

# SYLLABUS

## NATIVE AMERICAN RELIGIONS

Spring 2005 - Thursdays 6:25 to 9:05

Florida International University- University Park Campus - Miami, Florida

Anthropology (ANT 4211- U05), Religious Studies (REL 3380), or Liberal Studies (IDS 4920-U03)

Version of January 13, 2005c

### Instructor: Dennis Wiedman, Ph.D. Anthropologist

Associate Professor. Department of Sociology and Anthropology.

Phone 305-348-2262. Office: University Park DM, 336B. Biscayne Bay AC 1, 310.

Office Hours: By appointment or UP – Thurs. 2:00 to 4:00 PM. BBC – Wed. 3:30 to 5:00.

Email: [Wiedmand@fiu.edu](mailto:Wiedmand@fiu.edu) Web Page: [www.fiu.edu/~wiedmand](http://www.fiu.edu/~wiedmand)

Email communication should be within WebCT. I try to respond to emails within three days.

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an introduction to Native North American religions and spirituality. The course highlights the sacred ecology of people, plants, animals and the environment. Special emphasis is placed on myths, rituals, and beliefs ranging from individual practices to organized religions among a diverse array of Native American communities. These different ways of seeing, sensing and listening form entire life ways that are reflected in the arts, music, dance, poetry, narrative, architecture and social organizations. Of importance will be the historical, economic, health, environmental, political and legal issues that influence the present and future ways that Native Americans practice their religious traditions. Attention will be given to contemporary issues and Native cultures of South Florida.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES** On completion of this course the student should:

- 1) Recognize the diverse cultures and religious traditions of Native America.
- 2) Understand the importance of spirituality in the everyday lives and communities of contemporary Native Americans.
- 3) Identify tribal arts, music, dance, poetry, literature and architecture within the social, cultural, environmental, and spiritual context of Native American communities.
- 4) Appreciate the economic, political, environmental and legal restrictions that have been and continue to be placed upon the practice of Native American religions and culture.
- 5) Be able to compare similarities and differences among tribal religions.

### WEB ASSISTED MATERIALS

WebCT is used to support class presentations and the student learning experience. Learning components such as related readings, web page links, study aids, discussions, emails, extra credit exercises, local events, writing assignments, and a glossary are provided on-line. It is required that

students participate in the on-line email, discussions, assignments and quizzes within WebCT. Check “Content” regularly for course information. Internet access can be through any computer. Computers in the FIU computer labs and the library are available for those who do not have personal computers. Go to WebCT from FIU main page, or go directly to:  
[http://webct.fiu.edu/webct/public/home.pl?action=print\\_home](http://webct.fiu.edu/webct/public/home.pl?action=print_home)

**Native American Resources: Knowing, Understanding and Appreciating Native America.**

This set of web pages is designed to facilitate Native American Studies by providing links to selected information sources and innovative Internet presentations.

Web page: <http://www.fiu.edu/~wiedmand/naresources/index.htm>

**eHRAF: Human Relations Area Files** is an internationally recognized archive for encouraging and facilitating worldwide comparative studies of human behavior, society, and culture. The eHRAF Collection of Ethnography contains over 350,000 pages of information on all aspects of cultural and social life with diverse topics ranging from bringing up children to religious beliefs to causes and cures of diseases. Information is organized into cultures, ethnic groups and archaeological traditions. Full-text sources (books, articles, and dissertations) are numerically subject-indexed at the paragraph-level. Course reading and writing assignments will utilize this resource. Go through [FIU Libraries -- Information by Subject \(Sociology & Anthropology\)](#) From off-campus use the FIU Library Proxy server.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**Quizzes and submission of assignments are primarily through WebCT.**

- 1) **Quizzes** will focus on class lectures, films, readings and special presentations. Through quizzes the student can demonstrate an understanding of the materials presented and their integration into the total course. Two quizzes are scheduled.
- 2) **Discussions** both in-class and on-line demonstrate the student's interest in the course, understanding of the materials, as well as critical thinking and writing skills.
- 3) **Essays** are short written statements that demonstrate the student's skills in research methods, analysis and writing. Four essays are scheduled. Three are 750 words each and the fourth 1500 words. Essays will focus on an aspect of a contemporary tribal religion or issue. Best scores are given to those that integrate the course readings, discussions, and presentations with the student's research and experiences. In-text citations and “References Cited” at the end of the text must be in the style of the American Anthropologist. Follow the instructions in “Reference Your Sources” in WebCT course “Content.”
- 4) **Final Examination** covers the entire course. Scheduled at time published in University calendar.

## **READINGS**

Joseph Epes Brown and Emily Cousins

2001 *Teaching Spirits: Understanding Native American Religious Traditions*.  
New York: Oxford University Press.

Lawrence E. Sullivan, Editor

2003 *Native Religions and Cultures of North America: Anthropology of the Sacred*. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Vine Deloria, Jr.

2003 *God Is Red: A Native View of Religion*, 30th Anniversary Edition.  
Golden, Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing.

Dennis Wiedman (On reserve in Library)

1990 Big and Little Moon Peyotism as Health Care Delivery  
Systems. *Medical Anthropology* 12(4)371-387.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Attendance will be taken occasionally throughout the term. You may have one recorded absence without penalty. Each additional unexcused absence will reduce the total points earned during the semester.

## **QUIZZES AND FINAL EXAMINATION**

Quizzes demonstrate the students understanding of the course presentations and readings. These focus on the course and materials up to that time. They are composed of multiple choice, word identification, etc. Primarily administered on-line via WebCT. If you cannot take a quiz at the scheduled time, it must be taken within one week. If you do not have a legitimate reason for the delay, the quiz score will be reduced one letter grade.

The final examination will be cumulative of the entire course. Failure to take the exam at the scheduled time will result in a letter grade deduction from the final examination score. If for some legitimate reason you cannot take the exam at this time, it must be discussed and approved by the instructor prior to that date.

## **CLASS PARTICIPATION**

Discussion on the topics and issues are promoted during class and in WebCT. Students should be prepared to verbally and in writing demonstrate their comprehension of the class presentation and integration of the reading materials.

## EXTRA CREDIT

**Out-of-Class Activity:** Attend a Native American activity, exhibit, etc. and write a 300 - 600 word essay. Present a brief overview the specifically focus on a aspect that was of interest to you. Up to 4 extra points each. Approved in advance by the instructor. Submit via WebCT within two weeks following the activity.

**Learning Exercises:** Occasional projects will be issued during the course within WebCt. Extra credit points vary.

## ACADEMIC ETHICS

It is strictly prohibited to submit as one's own work material provided by a professional research agency, the Internet, or other persons. Student essays may be evaluated through [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com) a software used by FIU to assess plagiarism from web sites and on-line sources. A grade of F for the course will be assigned to any student who violates these principles. The instructor also has the authority to consider academic misconduct charges that carry considerable penalties. Please consult the University student handbook for further information on plagiarism and its consequences.

## Grading

Quizzes (2 = 15 points each)	<b>30</b>
Participation: On-line & In-Class	<b>15</b>
Essays (1, 2, 3 = 5 each, 4th = 15 points)	<b>30</b>
Final Exam	<b>25</b>
<b>Total Points</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Extra Credit</b>	<b># #</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b># # #</b>

### Final Grade Calculation

Grand Total Points minus attendance

A	= 95 - 100	C	= 70 - 72
A-	= 90 - 94	C-	= 67 - 69
B+	= 85 - 89	D+	= 63 - 66
B	= 80 - 84	D-	= 60 - 62
B-	= 77 - 79	F	= 59 or less
C+	= 73 - 76		

## TOPIC AND COURSE SCHEDULE

The course schedule is on a WebCT page that is updated as the course proceeds. The schedule includes dates for topic presentations, quizzes, readings, discussions and assignments. Reading assignments are an important foundation for discussion and tests. It is expected that students will be familiar with the assigned reading by the designated dates.

### **January 13- Class One – Course Overview**

**On-Line Assignment:** Intro to WebCT

**On-Line Survey:** Student Background

**Readings:** (To be read by this date) None

### **20- Class Two – Ways of Knowing**

**On-Line:** Course Pretest. No Score. Via WebCT

**Readings:** Brown: Forward & Introduction. Pps. i-xxiii.

Sullivan: Understanding Native American Religious Lifeways. Pps. 1- 32

Deloria: Forward & Introduction i - xvii

### **27- Class Three – Creation Stories and Cosmology**

**Readings:** Brown: Ch. 1. Back to Back,

2. Changeless at the Heart of Change, 3. Fixing a Center. Pps. 3-40.

Sullivan: Ch. 3. Rebalancing the World in the Contradictions of History:

Creek/Muskogee. Pps. 85-103.

Choctaw and Tewa Creation Myths – Library Reserve/WebCt.

### **February 3- Class Four – Sacred Land and Spaces**

**On-Line: Quiz 1.** Thursday Feb 3, 9:00 PM to Sunday Feb 6, 2:00 AM.

**Readings:** Brown: Ch. 4. Silence, the Word, and the Sacred,

5. There is No Word for Art (Pps. 41-82).

Sullivan: Ch. 1. Renewal as Discourse and Discourse as Renewal  
in Native Northwestern California. Pps. 33-52.

### **10- Class Five – Law, Politics and Religious Freedom**

**Assignment:** Essay 1. Annotated Bibliography. Via WebCT Feb 10. 6:00 PM

**Readings:** Brown Chapters 6 & 7. (Pps. 83-125).

### **17- Class Six – Rites of Passage and Identity**

Dr. Carol Markstrom. Apache Girls Sunrise Ceremony

**Readings:** Deloria: Chap 1-3, Pps 1-60.

Sullivan: Ch. 6. In the Space between Earth and Sky:

Contemporary Mescalero Apache Ceremonialism. Pps. 142-159.

**24- Class Seven – Vision Quests and Shamanism**

**Assignment:** Essay 2 - Tribal Creation Stories. Via WebCT Feb 24, 6:30 PM

**Readings:** Sullivan Ch. 4. Wiping the Tears: Lakota Religion in the  
Twenty-first Century. Pps. 104-120.  
Deloria: Chap 4-6, Pps 61-112.

**March 3- Class Eight –Sun Dance and Sweat Lodges**

**Readings:** Sullivan: Ch. 5. The Continuous Renewal of Sacred Relations:  
Navajo Religion. Pps. 121-141.  
Deloria: Chap 7-9, Pps 113-164.

**10- Class Nine – Ceremonial Art**

**Readings:** Deloria: Chap 10-12. Pps 165-218.

**17- Class Ten - Dance**

**Assignment:** Essay 3 “All My Relations.”

**Readings:** Sullivan: Ch. 2. Traditional Ways and Contemporary Vitality:  
Absaroke/Crow. Pps. 53-84.  
Sullivan: Ch. 7. Syncretism, Revival, and Reinvention:  
Tlingit Religions, Pre- and Postcontact. Pps. 160-180.  
Deloria: Chap. 13-14. Pps 219-256.

**24 – Spring Break**

**31 - Class Eleven – Peyotism and the Native American Church**

**On-Line: Quiz 2.** March 31, 9:00 PM to April 3, 2:00 AM.

**Readings:** Sullivan: Ch. 8. Eye of the Dance: Spiritual Life of the  
Central Yup'ik Eskimos. Pps. 181-207.

**Wiedman:** Big and Little Moon Peyotism as Health Care Delivery Systems.  
FIU Library Reserve/WebCT

**April 7 Class Twelve – Navajo Cosmology (DW at SfAA)**

**Readings:** Sullivan: Ch. 9. Images of the Sacred in Native North  
American Literature. Pps. 208-237.

Deloria: Chap 15-17. Pps 257-296.

**9 - Saturday - FIU Intertribal Celebration**

**14- Class Thirteen – Health and Healing**

**Assignment 4:** Final Essay – Tribal Religions Today. Via WebCT April 14, 6:30 PM.

**21- Class Fourteen**

Course Overview – Final Exam Review

**28 - FINAL EXAMINATION.** At University scheduled time