American Indians & the Environment
AIS/ENVIR/HSTAA 308

Instructor: Josh Reid
TA: La’akea Yoshida

Office: Virtual
Office Hours: Online by appointment
Office Phone: 206.616.3661 (not checked regularly this quarter)
Email: jlreid@uw.edu (instructor) – laakeay@uw.edu (TA)

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:

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:

- 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**

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

**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

Further Readings

Week 2 (Jan. 11-15)

Asynchronous Lecture: Myths & Settler Colonialism

Thursday: Stereotype of the “Ecological Indian”
Further Readings


Week 3 (Jan. 18-22)

Asynchronous Lecture: Apache History

Thursday: A Sense of Place


Further Readings


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


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


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


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


**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.**