

**Inconvenient Indians and the “American Problem”:** American Indian History Since 1815  
*AIS/HSTAA 210*

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**Overview**

With the US victory at the end of the War of 1812, American Indian nations east of the Mississippi River faced an “American problem,” i.e., an expansive nation state and people intent on acquiring Indigenous lands, waters, and resources. Unlike previous eras, Native nations could no longer manipulate alliances with other European powers and competing colonies to their advantage. Instead, they faced the settler colonial expansion of the new United States alone. More troubling, non-Native officials and citizens largely saw no place for Indigenous peoples, much less Native nations, in the body politic or even within the territorial boundaries of the United States. Indians had become inconvenient and in the way of US expansion, of the development of resources and industry, and of the general progress of American civilization. Native peoples west of the Mississippi faced different situations. Some lived in lands claimed by the Spanish empire, while others engaged successfully in various forms of the land-based and maritime fur trades in the intermountain and far west. Large swaths of the Great Plains were the homelands of other expansive Indigenous powers. It took another few generations until these Indigenous peoples became engulfed by the United States and hence inconvenient.

Yet Indigenous peoples—these “inconvenient Indians”—did not sit by idly, waiting for the United States to eliminate them bodily or culturally. Instead, they fought back in a variety of ways legally, diplomatically, and violently, and sought a range of cultural and economic opportunities that allowed them to survive and even thrive, at times. Indeed, the measure of self-determination that many American Indian nations have today is due to the efforts of savvy Indigenous leaders and activists. As illustrated by ongoing Native activism, Indigenous peoples continue to confront an aggressive nation state, international corporations, and a populace that still see Indians as inconvenient.

This course examines the histories of Indigenous peoples of North America, specifically in the United States, from the nineteenth century to today. Students will explore a range of topics, including settler colonialism; Indigenous power; American Indian–US relations; and Native governance, activism, and resilience.

In this course, students will understand:

- The diversity of the American Indian experience throughout the history of the United States.
- The ways American Indian individuals, communities, and nations used commerce, diplomacy, and/or violence to confront the expanding settler colonial power of the United States and its lethal results.

- How to interrogate and complicate the notion of American Indian victimization.
- The role of Indigenous historical agency in enabling American Indian communities not only to survive, but also to thrive.
- The range of historical and contemporary challenges resilient American Indians continue to face 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.

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 **before** scheduled class discussions.
- 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 used copies of these texts, but be careful to get the correct editions, especially for the textbook (Calloway's *First Peoples*). It also appears that electronic versions of these books are available. 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.

The required books are:

- Colin Calloway, *First Peoples: A Documentary Survey of American Indian History*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2018). [**Please note that you need to get the 6<sup>th</sup> edition.**]
- Colin Calloway, *Our Hearts Fell to the Ground: Plains Indian Views of How the West Was Lost*, 2d ed. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2015). [**Please note that you need to get the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.**]
- Daniel M. Cobb, *Say We Are Nations: Documents of Politics and Protest in Indigenous America Since 1887* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2015).
- Theda Perdue, *The Cherokee Removal: A Brief History with Documents*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2016). [**Either the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> editions will be fine.**]

**Note:** The Calloway textbook *First Peoples* covers the full range of American Indian history, from origins to modern times. I am aware that we are only using the second two thirds of this book this quarter. Therefore, you might want to consider relying on a rented digital copy – please make a decision that works for you. However, if you are going to take the first half of this survey course in a later quarter, you will want to own this textbook since it will also be required then.

**Online Class Sessions: Synchronous and Asynchronous**

This is a blended lecture and discussion course. The Calloway textbook will only provide you with a cursory overview of the material, so it is imperative that you attend the synchronous class sessions and review the asynchronous content so that you can best understand the larger narrative of American Indian history. Each Friday, I will upload to Canvas the lecture content for the following week. Please review these asynchronous lectures and do the assigned readings so that you are prepared for the synchronous content on Wednesdays and Fridays.

I expect you to attend every synchronous class session. We have incorporated discussion activities into a number of these synchronous sessions on most Wednesdays and during section meetings on Fridays. These are designed to give you experience with 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. Including exams, 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 Wednesdays and for the sections on Fridays. 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 able to be heard by the rest of the class and 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—this is fairly intuitive, but if you are having trouble with this, the university has robust tech support that you can rely on. Similarly, I can usually troubleshoot most straightforward tech issues. If you have any problems with this, please let me know right away so that we can resolve this.

**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:

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|--|----------|
| • Conference Write-up (Oct. 18)        | 50 pts.  |
| • Short Writing Exercise* (Oct. 22)    | 100 pts. |
| • Midterm Exam* (Oct. 28)              | 125 pts. |
| • Paper* (Dec. 7)                      | 275 pts. |
| • Final Exam* (Dec. 14)                | 250 pts. |
| • Reflections (throughout the quarter) | 100 pts. |
| • Section Participation                | 100 pts. |

In order to be eligible to earn a passing grade for this course, you must complete all items marked with an asterisk.

### *Short Writing Exercise*

We have scheduled one 500-word writing exercise early in the quarter. This is designed to practice the analytical writing skills that you will also use in the more formal paper. Moreover, this will alert us to any writing challenges you may have and provide you with some examples of what we are looking for when assessing student writing.

### *Paper*

You will be required to write one historical essay synthesizing a variety of material, including lectures, readings, primary documents, media, and class discussions. This paper will be 1,500-2,000 words in length (about six to eight pages long). 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. It is important that this essay argues a specific point of view that encourages the reader to agree or disagree. We also expect you to review the feedback from the short writing exercise, incorporating these recommended improvements into this 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 me or the TA to discuss paper topics as you begin developing your draft. Please remember that late work will be penalized 5% per day (with a maximum loss of 30%), including weekends and holidays.

### *Exams*

Both exams will be administered online and will ask you to engage with the IDs discussed in the lectures. On the midterm, you will have a set of IDs to address; on the final, you will have two sets to address. For the ID sets, we will give you several from which to choose. Students will detail the IDs in the set (or sets) of their choice, supplement it with an additional ID that fits with the others, and then write about how the IDs in the set are related. We will show you some examples of this before the midterm. Possible IDs you will be asked to write about will be listed on the lecture handouts.

Each exam will also have an essay-question section. These will require you to formulate an original argument demonstrating your command of broader course themes and to include IDs and other historical details from the lectures and readings to support the argument. The final exam is cumulative in the sense that you will be expected to reflect on the entire chronology of the class at the end of the quarter.

### *Reflections*

Throughout the quarter, there will be several assigned reflections. Some will assess section discussion activities. 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. Other reflections will ask you to engage with the readings for that week. There will be more specific directions for the reading reflections. Please see the schedule below for the reflection due dates and type of reflection being assigned.

### *Conference Write-Up*

Because of the pandemic, nearly all academic associations have moved their annual conferences online. This quarter, the Western Historical Association is holding its conference online from Oct. 13-17. We have access to three of the conference sessions that deal with American Indian history. Each student will choose one of the sessions to attend—you could attend all three, depending on your schedule—and write up a 500-word response to the session. Discuss how it intersects with one of the understanding goals (bulleted items on pp. 1-2 on the syllabus).

Available sessions to attend:

- 10/14 (9:30-11 AM): History of Native Rock n' Roll
- 10/15 (9:30-11 AM): Pushing the Boundaries of Indigenous Borderlands I
- 10/17 (7:30-9 AM): New Insights on Settler Conflicts with Indigenous Peoples

### *Grading Scale*

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

### **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 Friday, 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 (Sept. 30 – Oct. 2)**

##### Asynchronous Lectures

- Convenient Indians and the Unsettling of the Red Continent

##### Wednesday

- Introductions

##### Readings

- Excerpt from Thomas King, *The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Native People in North America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013) (OL)
- Settler Colonialism Readings (OL)
- Optional: Calloway, *First Peoples*, pp. 14-258 – (for those who want to know what happened before 1815)

#### **Week 2 (Oct. 5-9)**

##### Asynchronous Lectures

- Life as Inconvenient Indians circa 1815
- American Indians in the Antebellum Far West, Parts 1 & 2

Wednesday

- Understanding Disease from Indigenous Perspectives

*Readings*

- Calloway, *First Peoples*, pp. 269-274, 304-312
- Perdue, *Cherokee Removal*, Introduction & Chapters 1 & 2 (pp. 1-97 in 3<sup>rd</sup> ed)

**Reflection 1 (discussion) due noon Saturday, Oct. 10**

**Week 3 (Oct. 12-16)**

Asynchronous Lectures

- Expanding Native Powers in the Great Plains, Parts 1 & 2
- Indian Removal & Remaking of Native Nations, Parts 1 & 2

Wednesday – [note: this synchronous session will start at 11:15, a little later than normal]

- Thinking Critically about Indigenous Power in North America

*Readings*

- Calloway, *First Peoples*, pp. 258-269, 282-293
- Perdue, *Cherokee Removal*, Chapter 3 to the end (pp. 98-end in 3<sup>rd</sup> ed)
- Calloway (ed.), *Our Hearts Fell to the Ground*, Chapter 3 (“The Life and Death of Four Bears”)
- Excerpts from Greenberg (ed.), *Manifest Destiny and American Territorial Expansion* (OL)

**Conference Write-up due 10 PM Sunday, Oct. 18**

**Week 4 (Oct. 19-23)**

Asynchronous Lectures

- Indian Treaties of the Mid-Nineteenth Century
- American Indians in the Civil War Era, Parts 1 & 2

Wednesday

- Treaty Documents Analysis
- Midterm Prep

**Short Writing Exercise due 10 PM Thursday, Oct. 22**

*Readings*

- Calloway, *First Peoples*, pp. 312-318
- Calloway (ed.), *Our Hearts Fell to the Ground*, Chapter 5 (“Massacres North and South”)
- Excerpts from *The Dakota Prisoner of War Letters* (OL)

**Reflection 2 (discussion) due noon Saturday, Oct. 24**

**Week 5 (Oct. 26-30)**

Asynchronous Lectures

- US Invasion of the Great Plains

Wednesday: **Online Midterm Exam** (no synchronous class session)

*Readings*

- Calloway, *First Peoples*, pp. 318-363
- Calloway (ed.), *Our Hearts Fell to the Ground*, Chapter 1 (“A Sioux Archive”), Chapter 6 (“Talking to the Peace Commissioners: The Treaty of Medicine Lodge, 1867”), Chapter 7 (“The Slaughter of the Buffalo”), Chapter 8 (“The Battle on the Greasy Grass”), Chapter 9 (“The End of Freedom”)

**Reflection 3 (discussion) due noon Saturday, Oct. 31**

**Week 6 (Nov. 2-6)**

Asynchronous Lectures

- Confronting Assimilation, Parts 1 & 2

Wednesday: no synchronous session this Wednesday

**Reflection 4 (reading) due 10 PM Thursday, Nov. 5**

*Readings*

- Calloway, *First Peoples*, pp. 370-430
- Calloway, *Our Hearts Fell to the Ground*, Chapter 10 (“Going Home”), Chapter 11 (“Attending the White Man’s Schools”), Chapter 12 (“Killing the Dream”)

**Week 7 (Nov. 9-20)**

Asynchronous Lectures

- Indian New Deal & Twentieth-Century Tribal Governments, Parts 1 & 2
- WWII & Termination, Parts 1 & 2

Wednesday

- Menominees Confront Termination

**Reflection 5 (reading) due 10 PM Thursday, Nov. 5**

*Readings*

- Calloway, *First Peoples*, pp. 436-454, 468-481, & 490-495
- Cobb, *Say We Are Nations*, pp. 1-7 & 55-114

**Week 8 (Nov. 16-20)**

Asynchronous Lectures

- Twentieth-Century Assault on Indian Lands & Waters, Parts 1 & 2
- The Beginnings of Twentieth-Century Indian Activism, Parts 1 & 2

Wednesday

- Introduce Final Paper Assignment

*Readings*

- Calloway, pp. 454-459
- Cobb, *Say We Are Nations*, pp. 9-53
- Oral History Selections from *Confluence Story Gathering Collection* (OL)

**Reflection 6 (discussion) due noon Saturday, Nov. 21**

**Week 9 (Nov. 23-27)**

Asynchronous Lectures

- Indian Activism of the 1960s & 1970s: Fish Wars in the PNW, Parts 1 & 2

Wednesday: nothing synchronous this week – Thanksgiving

Readings

- Calloway, pp. 459-462
- Cobb, *Say We Are Nations*, pp. 115-188
- Fish War Documents (OL)
- Oral History Selections from *Confluence Story Gathering Collection* (OL)

**Week 10 (Nov. 30 – Dec. 4)**

Asynchronous Lectures

- Indian Activism of the 1960s & 1970s: AIM & Occupations, Parts 1 & 2
- Self-Determination and Sovereign Native Nations, Parts 1 & 2

Wednesday: no synchronous class session this Wednesday – extra time for online consultations

*Readings*

- Calloway, *First Peoples*, pp. 462-467, 481-489, 500-560
- Cobb, *Say We Are Nations*, pp. 189-201

**Week 11 (Dec. 7-11)**

**Paper due 10 PM Monday, Dec. 7**

Asynchronous Lectures

- *Âs Nutayuneân: We Still Live Here* (2011)
- Indian Activism Today, Parts 1 & 2

Wednesday

- Big Picture Takeaways

**Reflection 7 (overall) due 10 PM Thursday, Dec. 10**

*Readings*

- Calloway, *First Peoples*, pp. 566-637
- Cobb, *Say We Are Nations*, pp. 203-250

**Online Final Exam: December 14**

**I RESERVE THE RIGHT TO EMEND THESE POLICIES AND THE SCHEDULE AT MY DISCRETION AND WILL GIVE ADEQUATE NOTICE OF ANY CHANGES.**