

History 353: Native American History
Spring 2021
Dr. Alexander Olson
Western Kentucky University

Email: alexander.olson@wku.edu
Office hours: any weekday by appointment

Course Description:

“Contact was not a battle of primal forces in which only one could survive. Something new could appear.”

-Richard White, *The Middle Ground* (1991)

In the 2010 U.S. census, only 0.3% of the population of Kentucky identified as American Indian. Many residents of the commonwealth have never interacted with Indian people. And yet, huge swaths of the United States are sovereign Indian lands. Twelve of the nation’s 310 reservations are larger than Rhode Island. The Navajo Nation alone is larger than ten states, including West Virginia. And the single highest concentration of Native Americans is in New York City, with 111,000 American Indian residents. Far from being the “vanishing race” portrayed in Hollywood, the thousands of enrolled tribal members in the United States include doctors, construction workers, entrepreneurs, and participants in every other aspect of American society. This course offers a broad introduction to Native American history. What are the most pressing issues in Indian country today? How can history make sense of those issues? What is the status of Indian nations in relation to state and federal governments? How do we explain the urge among non-Indians to claim “Indian blood” and create novels and films about Indians? Contrary to stereotypes of indigenous cultures as bastions of traditionalism, a new wave of scholarship has brought to light stories of hybridity, complexity, and change that cast Native American people as important and powerful players in shaping the United States and Canada into modern nations.

Required Texts:

- Tiya Miles, *The House on Diamond Hill: A Cherokee Plantation Story* (2010)
- Brenda Child, *Boarding School Seasons: American Indian Families, 1900-1940* (1998)
- Charles Wilkinson, *Messages from Frank’s Landing* (2000)
- Additional readings are available on Blackboard

Course Structure:

This course will be taught asynchronously, which means there is no specific time when everybody will be logged on simultaneously. There will be no quizzes, exams, or zoom meetings. Instead, your grade is heavily based on your writing in the discussion board. Rather than memorizing facts, you should think of this class as a college-level book club where we will analyze, critique, and discuss the readings, which have been carefully chosen to generate meaningful discussion.

Monday and Tuesday: These days are reserved strictly for reading. During this time, I will post a set of framing remarks to guide the discussion.

Wednesday: Each student will submit a 500-word post (which can be longer if you wish) to the Blackboard discussion board. Your post can address any aspect of the readings and should not simply mirror what I have written in my framing remarks. Dissent is encouraged.

Thursday and Friday: Each student will submit at least three comments (for a combined total of at least 500 words) responding to the posts submitted by your fellow students.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will master basic frameworks for understanding American Indian history and its relation to contemporary issues. Such frameworks include law and policy, historical chronology, aesthetic and cultural production, modernity, and the politics of resistance and accommodation.
2. Students will learn to identify and utilize primary sources to develop credible interpretations of the past. This course supports WKU's Quality Enhancement Plan, *Evidence & Argument*.
3. Students will gain an appreciation for the diversity of Native America.
4. Through intensive weekly discussion boards, students will explore American Indian history in sufficient detail to achieve a measure of expertise.
5. Students will be able to articulate how American Indian history is embedded global networks of political, economic, and cultural exchange.

Technology Requirements:

Students are required to have access to a computer and reliable Internet connection to use Blackboard and to write and submit your assignments. To avoid losing your work in progress, you are encouraged to compose your drafts in a word processing program before submitting your posts on Blackboard. Although Blackboard is accessible through a smartphone, you should think of your discussion posts as short essays that require careful thought and proofreading. You should also have a plan for an alternate way to connect to the internet in case of emergency. If you are unfamiliar with Blackboard, visit the Online Orientation for Online Learners at <http://www.wku.edu/online/orientation/index.php> before the course begins. If you have any problems using the online tools for this course, please contact me as soon as possible.

Note on Language:

In general terms, you can't really go wrong with "Native American" or "American Indian." A specific name (Dakota, Diné, Tuscarora, etc.) is appropriate when you're discussing a specific tribe. The term "Indian country" refers to the many self-governing Native communities across the United States (the leading news outlet of Native America is *Indian Country Today*: <https://indiancountrytoday.com/>). The term "Indian" is not considered derogatory, but it can be confused with people from the Asian nation of India, which is why the terms Native American or American Indian are generally preferred unless it is clear from context. On the other hand, the former name of Washington DC's football team is off-limits in this class.

If you're talking about Canada, then use "First Nations." "Aboriginal" is okay in Canada as an adjective and is particularly useful in discussing issues related to historical events or legacies (aboriginal land title, for example). But not so much "aborigine," which would put you in Australia. "Tribal" functions a bit the same way, as an adjective with positive connotations (not to be confused with the generally pejorative meaning of the word as it is applied to contemporary American politics). "Indigenous" is a great word for generalizing in a global sense, especially for drawing parallels between indigenous people of the Pacific Islands and North America. And yes, ending each of these terms with "people" is a great idea. Finally, since *sovereignty* is one of the main stakes in this field, it's cool—and accurate—to use "nation," when describing Indian people in discussions of law, policy, and politics.

Grading Scale:

The assignments for this class add up to exactly 1000 points. This allows you to calculate your final grade using the following scale. No grades will be rounded up or rounded down.

- A (90-100%, or 900-1000 points)
- B (80-89%, or 800-899 points)
- C (70-79%, or 700-799 points)
- D (60-69%, or 600-699 points)
- F (0-59%, or 0-599 points)

Late Assignments and Grade Disputes:

Late assignments will result in a penalty. Grade disputes (which should consist of a one-page written explanation) will be accepted *no earlier than seven days* after grades are posted. Do not assume that your request will succeed; I reserve the right to lower your grade upon reconsideration.

Academic Dishonesty:

The maintenance of academic integrity is at the heart of higher education. Acts of plagiarism or any other form of cheating will not be tolerated. Engaging in academic dishonesty risks serious punishment, including a failing grade in the class. Please read the relevant section of the WKU Student Handbook: www.wku.edu/handbook/academic-dishonesty.php.

Writing Center Assistance:

The Writing Center on the Bowling Green campus is offering **only** remote assistance to writers during the covid-19 pandemic. WKU students may request feedback on their writing via email or arrange a real-time Zoom conference to discuss a paper. See instructions and how-to videos on the website (www.wku.edu/writingcenter) for making online synchronous (Zoom) or asynchronous (email) appointments. Students may also get short writing questions answered via email; just put “Quick question” in the subject line to (writingcenter@wku.edu).

ADA Notice:

In compliance with University policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center located in Downing Student Union, 1074. SARC can be reached by phone number at 270-745-5004 [270-745-3030 TTY] or via email at sarc.connect@wku.edu. Please do not request accommodations directly from the professor without a faculty notification letter from the Student Accessibility Resource Center.

Sexual Misconduct/Assault:

Western Kentucky University (WKU) is committed to supporting faculty, staff, and students by upholding WKU’s Title IX Sexual Misconduct/Assault Policy (#0.2070) at <https://wku.edu/eoo/documents/titleix/wkutitleixpolicyandgrievanceprocedure.pdf> and Discrimination and Harassment Policy (#0.2040) at https://wku.edu/policies/hr_policies/2040_discrimination_harassment_policy.pdf.

Under these policies, discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct based on sex/gender are prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator, Andrea Anderson, 270-745-5398 or Title IX Investigators, Michael Crowe, 270-745-5429 or Joshua Hayes, 270-745-5121. Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a faculty member, WKU faculty are “Responsible Employees” of the University and **MUST** report what you share to WKU’s Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator. If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU’s Counseling and Testing Center at 270-745-3159.

Problems?

If you are struggling or not getting the grades that you want, please contact me. Don’t wait until things seem dire. I am here to help you! I am happy to answer questions by email, and we can make an appointment to speak by Zoom or phone. My office hours are any weekday by appointment.

Also, college can be stressful, but there are resources on campus to help. Your health is more important than this class. Please reach out to the WKU Counseling and Testing Center if you are feeling overwhelmed, anxious, or depressed: <https://www.wku.edu/heretohelp/>

Assignments and Grade Breakdown

There are a total of 1000 points available based on the following breakdown. Please note the very high percentage of the grade devoted to the discussion board. *The best way to succeed in this class is to actually do the readings every week.* Our goal is not to memorize facts and arrive at a “right” answer each week, but rather to engage deeply and critically with the readings.

1) Discussions (65% of grade)

Weekly discussion of reading—560 points (56% of grade).

Each week, you must write one 500-word-minimum original post (due by Wednesday at 11:59pm) and three shorter responses to your classmates’ posts (due by Friday at 11:59pm). Each thread is worth 40 points. I expect work that shows careful, critical, and constructive engagement with the readings and the posts of your classmates. Although you can write with a casual, conversational tone, you are expected to proofread all submissions. You will not receive full credit for posts that simply mirror my remarks rather than demonstrating your own thoughts on the readings.

Engagement with peers—90 points (9% of grade).

At the end of the semester, I will go back through all fourteen discussion forums and assess the overall quality of your responses to others. Although your comments are part of your weekly grade, these points are reserved for stepping back at the end and assessing overall quality.

2) Papers (35% of grade)

Starting Point Essay—50 points (5% of grade)

This assignment requires you to write a short essay (minimum 500 words) summarizing, to the best of your recollection, what you learned about Native American history in high school and college. Were lessons on Native American history included in your U.S. history or world history classes? If so, how would you characterize these lessons? Our goal with this assignment is to pool our experiences to build a collective diagnosis of how Native history is taught in non-specialized history classes. Upload your essay to the Tests & Quizzes section on Blackboard. **Due on 1/22.**

Carlisle Indian School Map and Digital Archive Essay—200 points (20% of grade)

The readings for week 9 include a complete list of all 1,218 students attending Carlisle Indian School during the 1910 United States census. For this assignment, create a map showing the tribal affiliation of every student. (Some of these locations will be approximate, referencing groups that are spread out among multiple reservations. You do not need to list every student, but every tribal affiliation should be present on the map along with a tally of students from that group.) Then, select three students with records in the Dickinson digital archive and write an essay (800 words minimum) about the experiences of those students. Upload both your essay and a digital copy of your map to the Tests & Quizzes section on Blackboard. *If you are taking this class for Honors credit, please see supplemental component on next page.* **Due on 3/19.**

NAGPRA Case Study—100 points (10% of grade)

The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act was passed in 1990 to start the process of returning human remains, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony that had been stolen from tribes and placed in museums. The implementation of this law is not always a simple and straightforward process. For this assignment, you will choose one of the posted hypothetical scenarios and write an essay (800 words minimum) explaining how you think it should be handled under the law. Your essay can draw on the resources that we will be discussing in week 13. Please upload your essay to Tests & Quizzes on Blackboard. **Due on 4/16.**

Additional Assignment for Honors Section of History 353

This class includes an Honors section. You are not required to be a member of the Honors College to enroll in this section, but if you would like to join, you must let me know by Friday, January 22, in order to secure funding for the Ancestry.com membership. Students in the Honors section will complete a supplementary component to the Carlisle Indian School assignment. For your essay, you chose three students from the 1910 census list. For this supplementary assignment, use the research tools on Ancestry.com to track them across the 1920, 1930, and 1940 census. Then, in an additional essay (600 words minimum), share the findings from your census research. Where did these students end up? Did they return to their home communities? What careers did they enter? Did they purchase homes and have children? You are welcome to supplement your census research with outside sources, but this is not required. This supplemental essay will be assessed as part of the grade on your Carlisle Indian School assignment, and it is due on the same day.

Schedule

Readings are due the week that they are listed on the syllabus. You are expected to read carefully, not skim. There are no “right” answers in the discussions, but you are expected to demonstrate that you have read the entirety of the assigned readings each week. With the exception of the three required books for purchase (Miles, Child, and Wilkinson), all readings can be found in the Content section of Blackboard.

Weekly structure:

Monday and Tuesday: These days are reserved strictly for reading. During this time, Dr. Olson will post a set of framing remarks to guide the discussion.

Wednesday: Each student will submit a 500-word post (which can be longer if you wish) to the Blackboard discussion board addressing the weekly readings.

Thursday and Friday: Each student will submit at least three comments (for a combined total of at least 500 words) responding to the posts submitted by your fellow students. Please note that responses cannot be submitted earlier in the week. You are encouraged to check back several times on Thursday and Friday to keep up with the discussion.

Readings:

Week 1 (January 19-22): Introduction to Native American History

- Philip Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (2004), 3-11.
- Scott Lyons, “The Fourth Remove,” *X-Marks* (2010), 21-23.
- Erin Blackmore, “Sequoyah, the U.S. state that almost existed” (2020).
- Gillian Brockell, “Harris will be the first female, Black, and Asian vice president. But not the first VP of color.” *Washington Post*, November 12, 2020.
 - Starting point essay due by Friday, January 22nd, at 11:59pm.

Week 2 (January 25-29): Indian Modernity

- Paul Chaat Smith, *Everything You Know about Indians Is Wrong* (2009), 1-27.
- Scott Lyons, “Actually Existing Indian Nations: Modernity, Diversity, and the Future of Native American Studies,” *American Indian Quarterly* 35, no. 3 (2011): 294-312.

Week 3 (February 1-5): Blood Quantum and Indian Identity

- Kim TallBear, “20th Century Tribal Blood Politics,” *The Great Vanishing Act* (2017) 129-139.
- Justin Wingerter, “For Cherokees, the Elizabeth Warren dispute goes to the heart of their identity,” *The Oklahoman*, October 17, 2018.
- Scott Jaschik, “Fake Cherokee?” *Inside Higher Ed*, July 6, 2015.
- Paul Chaat Smith, “Homeland Insecurity” (2009), 64-66.
- Listen: “Can a DNA test make me Native American?” *All My Relations Podcast*, March 12, 2019.

Week 4 (February 8-12): Slavery and the Cherokee Nation

- Tiya Miles, *The House on Diamond Hill* (2010), 1-26, 51-107, and 181-186.

Week 5 (February 15-19): The Comanche Empire

- Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (2008), 1-17 and 141-180.
- Juliana Barr, *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman* (2007), 1-15.
- Brian DeLay, “Forgotten Foes,” *Berkeley Review of Latin American Studies* (Fall 2010): 14-19.

Week 6 (February 22-26): Gaazagaskwaajimekaag and the Native New World

- Michael Witgen, “The Long Invisibility of the Native New World” (2011), 1-21.
- David Treuer, *Rez Life* (2012), 1-9.

Week 7 (March 1-5): Christianity

- Watch: “Saint Kateri and Native American Catholics” *Religion & Ethics News Weekly* (2015): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YLHN7ebLz0>
- Allan Greer, *Mohawk Saint: Catherine Tekakwitha and the Jesuits* (2005), 3-24.
- Deborah Miranda, *Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir* (2013), 7-21.

Week 8 (March 8-12): Boarding Schools

- Brenda Child, *Boarding School Seasons* (1998), v-xx, 1-25, 43-68, and 87-100.

Week 9 (March 15-19): Carlisle Indian School

- Watch: *Rabbit Proof Fence* (2002). Available on Netflix and Amazon Prime.
- Browse: Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center: <http://carlisleindian.dickinson.edu/>
- Browse: Carlisle Indian School Project: <https://carlisleindianschoolproject.com/>
- Complete list of students in attendance at Carlisle Indian School in 1910
 - Carlisle Indian School assignment due by Friday, March 19, at 11:59pm.

Week 10 (March 22-26): The Long Red Power Movement

- Philip Deloria, “What Tecumseh Fought For,” *The New Yorker*, November 2, 2020.
- Joshua Reid, “I Want the Sea,” *The Sea Is My Country* (2015), 124-137.
- Paul Chaat Smith and Robert Warrior, *Like a Hurricane* (1996), 1-35.
- David Wilkins and Heidi K. Stark, “A History of Federal Indian Policy” (2018), 149-163.

Week 11 (March 29-April 2): Cooperation and Conflict in the Pacific Northwest

- Charles Wilkinson, *Messages from Frank's Landing: A Story of Salmon, Treaties, and the Indian Way* (2000).

Week 12 (April 5-9): Recognition

- James Clifford, "Identity at Mashpee," *The Predicament of Culture* (1988), 277-346.

Week 13 (April 12-16): Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA)

- Browse: NAGPRA Documents and Resources: <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nagpra/index.htm>
- NMAI Repatriation Policy: <https://americanindian.si.edu/sites/1/files/pdf/repatriation/NMAI-Repatriation-Policy-2020-final.pdf>
- Harvard University NAGPRA Policy: <https://www.peabody.harvard.edu/node/310>
- Sonya Atalay, Jen Shannon, and John Swagger, *Journeys to Complete the Work* (2017).
- Case studies for NAGPRA assignment.
 - NAGPRA case study due by Friday, April 16, at 11:59pm.

Week 14 (April 19-23): The Indigenous Pacific

- David Chang, "Looking Out from Hawai'i's Shore: The Exploration of the World is the Inheritance of Native Hawaiians," *The World and All the Things Upon It* (2016), 1-23.
- Stephanie Nohelani Teves, "Throwing Mangoes at Tourists," *Defiant Indigeneity* (2018), xi-xvi.
- Epeli Hau'ofa, "Our Sea of Islands" (1993), 2-16.