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GRANDE PRAIRIE REGIONAL COLLEGE
DEPARTMENT OF ARTS, COMMERCE AND EDUCATION
ANTHROPOLOGY 2550 3(3-0-0), WINTER 2003
CONTEMPORARY CANADIAN NATIVE PEOPLES

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Office Hours: Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays 1:30-2:30. Drop-ins welcome.

Prerequisite: a 3-credit course in the Social Sciences.

Calendar description: Anthropological perspectives on some current situations of Native peoples in Canada.

REQUIRED TEXTS

THE INDIAN ACT, 1989. (Available on-line at www.canada.justice.gc.ca.)

Long, D. and Dickason, O.P. (Editors) (2000). Visions of the heart: Canadian aboriginal issues. Toronto: Harcourt Canada.

CHOOSE AMONG THE FOLLOWING (SEE ASSIGNMENTS)

Bussidor, I. and Bilgen-Reinart, U. (1997). Night spirits: the story of the relocation of the Sayisi Dene. University of Manitoba Press.

Maracle, L. (1999). Sojourners and Sundogs. Vancouver: Press Gang Publishers.

Taylor, D.H. (1999). Further adventures of a blue-eyed Ojibway. Theytus Books.

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, the Indian Act and films are compulsory. Choose one of the other 20% assignments. Assignments must be handed in to the instructor by 3p.m. Friday on the week they are due. Late papers will not be accepted. All marking of these assignments uses the stanine system.

Students will often be called upon to report on their learning activities, and there will also be in-class assignments (quizzes, group discussions, etc.) timed at the instructor's discretion. These reports and assignments will be worth 20% percent of the final course grade. As one of these assignments (worth ten points), students are to meet with me for an in-depth writing tutorial on one of their assignments, at any point during the term. Ample opportunity to earn points will be provided, so there will be no make-ups for in-class work. For in-class assignments and reports ONLY, calculate your mark as a percentage of total marks obtainable.

80-100%	= 9
72-79%	= 8
65-71%	= 7
60-64%	= 6
56-59%	= 5
50-55%	= 4
45-49%	= 3
26-44%	= 2
0-25%	= 1

WEEK 3 ASSIGNMENT: TREATIES

Value: 20%

Due Week 3

PART I

Read carefully Treaty 8 and the Treaty Commissioner's Report and answer the following questions.

1.
 - a) When was it signed?
 - b) Which are the First Nations involved?
 - c) What are the boundaries of the geographical area it encompasses?
 - d) What larger political area is included?
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 Indians have on reserved land? What rights do others have on reserved land?
7. What do the Indians promise for the future?
8. What is the structure of the Indian political system, as implied in the Treaty?
9. How are the Indians expected to live in future?

PART II

Read carefully the Reports of the Commissioners for Treaty 8. What concerns were expressed by Indians during Treaty negotiations? How did government representatives respond?

ASSIGNMENT: INDIAN ACT

Value: 20%

Due Week 5

1. Study my synthesis of the Act as it stood up to 1985. Summarize regulations regarding
 - a) enfranchisement
 - b) the right to be registered as an Indian
 - c) the right to be registered as a band member (on band list)
 - d) alcohol use.
 - e) the prerogatives and powers of bands and/or band council

2. Read through the 2001 compilation of the Indian Act. Compare and contrast with the pre-1985 version regulations regarding
 - a) enfranchisement
 - b) the right to be registered as an Indian
 - c) the right to be registered as a band member (on band list)
 - d) alcohol use

3. What effect does the Indian Act have on Treaty provisions? Provide specific examples and an overall assessment.

FILM ASSIGNMENT

Value: 20%

Due Week 7

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, the producer, the director, and its length
- b) the topic and people it is about (community, culture and geographical region)
- c) your understanding of the broader issues it addresses

Films should be at least 30 minutes in length.

ASSIGNMENT: NIGHT SPIRITS

Value: 20%

Due Week 9

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?

Length: not more than ten pages, or 2500 words. Use references as appropriate.

ASSIGNMENT: THROUGH ABORIGINAL EYES

Value: 20%

Due Week 11

Describe white people and dominant Canadian society as portrayed by

- a) Drew Hayden Taylor in Further adventures of a blue-eyed Ojibway
- OR
- b) Marianne and her family in Sundogs.

Length: not more than ten pages, or 2500 words. Use references as appropriate.