

**American Indian Studies Program/History 546:
Writing Tribal Histories**

Spring 2007

Instructor: Professor Ned Blackhawk
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Course Description:

American Indian history has recently become one of the most honored and prolific fields of historical inquiry. Gone are the days when Indian peoples and their histories were seen as unimportant. Indeed, far from being “peoples without history,” as traditional historians long maintained, Indians are now seen as among the most adaptive and resilient groups in American history. This course investigates such adaptation from the perspective of particular Native communities and nations. Initially surveying some of the recent literature on tribal histories, this course will subsequently encourage students to fashion their own history of a particular tribal community, nation, or extended family.

Course Readings:

Charles Wilkinson, *Blood Struggle: The Rise of Modern Indian Nations*
Frederick E. Hoxie, *Parading Through History: The Making of the Crow Nation In America, 1805-1935*
Patty Loew, *Indian Nations of Wisconsin: Histories of Endurance and Renewal*
Ned Blackhawk, *Violence over the Land: Indians and Empires in the early American West*

Course Requirements:

Designed as a research and readings seminar, this first half of this course meets twice a week to discuss common readings. During the second half, we will meet regularly to report on the status of our individual student research projects. As a seminar, discussion can only work with everyone’s participation. Attendance is therefore mandatory. Unexcused absences will be noted and will result in grade devaluation.

Students will be evaluated based on the following assignments:

1) **Paper #1:** a 5-page written response to Charles Wilkinson’s *Blood Struggle* will constitute 20% of the final grade. Each book response should evaluate the central argument made by Wilkinson and identify three (3) particular moments that you believe to be most critical to the book’s argument. Consider analyzing the author’s primary purposes, assess the relative strengths and weaknesses of his central arguments, and analyze three relevant examples and moments in detail. Much more than mere summation, the book response should demonstrate sustained engagement with the text’s overall arguments and effectiveness. For help with paper organization, argument development, and general writing assistance, students are encouraged to use the Writing Center in 6171 Helen C. White, 263-1992. The Writing Center organizes classes and provides one-on-one guidance and feedback. Paper #1 is due in class on February 8th. No late or emailed papers will be accepted.

2) **Short Reaction Pieces:** Three (3) reaction pieces to Hoxie, Loew, and Blackhawk's works will be collected in lieu of a midterm. Each reaction piece should be 2-pages and should briefly answer questions distributed beforehand. These reaction pieces will collectively constitute 20% of the final grade and are due at the end of our discussion of each text.

3) **Research Project Formation:** Prior to the submission of the final research project, each student is expected to produce a general bibliography, an annotated bibliography, and a project outline along with a preliminary thesis statement and argument. These will not factor into the final grade and will be marked as either satisfactory or unsatisfactory. Unsatisfactory materials will be returned and will not receive credit until improved. All students must also meet with the instructor to discuss their potential research topic.

4) **Project Presentation and Participation:** A final presentation of the research project and overall seminar participation will comprise 20% of the final grade. Each presentation should be no more than 15 minutes and should provide an overview of the research process—what materials were used, how were they identified, what problems did they present—as well as the project's primary findings and conclusions. Maps, photographic reproductions, and other visual aids are encouraged.

5) **Final Research Project:** The final project is due May 14th by 4pm. Students should develop 16-20 page papers organized into a few subject headings if needed. Each project should introduce and examine the history of an American Indian community, nation, or extended family, situating these histories within the larger thematic currents of the course. Each research project should be double-spaced, properly formatted and referenced [footnotes and endnotes matter!] and handed in on time. The use of photographic, documentary, and/or oral histories is encouraged. These final projects will constitute 40% of the final grade. Students can devise alternative formats for their final projects. Websites, academic poster boards, or bounded documentary histories, in which the documents are at the center of the narrative, are among the possible selections.

Course Schedule

Week 1

January 23: Introduction and Organization: What is Indian History?

1/25: How and Why Do We Write Indian History: The Powers and Perils of the Field

Readings: Ned Blackhawk, *History Section, Native Americans of North America, 2003*
Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia:
http://encarta.msn.com/text_761570777___250/Native_Americans_of_North_America.html

Part I

The Rise of Modern Indian Nations

Week 2

1/30: The Crisis of Termination Amidst the Crisis of Reservation Impoverishment

Readings: Wilkinson, *Blood Struggle*, ix-86

2/1: The American Indian Movement and the Movement for American Indian Sovereignty

Readings: Wilkinson, *Blood Struggle*, 89-173

Week 3

2/6: Self-Determination

Readings: Wilkinson, *Blood Struggle*, 177-268

2/8: "Different Now But Also the Same:" Contemporary Indian History

Readings: Wilkinson, *Blood Struggle*, 271-379 (**Paper #1 due in class**)

Week 4

2/13: The Indian Nations of Wisconsin

Readings: Loew, 1-53

2/15: The Indian Nations of Wisconsin, Cont'd

Readings: Loew, 54-126 (**Reaction #1 due in class**)

Part II

Reservation and Regional Tribal Histories in Focus

Week 5

2/20: Video Presentation, Selections from *Smoke Signals* and *Skins*

2/22: Recasting the Paradigm of Disappearance: Indian History on Parade?

Readings: Hoxie, *Parading Through History*, 1-95

Week 6

2/27: Group Reports on Hoxie: Group A, Chapters 4-5; Group B, Chapter 6; Group C, Chapter 7; Group D, Chapter 8; and Group E, Chapters 9-10

3/1: Crows and Other Americans

Readings: Hoxie, 344-375 (**Reaction #2 due in class**)

Week 7

3/6: Indians in the Early American West

Readings: Blackhawk, *Violence over the Land*, 1-54

3/8 Group Reports on *Violence over the Land*: Group A, Chapter 2; Group B, Chapter 3; Group C, Chapter 4; Group D, Chapter 5

Week 8

3/13 Implementing Federal Indian Policy in the Intermountain West

Readings: Blackhawk, 176-293 (**Reaction #3 due in class**)

3/15 No Class—Begin Preparations for Individual Research Meetings

Part III

Formulating Tribal History Research Projects

Week 9 Individual Meetings with Instructor: Bibliographies Due on Thursday

3/19 Extended Office Hrs.

3/20 Formulating Research Topics: Group Discussion

3/21 Extra Office Hrs.

3/22 546 Alumni Session: Continued Investigations into Indian history

Week 10 (Move to Weekly Seminar Format)

3/27: Discussion of Research Strategies and Paper Organization

(Spring Break 3/31-4/8)

Week 11

4/10 Wisconsin Historical Society Tour of Wisconsin Indian History Materials

Week 12

4/17 Thesis Statement Presentation (Thesis statement/paragraph & bibliographies due)

Week 13

4/24 Final Presentations, 1-3

Week 14

4/31: Final Presentations, 4-6

5/2: Final Presentations, 7-10

Week 15

5/7: Final Presentations, 11-14

5/9: Final Presentations, 15-18

Final Research Project Due Monday, May 14th by 4pm