

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

**Spring 2006**

**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 allow students to fashion their own tribal history of a particular Indian community, nation, or extended family.

### **Course Readings:** (Available at the Underground Textbook Exchange)

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*  
Steven J. Crum, *The Road on Which We Came: A History of the Western Shoshone*  
N. Scott Momaday, *The Way to Rainy Mountain*

### **Course Requirements:**

Designed as a research and readings seminar, this course meets twice a week to discuss common readings and then regularly throughout the semester to report on the status of 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 4-5 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/moments in detail. Much more than mere summation, the book response should demonstrate sustained engagement with the text. For 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 2<sup>nd</sup>.

2) **Short Reaction Pieces:** Four (4) reaction pieces to Momaday, Loew, Crum, and Hoxie's works will be collected in lieu of a midterm examination. Each reaction piece should be 2 pages, typed, and should briefly identify both the central purpose of each work and your assessment of its overall achievement. These will collectively constitute 20% of the final grade and are due at the end of our discussion of each text. They also will be considered incomplete until all four pieces are together.

3) **Research Project Formation:** Prior to the submission of the final research project, each student will be 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 your 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 the last week of class. Students should develop 16-20 page papers organized into a few subject headings/categories if needed. Each project should introduce and examine the history of an American Indian community, nation, or extended family, situating these histories as best you can in 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 17: Introduction and Organization: What is Indian History?

1/19: How 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](http://encarta.msn.com/text_761570777___250/Native_Americans_of_North_America.html)

**Part I**  
**The Rise of Modern Indian Nations**

**Week 2**

1/25: The Crisis of Termination Amidst the Crisis of Reservation Impoverishment

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

1/27: The American Indian Movement and the Movement for American Indian Sovereignty

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

**Week 3**

1/31: Self-Determination

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

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

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

**Week 4**

2/7: The Indian Nations of Wisconsin

Readings: Loew, 1-53

2/9: The Indian Nations of Wisconsin, Cont'd

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

**Part II**  
**Reservation and Tribal Histories in Focus**

**Week 5**

2/14: Video Presentation, Selections from *Smoke Signals* and *Skins*

2/16: Autobiography and Community: The Self and Nation in *The Way to Rainy Mountain*

Readings: Momaday, *The Way to Rainy Mountain* (**reaction piece #2 due in class**)

**Week 6**

2/21: Recasting the Paradigm of Disappearance: Indian History on Parade?

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

2/23: Enduring Confinement: Early Crow Adaptations to Reservation Life

Readings: Hoxie, 96-166

**Week 7**

2/28: Creating the Institutions Necessary for Survival

Readings: Hoxie, 167-265

3/2: Economic Hardship and Community Endurance: How Do We Assess the Parade?

Readings: Hoxie, 266-375 (**reaction piece #3 due in class**)

**Week 8**

3/7: Excavating Under-studied Indian History

Readings: Crum, *The Road on Which We Came*, vii-Chapter 3

3/9: Tribal History from a Tribal Member

Readings: Crum, Chapter 4-end (**reaction piece #4 due**)

**(No Class Spring Break March 11-19)**

**Part III  
Formulating Tribal History Research Projects**

**Week 9**

3/21: Discussion of Research Strategies and Bibliography Preparation

Readings: Academic Article and Related Hand-outs: National Archives Documents, etc.

3/23: Continued Discussion of Research Strategies and Exercise

**Week 10 Individual Meetings with Instructor: Bibliographies Due in Office Hrs.**

3/28: Office Hours I: 5115 Humanities, 1-215pm

3/30: Office Hours III: 5115 Humanities, 1-215pm

**Weeks 11-12 Independent Research**

4/4-4/6: No Class—Independent Research

4/11-4/13: No Class—Independent Research

**Week 13**

4/18: Group Research Discussion, Part I

4/20: Group Research Discussion, Part II and Determining Presentation Schedule

**Week 14**

4/25: Final Presentations, 1-5

4/27: Final Presentations, 6-10

**Week 15**

5/2: Final Presentations, 11-15

5/4: Final Presentations, 16-20

**Final Research Project Due Wednesday, May 10<sup>th</sup> by 4pm**