"The Great Spirit gave land to his children to live upon and cultivate...land cannot be sold."

Black Hawk, Sauk Chief (1834)

Course Description

This course introduces students to themes from Native American Studies and is intended as a provocative engagement with a range of issues covering both the history and contemporary cultural politics of indigenous Americans.

Substantively, the course is designed to provide students with a starting point for studying past and present encounters between indigenous Americans and the immigrant settlers to America and their present-day descendants who have dispossessed the indigenous and, willfully or not, have tried to bury native culture. These encounters, often racially charged, have generated enormous controversies while the voices and experiences of Native peoples have been too often concealed in these exchanges. The course makes a modest effort to intervene into the meaning of these experiences and render Amerindians visible and their voices audible while conceding that many of these controversies remain open and unresolved. Because much of the course material focuses on controversial issues of race and identity, one of the primary pedagogical aims of the course will focus on understanding the nature of arguments and point of view. In essence, the course is intended to be a theoretically rigorous, historically rich, and topically interesting engagement with what is often the sadly forgotten story of indigenous Americans and their encounters with the settlers who came later and remade America into something far different.
Course Format and Requirements

Due to the ongoing COVID pandemic, and the more recent situation with the Omicron variant, the entire course will assume an online format. In principle, the class will have one 80-minute lecture each week that will be posted to the Canvas site by the time of the Tuesday class. Thursday sessions of the class will be synchronous discussion sessions consisting of material from the Tuesday lecture and readings. It should be emphasized that the class format will be flexible due to the difficult circumstances confronting all of us. All students will prepare at least one question each week from the lecture and readings that will be submitted to the Canvas site prior to the Thursday session. Grades will be based on the weekly submissions (20%), the midterm paper (30%), final paper (50%). Students can also improve their grades through active participation in the Thursday discussions sessions.

Course Readings

Readings for the course will be available from a combination of library e-reserves, Canvas, or from links on this syllabus. Sessions and readings are organized as follows:

* Syllabus subject to change

COMM 113t Weekly Schedule

**Week 1** Precontact: Amerindian Societies Before the Colonists


**Week 2** Amerindians and Colonists: Property and Conflict over Land

- **Video:** We Shall Remain – Part 1: “After the Mayflower” [Watch on UCSD Library Kanopy] [https://ucsd.kanopy.com/product/after-mayflower](https://ucsd.kanopy.com/product/after-mayflower)


Week 3  ‘Trails of Tears’: Removing Amerindians and Remaking the Landscape

Video: We Shall Remain – Part 3: “Trail of Tears” [Watch from UCSD Library Kanopy]
https://ucsd.kanopy.com/video/trail-tears


Week 4  Representations I: Advertising and the Visual Culture of the Amerindian ‘Other’


Smith, Paul Chaat (2009). Everything You Know About Indians is Wrong. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.  [pp. 1-6, 9-12, 37-42.]  [Read electronic version from UCSD Library website].


Week 5  Representations II: Indigenous Americans in Film

Film: Reel Injun [View on UCSD Library Website]


Week 6   Redskins, Indians, and Fighting Illini: Indian Mascots in Sports

Film: In Whose Honor: American Indian Mascots in Sports.  [View on UCSD Kanopy]
https://ucsd.kanopy.com/video/whose-honor

https://www.ncai.org/proudtobe


https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2014/06/amanda-blackhorse-washington-football-team-trademark-lawsuit/
Week 7  Who Owns the Past? Repatriation of Amerindian Remains and Artifacts


Raja, Tasneem (2016). “A Long, Complicated Battle Over 9,000-Year-Old Bones Is Finally Over.” *NPR.* http://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2016/05/05/476631934/a-long-complicated-battle-over-9-000-year-old-bones-is-finally-over


Synopses of the Debate can be found in a special issue of *Archeology* (1999) http://archive.archaeology.org/online/features/native/debate.html

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Week 8  High Stakes! Debates over Indian Gaming


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Week 9  Disease! COVID in the Long Haul of Colonization


Week 10  ‘We Shall Remain’: Indigenous Resistance to Colonization


Other Sources

Indian Images


Ecological Indian


Film: PBS Independent Lens, *What was Ours* (Excerpts)


