

GRANDE PRAIRIE REGIONAL COLLEGE
DEPARTMENT OF ARTS, COMMERCE AND EDUCATION
ANTHROPOLOGY 2500 3(3-0-0), UT, FALL 2006
NORTH AMERICAN ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

Instructor: Dr. Laurie Nock

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 1-2:30 p.m., Fridays 11:30-1 p.m.

Drop-ins welcome.

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Delivery method: lecture

Pre-requisites: AN1010

Required text:

Kehoe, Alice B. (2006) North American Indians. Upper Saddle River, N.J.:
Pearson/Prentice Hall.

Other readings will be assigned during the term.

Calendar description: Ethnographic survey of First Peoples, focusing on the interplay between environment, economic, political, social and ideological systems, and experience with the modern world.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course serves the dual purpose of helping students learn of the aboriginal societies of North America, and demonstrating the value, techniques and shortcomings of the ethnographic method. We shall study the peoples of the principal cultural/ecological areas of North America (the Arctic, Subarctic, Plateau, Plains, California, Northwest Coast, Northeastern Woodlands, Southeastern Woodlands and the American Southwest), ranging from mobile foraging bands to agricultural societies. We shall study the coherence between levels of economic, political, social and ideological complexity (or hierarchy) and associated environmental factors. This in turn will be shown to be related to the historical experience of the peoples of these areas, and to the pattern and timing of intrusion by the modern world system. Approaches to this subject matter include general ethnographic overview reinforced by multiple resources additional to the course text in the attempt to create an experiential understanding of indigenous peoples across North America, past and present.

REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

Following an introduction to the course and major concepts, a different culture area will usually be covered each week. During the first class of the week, we will "construct" the ethnography of the culture area together, students contributing what you have learned in your reading and the instructor adding comments and information. Much of the second class in the week will be used to add images and impressions from other media, e.g. photographs, films, stories, maps, etc.

As the goal is for students to develop knowledge and understanding of the physical and cultural areas of North America, “active reading” of the course text is essential. To this end, students must submit at least six “Culture Area” assignments for sixty percent of the course grade. Another twenty percent will be contributed by “Lasting Impressions” assignments. (These assignments are described below.) The remaining twenty percent of the course grade will be based on contributions to class discussions.

Any changes to this plan or to the assignments will be made in consultation with students.

MARKING AND GRADING

Assignments for this course will be ultimately marked on a percentage scale. Each Culture Area assignment is worth 10 marks and each Lasting Impression worth 2 marks, adding up to 80. Contributions to class discussion will be added to this.

A+	94-100%
A	88-93
A-	82-87
B+	76-81
B	73-75
B-	70-72
C+	67-69
C	64-66
C-	60-63
D+	55-59
D	50-54
F	0-49

CULTURE AREA ASSIGNMENTS – 10% each

Each of these assignments will contribute 10% to the final course grade for a total of 60%. (If more than six are submitted, the best will be used in calculating your course grade.) They must be submitted by 10 a.m. Mondays, via the Drop Box feature on Blackboard or in hard copy (i.e. on paper). One and only one late assignment will be accepted. These are not expected to be more than five double-spaced pages in length.

These assignments have three parts:

1) Answer the questions on the assigned readings. Most can be answered from the text itself; some may require thinking through or a quick Google search. In most cases, answers will be brief.

2) In order to expand our understanding of anthropology, ethnographic description, terminology and methods, develop two brief anthropological questions and seek to answer them. This could take the form of seeking the definition of an anthropological term or the origins or consequences of a particular practice, for example. Another possibility is to learn more of a particular anthropologist and his or her work. Your research could take you onto the Internet, into reference books, databases or monographs in the library, or into introductory anthropology textbooks! Detailed references to your sources must be provided.

3) Seek out at least two additional sources of information on the particular culture area. These might be films, magazine articles, books, websites, or even accounts of your own experience. It is most important that you describe your findings and explain their significance to your understanding of the culture area.

You are also encouraged to pose questions or make comments regarding your reading and your learning. These can then be discussed in class. When appropriate, the instructor will also post your submissions to parts 2) and 3) on Blackboard, as other students will likely find them of great value!

LASTING IMPRESSIONS

In these ten assignments (which will likely average two double-spaced pages in length), you are to consider the images and information most salient to you about each culture area. Discuss learnings from readings, class discussion and supplementary materials. A draft of these must be submitted by 10 a.m. of the Monday following the week we've dealt with the culture area, either via Blackboard or on paper, although you are encouraged to write them up immediately. You will be allowed to edit them any time up to December 11.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Weeks 1-2	Introduction to the course and to major themes
Week 3	The Arctic
Week 4	The Subarctic
Week 5	Great Basin
Week 6	Plateau
Week 7	The Plains
Week 8	California
Week 9-10	The Northwest Coast
Week 11	The Northeastern Woodlands
Week 12	The Southeastern Woodlands
Week 13	The American Southwest

INTRODUCTION TO ETHNOGRAPHY

Ecological adaptation

- geographical location, climate
- productive activities, resources available and used
 - e.g. food cultivation, more or less intensive, wild rice
- foraging: sea mammals – whales vs. seals
 - land mammals – herds (caribou), bison w/ or w/out horse
 - vs. individuals (moose)
- fishing – lake or runs
- technological base: tools and knowledge
- demographic features – size and density of population

FORMS THE BASIS OF THE CULTURE AREA CONCEPT
(How does language relate?)
FORMS THE BASIS FOR HISTORICAL EXPERIENCE

Economic organization

- access to resources, e.g. land, animals, tools
 - usufruct vs. ownership
- division of labor and/or occupational specialization
- distribution of production: sharing, trade and/or tribute

Social organization

- residence/settlement pattern: mobile/nomadic to settled/urban
- type of community; egalitarian or hierarchical society
- family, household and kinship structure:
 - matri/patri –local or –lineal
- marital patterns and practices—polygyny, monogamy,
 - in/formality
- gender relations: hierachical, egalitarian
- kin / non-kin based organizations
- social interaction: ranked differences, egalitarian

Political organization

- band, village, tribe / confederacy, chiefdom
- type of government, formal or informal
- authority structures or consensus
- conflict resolution and social control—law, enforcers
- relations w/ neighbors—war, trade, travel, migration

Ideology, worldview and/or religion

- art forms
- mythology, deities, forms of worship
- ceremonies and rituals
- values and beliefs that shape behavior
 - (science, approaches to nature, religion)