 Reflections on Outside class Speakers due. Readings TBA

5/27 – Memorial Day, no class

5/29 Term paper due. Readings TBA

JUNE

6/3 Readings TBA

6/5 Second collection of portfolios. Conclusion