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GRANDE PRAIRIE REGIONAL COLLEGE
DEPARTMENT OF ARTS, COMMERCE AND EDUCATION
ANTHROPOLOGY 2550, WINTER 2001
CONTEMPORARY CANADIAN NATIVE PEOPLES

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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 1-2:30 p.m. Drop-ins welcome.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Aboriginal peoples all over the world have been encapsulated within modern states, and the relationship is usually problematic, especially for the former. The imposition of state (and global) economic systems was accomplished through the appropriation of aboriginal resources (particularly land and labor). Political systems designed to impersonally govern millions of people and relations with other states of the same scale were imposed on small communities. Social systems developed to sustain inequalities and to allow the interaction of strangers replaced systems which assumed everyone is related. Ideological systems envisioning individual human control over the universe challenge those which stress that we are inextricably linked to all beings past, present, and future and are responsible for all of them and for each other. The control the state exerts over aboriginal peoples is, ultimately, military, but it is also expressed in its domination of the mass media and of educational systems. Of particular interest is the perspective that legal systems are created to further particular economic and political interests, and within particular cultural frameworks; however, they can also be utilized by those whose interests are opposed and whose culture is different. Hence the success of recent land claims and inter-governmental agreements, and the increased tendency towards self-determination and self-government.

Following an initial outline of the culture and society of aboriginal peoples in Canada prior to European occupation, we shall study their experience under Euro-Canadian domination. We shall examine the Treaties (legal documents by which aboriginal land was acquired) and consequent land claims suits, the Indian Act (designed to control and protect Indian reserve lands and residents), the continuous quest for economic resources, and the effects of Canadian educational, religious and legal institutions. Throughout, our attempt will be to make sense of the Native point of view, its logic and rationale; we shall be learning at least as much of the Euro-Canadian point of view and its logic and rationale.

REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

The assignments on Treaties and the Indian Act are compulsory. Choose two of the other 20% assignments, choose one and construct a fourth assignment of your own, in close consultation with the instructor. Assignments must be handed in to the instructor by 3p.m. Friday on the week they are due. (Week 1 ends on the second Friday of classes.) The final week of classes (Week 13), you may submit one assignment of your choosing. All marking of these assignments uses the stanine system.

There will also be in-class assignments (quizzes, group discussions, etc.) timed at the instructor's discretion, which in total will compose twenty percent of the final course grade. Ample opportunity to earn points will be provided, so there will be no make-ups for these. For this portion of the course only, calculate your mark as a percentage of total marks obtainable.

70-100%	= 9	40-44%	= 4
61-69%	= 8	35-39%	= 3
55-60%	= 7	30-34%	= 2
50-54%	= 6	10-29%	= 1
45-49%	= 5	0-10%	= 0

TEXTS

THE INDIAN ACT, 1989. (Available on reserve in the Library.)

Bussidor, Ila and Bilgen-Reinart, Ustun 1997. Night spirits: the story of the relocation of the Sayisi Dene. University of Manitoba Press.

Ponting, J. Rick, Ed. 1997. First Nations in Canada: perspectives on opportunity, empowerment, and self-determination. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson.

Taylor, Drew Haydon, 1999. Further adventures of a blue-eyed Ojibway. Theytus Books.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS, READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Readings are in J. Rick Ponting, Ed. (1997) **FIRST NATIONS IN CANADA: PERSPECTIVES ON OPPORTUNITY, EMPOWERMENT, AND SELF-DETERMINATION**. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson.

WEEKS 1-2 Introduction; Stereotypes; Ethnographic and Demographic Overview;
4. The socio-demographic picture, J. Rick Ponting.

6. Disempowerment: "Justice", racism, and public opinion, J. Rick Ponting, pp. 163-192.

Film: Hands of History 1994 52 min. GPRC

All over: Stolo, Gitksan, Blood, Chippewa; 4 women artists.

WEEK 3 Treaties

2. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND: PART I, Roger Gibbins.

Appendix A Treaty#7 with the Blackfoot, 1877.

ASSIGNMENT ON TREATIES DUE

WEEK 4 The quest for economic resources; Land claims

7. Exploitation of the oil and gas frontier; impact on Lubicon Lake Cree women, Rosemary Brown.

16. The government of Nunavut (1999): a prospective analysis, Andre Legare.

Film: Blockade: who owns the land? 1998 24 min. GPRC

Plateau. Gitksan and Wetsuweten.

WEEKS 5-6 Indian Act; Economic and political underdevelopment

5. An overview of First Nations' empowerment and disempowerment, J. Rick Ponting.

Appendix C: The Indian Act: Selected provisions and commentary

Film: Place of the boss 1996 49 min. GPRC

ASSIGNMENT ON INDIAN ACT DUE WEEK 5

WEEK 7 Legal systems: Canadian and traditional

6. Disempowerment: "Justice", racism, and public opinion, J. Rick Ponting, pp. 152-163.

Film: No turning back 1997 47 min. GPRC

Canada; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Lots of testimony.

Unfortunately, don't name speakers. Excellent.

ASSIGNMENT ON NIGHT SPIRITS DUE

WEEK 8 Schooling and Churching

9. Urban Indians: reflections on participation of First Nation individuals in the institutions of the larger society, George Calliou.

13. Empowerment through First Nation control of education: a Sakaw Cree philosophy of education, Dale Auger.

WEEKS 9-10 Social problems

10. First Nation cultures and communities, J. Rick Ponting

11. Stopping family violence: aboriginal communities enspirited, Madeleine Dion Stout with Catherine R. Bruyere

Film: Keepers of the fire 1994 55 min. GPRC

All over: Oka, Mohawk, Haida, Mikmaq (Tobique), urban Toronto; women activists.

ASSIGNMENT ON FURTHER ADVENTURES . . . DUE WEEK 9

WEEKS 11-12 Mobilization and resistance

12. Leadership in First Nation communities: a Chief's perspectives on the colonial millstone, Strater Crowfoot

14. Self-determination, J. Rick Ponting.

18. Getting a handle on recommendations of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

ASSIGNMENT ON FILMS DUE WEEK 11

WEEK 13

MISSED OR ALTERNATIVE ASSIGNMENT DUE

ASSIGNMENT ON TREATIES

Value: 20%

Due: Week 3

Read carefully Treaty 7 and Treaty 8 and the reports accompanying the latter. For each Treaty, answer the following questions.

1.
 - a) When was it signed?
 - b) What specific geographical area does it encompass?
 - c) What larger geopolitical area does it encompass?
2. Why does Her Majesty's government want a Treaty?
3. What are the Indians to give up?
4. What does Her Majesty offer in return?
 - a) as an immediate reward for taking Treaty
 - b) as occasional gifts or assistance
 - c) ongoing and/or regular benefits
5. What rights do Indians have on the lands they have ceded outside of reserved land??
6. What rights do others have on reserved land?
7. What do the Indians promise for the future?
8. What is the structure of Indian government, as expressed in the Treaty?
9. How are the Indians to live in future, as expressed in the Treaty?
10. What are your comments about and reactions to the Treaties? How do they differ or resemble each other?

ASSIGNMENT: INDIAN ACT

Value: 20%

Due: Week 5

1. Read through the 1989 compilation of the Indian Act, judiciously summarizing regulations regarding
 - a) the right to be registered as an Indian
 - b) the right to be registered as a band member
 - c) enfranchisement
 - d) alcohol use
 - e) the prerogatives and powers of band government
2. Study my synthesis of the Act as it stood up to 1985. Summarize the differences with the above on points a) through d)
3. Explain the potential of and limitations to self-government of First Nations under the Indian Act, using your notes for e) above.

Value: 20%

Due: Week 7

ASSIGNMENT: NIGHT SPIRITS

Some of the principle causes of the disruption of the Sayisi Dene community were:

- alcohol
- relocation
- disruption of trapping and hunting
- unemployment
- the imposition of Canadian government administration

Describe the effects of these factors on ideology (religion or spirituality, ideas of good and bad, right and wrong), social organization, political life and the economic system of the community. Which would appear to be the most significant source of change?

ASSIGNMENT: FURTHER ADVENTURES OF A BLUE-EYED OJIBWAY

Value: 20%

Due: Week 9

Analyze stereotypes, as described and used in Taylor's book. Categorize them, explain who holds them and to whom they refer, and describe their consequences. Use this opportunity also to explore functions and types of humor.

ASSIGNMENT: FILMS

Value: 20%

Due: Week 11

The Library at GPRC holds many documentary films which are of relevance to contemporary Native issues. Review five films we have not seen in class, including at least the following information

- a) when the film was made, and by whom
- b) the topic and people it is about
- c) your understanding of the broader issues it portrays
- d) the success of the film in achieving its objectives.