

## Integrating Indigenous Identities

### *Writing Intensive Course*

Professor Winona Wynn, Heritage University

NAIS 4XX spring semester 2016

This course, INDIG 4XX, functions as a culminating thematic course that complements, complicates and deepens previous courses taken in the NAIS Program. Additional pre-requisites ensure that students are prepared to engage with complex analysis and critical research essay writing formats. Placed in the fourth year, the course is the final “examination” of themes and community/research processes explored throughout the NAIS curriculum. The seminar format of this course limits the number of students to ensure full and deep engagement with the teaching and learning opportunities. True to the format of the FOUR KEY NAIS courses, *INTEGRATING INDIGENOUS IDENTITIES* (NAIS 4XX) will incorporate and interconnect both intergenerational research and community internships with major course themes. The course will be taught through a collaborative teaching model the goal of which is to enlist our NAIS Advisory Board members\* to continue to work with our faculty in a reciprocal teaching and learning context.

Representative course syllabi for this NEH Project follow a Four Module Format outlining the major sections of the undergraduate content.

### **Modules for *Integrating Indigenous Identities***

#### I. Indigenous family identities—contested, complicated, and connected self.

In this module, students will be focused on family histories, literary constructs and definitions of “family” in multiple contexts (including Global North and South). Community engagement may consist of inter-generational interviews, family trees, museum internship (Yakama Nation Museum and collections elsewhere i.e., Smithsonian, Library of Congress, PBS, New York Public Library databases, etc.).

#### II. Indigenous community identities—emergent citizenship, shifting geographical spaces, settler colonies, socio-political constructs

Revisiting or deepening the understanding or politicized spaces from which authors project “voice.” Discussing constructs of citizenship as it relates to colonization (citizen-states). Complicating the binary of “inclusion/exclusion” as it defines “the other.” Recognition that “the other” resides within us—multi-racial identities and the denial of indigeneity and also the rise of an indigenous consciousness (Zapatistas and the United Nations). Voices previously marginalized (reference earlier readings and historical contexts from Native American and Chicano/a Literature), now centered. Grappling with the concept of “belonging”: how are students coming to terms with the complexity of the “multiple worlds in which they and others function”? Perceptions of multiple worlds—community project and research.

III. Indigenous global identities—geographic and symbolic spaces, i.e. symbolic space of memory and experiences, imaginary maps (shifting borders due to political strife and reclamation).

Examining the phenomenon or recently recognized revitalization of global societies and their simultaneous movement “backward and forward” in the context of “indigenous mind rising.” How is *this* binary being challenged—the simultaneous and seemingly oppositional movement of back and forth? Why is it important? How do global identity shifts impact local identities? Are identity constructs ever just “locally placed.” Again, the focus is on the Global North and South. See Michael Brown’s work (Williams College) and Gregory Cajete’s work (University of New Mexico), as well as others.

IV. Indigenous personal identities—engaging with a mosaic-like analytical process encompassing all of the above.

Analyzing key elements through various perspectives (Domains of Thinking, i.e. psychological, historical, ethical/legal, sacred/faith traditions, sociological, cultural, geographical, mythological, etc.). This final module is to “sort through the chaff,” returning to questions brought forward in the previous modules, the value of our personal identities. Consider this quote from Omi and Winant’s work: *When European explorers in the New World “discovered” people who looked different than themselves, these “natives” challenged then existing conceptions of the origins of the human species, and raised disturbing questions as to whether all could be considered in the same “family of man.”* The purpose of this last module may be to revisit terms like family, community, global, etc. and provisionally re-define them according to the students’ newly cultivated “conscientizacao” or consciousness raising (Freire, 1970).

#### **Class Process/Key Assignments:**

##### **25% Class participation, Homework Assignments, Quizzes and In-class Writing**

The class format is designed to encourage and reward you for keeping up with the readings and coming to class prepared with comments and questions. Class participation will include regular attendance, informed and thoughtful contributions to discussion, in-class writing, reflection exercise, participation in group exercises and periodic quizzes. You are expected to attend every class session and to let me know the reason for absences, preferably ahead of time. More than three unexcused absences will negatively affect your grade. I will take attendance at the beginning of class. I will periodically assign short (hopefully fun and creative) assignments designed to enrich understanding of the readings.

I will also ask you to hand in short written responses, what English professor Peter Elbow refers to as “low stakes writing” to help you synthesize the course material and generate your own analysis. As needed, there will be periodic unannounced quizzes. Rather than a threat or penalty, these assignments help you to keep up on class work, demonstrate your own critical thinking and receive regular feedback.

##### **15% Critical Reflection Paper, 2-3 pages**

This assignment asks you to demonstrate your understanding of key concepts and arguments in the readings by applying them to your experiences with community service learning and critically analyzing how your social position shapes these experiences. You can choose one or two key events or

interactions with the community group that you are working with and reflect upon how your own values, beliefs, and practices shaped these. The assignment helps you to develop skills in thinking self-reflexively about how your social position engenders certain kinds of perspectives and how these shape your interactions in the world.

#### **40% Community-based Research and Service Learning Project (Parts A & B 20% each)**

Students will work together in groups and in partnership with community organizations to design a project which encompasses an analysis of gender roles. This assignment is designed to help you synthesize and apply the readings toward understanding and changing your own social worlds, to foster collaborative learning, to develop public presentation skills and to get you out of the classroom and into the local community! You will analyze your project in both oral and written form as follows:

**A. Prospectus:** You will write a plan for completing your community-based research project, including the topic, goals, implementation, contribution by each individual member, collaboration with a local community organization, schedule and background readings.

**B. Class Presentation:** You will work with a group of about 2-3 students to present your project to the class, ideally community members will opt to be part of your audience. I encourage you to use visual aids, multimedia, role plays, etc. to make your presentation original and engaging. You can regard the group presentation as an opportunity for you to present the arguments and findings from your research paper (see below) while drawing connections between your topic and the work of your classmates. You will work collaboratively but receive an individual grade for your part.

**20% Final Paper (5-7 pages)** Your final paper will include two parts. First, you will prepare a report on the findings of your community-based research that you will share with your organization. Second, you will critique the project, analyze its strengths and weaknesses, reflect on your own participation and learning and relate your findings to arguments in the readings. You are expected to cite relevant background sources, but rather than conducting extensive library research, you should consult with your community group on the kinds of information that would be most helpful to them. For the analytical section, you should concentrate on applying and synthesizing the assigned course readings and class discussions to your project. We are not having a final exam so this research report must demonstrate your mastery of the course readings. You will each receive an individual grade for your paper.

#### **Readings**

Alexander, Jacqui M., *Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred*. Duke University Press, 2006.

Brown, Michael F. *Who Owns Native Culture?* Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2003.

Cajete, Gregory. *Look to the Mountain: An Ecology of Indigenous Education*, Kivaki Press, 1994.

Cisneros, Sandra. *Caramelo*, 2002.

Comandanta Esther. Speech before the Mexican National Congress. In *Dissident Women*:

*Gender, Ethnicity and Cultural Politics in Chiapas*. Speed, Hernandez and Stephen, eds.

University of Texas Press. 2006.

Curruchich Gómez, María Luisa. Mayan Cosmvision and gender perspectives. In *Faces Without Masks:*

*Mayan women on identity, gender and ethnicity in Guatemala*. Oxfam. 2001.

Deloria, Ella. *Waterlilly*, 2009.

Eastman, Charles. *The Soul of the Indian, 1911; Memories of an Indian Boyhood, 1902*.

Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Continuum Press, 2007.

Momaday, N. Scott. *The Names (Sun Tracks): A Memoir*. University of Arizona, 1987.

Omi, Michael and Winant, Howard. *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to*

*the 1990s (Critical Social Thought)*, Routledge, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1994.

Otzoy, Irma. Indigenous Law: Connections and Dis-Connections with Gender Equity. In *Human Rights in*

*the Maya Region: Global Politics, Moral Engagements, and Cultural Contentions*,

Pitarch, Pedro, Shannon Speed, and Xochitl Leyva Solano (eds.). Duke University Press. 2008.

Parsons, Elsie Clews. Waiyautitsa of Zuñi, New Mexico. *American Indian Lives*, ed. E.C.

157-173. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1967 [1922].

Ramirez, Gloria Munoz. *The Fire and the Word: A History of the Zapatista Movement*, City Lights

Publishers, 2008.

Rosemary Joyce, *Ancient Bodies, Ancient Lives*. Thames and Hudson, 2008.

Shanley, Kathryn W., Editor. *Native American Literature: Boundaries & Sovereignties*, Paradoxa Press, 2001.

### Relevant Web Resources

[Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous Voices](#)

[International Workgroup for Indigenous Affairs](#)

Wynn/Olson *Integrating Indigenous Identities* NAIS 2014

[Leaving Race Behind: Our Growing Hispanic Population Creates a Golden Opportunity](#) by Etzioni, Amitai *The American Scholar* (spring, 2006)

[The Genographic Project](#), *National Geographic* (March, 2006).

[Storm from the Mountain \(2009 video\)](#) Indigenous Peoples Issues and Resources.

[List of writers from peoples indigenous to the Americas:](#)