COURSE SYLLABUS
ANTH307: INDIANS OF NORTH AMERICA SPRING 2016
(cross listed as Gender Studies 380)
1:30 – 2:45 pm Tues-Thurs SMITC 116
Kendall House, Ph.D. Instructor

Welcome to the new semester! Please treat this syllabus as your first reading assignment. If you have any questions regarding anything discussed here please feel encouraged to contact me.

TALK TO ME! HOW TO CONTACT ME THIS SEMESTER

EMAIL ME at khouse@boisestate.edu. I will answer every email you send so long as you identify yourself. Please remind me which course you are in as I teach multiple sections. I will usually reply within a few hours except on evenings, weekends or holidays.

MAKE AN APPOINTMENT TO VISIT IN PERSON: My office is in the Hemingway Building (see the map – it is just east of the library, just west of the SUB). I am in Room 116, upstairs in the southeast corner. My phone is 426-3896.

QUICK LINKS TO KEY TOPICS
To quickly go directly to the different segments of the syllabus, simply click on the links below. To return to this menu, click on the Return to Menu links.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All about what you will learn</th>
<th>Campus Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is this course about?</td>
<td>Disability Accommodations / Dean of Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Learning Objectives</td>
<td>Course &amp; Campus Policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required Readings</td>
<td>Attendance policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About the Schedule</td>
<td>Personal Crisis or Illness / Late Withdrawal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How your grade is determined</td>
<td>Academic Honesty Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six Scored Learning Activities</td>
<td>Statement of Shared Values / CARE Alert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grading Policies</td>
<td>Student Privacy Notice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Point Allocations &amp; Distributions</td>
<td>Copyright Compliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Syllabus revision / Save this Syllabus!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Did you know?
This course counts toward earning a minor in Native American studies!
Contact Dr House for more details!
What is this course about?

This course introduces the anthropology of Native America north of Mexico. Our focus will be primarily sociocultural, combining ethnological surveys with discussions of theory, methods, and key issues.

**This is an upper division course.** I take it for granted that you recognize the need to attend all lectures, create your own notes, successfully read challenging material independently, critically evaluate concepts and evidence, and write originally, clearly, and effectively. You will exercise all of these core skills in this course.

**We are here to study anthropology.** Scholars from many disciplines contribute to Native American Studies. This course is limited to anthropology. Because the anthropological literature on Native North America is massive, this in itself will keep us very busy. This course has a lot of conceptual content that is specific to anthropology. I recommend that you complete at least one lower division course (preferably ANTH102, ANTH103, or ANTH105) prior to tackling this course. I do not work from the assumption that you will be completely unfamiliar with anthropology.

**Within anthropology, our primary focus is sociocultural and ethnographic.** Sociocultural anthropology focuses on the description and analysis of the ways of life of living peoples. Although this demands a historical perspective, this course offers only incidental coverage of North American prehistory. Our department offers ANTH312 on North American archaeology. Similarly, although you will learn about the classification of languages and their geographic distribution, this is not a course in Native American linguistics. Lastly, I will have relatively little to say about physical anthropology beyond its historic significance. Our primary focus will be on subjects traditionally associated with social and cultural anthropology, such as how people make their living, their systems of kinship and marriage, their art and religion, and their political and economic organization. The primary time-frame for our discussions will be from 1492 to the present.

**Readings will focus on specific issues and case studies. Lectures will be ethnological and comparative.** The lectures in this course will substitute for a textbook. My lectures will be historical, comparative, critical, and synthetic. I will use three primary ethnological frameworks. The first framework is geographic, based on the conventional organization of anthropological research in North America into culture areas. The second framework is theoretical and methodological, focusing on contrasting the major Americanist traditions of anthropological inquiry. The third framework is historical, focusing on the historical development of anthropology in relation to the modern history of Native America.

**This course emphasizes historical understanding.** The Americanist research tradition refers to the entire sweep of anthropological research in the Americas. Our focus will be on ethnographic studies of North America that primarily derive from
the direct observation of living peoples by anthropologists. This represents the cumulative efforts of thousands of scholars, and many thousands of publications. Most ethnographic writing, until quite recently, adhered to a set of ahistorical narrative conventions called the \textit{ethnographic present}. This means that most ethnography was written in the present-tense, even though the goal was usually to describe pre-contact ways of life. This was usually misleading, as the description offered was neither timeless nor, usually, contemporary. Instead, ethnographers tried to reconstruct pre-contact lifeways, but lacked adequate historical and archaeological context. It was akin to trying to drive screws with a hammer.

There was an upside to this evasion of history, and prehistory: it led anthropologists to focus on living traditions whose survival appeared doubtful. But it was also very distorting. It has often been suggested that this evasion of history was an effort to avoid discussing the violence of Euroamerican expansion, and that was certainly one consequence. But even if it were not, any living human society is an object in motion. To make proper use of ethnographic writings, we need to try to grasp the forces that produced the moment of observation that a given fieldworker observed, as well as the changes that have followed since their research was completed.

To counter-balance the weaknesses of traditional ethnography, I will strive to place the ethnographic record of North America within a more dynamic historical context – something more possible today due to the hard work of archaeologists and historians. This effort applies to researchers as well as to the societies they studied. For example, you will learn about the research of Julian Steward in the Great Basin culture area in this course. The “ethnographic present” when Julian Steward worked in the Great Basin was the economic depression of the 1930s, but his core method was to interview elderly individuals, in order to collect information about the traditional, pre-contact past. The elderly individuals he interviewed had survived enormous changes, and were accommodating themselves to declining economic prospects. Their memories of life when they were young reflected not timeless traditions, but a world that had been already altered dramatically. To speak of \textit{traditional ways of life} as if they are unchanging is misleading. But we must also pay attention to the social and intellectual history of anthropology. To return to Steward, his theoretical contribution – known as “cultural ecology” - was a response to the social and intellectual context of anthropology in the early twentieth century. Brought to the Great Basin today, Steward would not only observe many changes in the situation of Native peoples, he would no doubt also apply different concepts and methods, and pursue different research questions.

Here is a geological metaphor. Think of the great body of ethnographic knowledge about Native America as layers of sediment deposited in libraries over as many as five centuries. To really understand the ethnography of North America, we have to grasp the flows of thought and social life that produced the scholars that produced those writings. Historical context matters in multiple ways.

\textbf{This course stresses theory, method, and critical thinking}. It is easy for culture area surveys to devolve into lists of facts to be memorized. Exercising your memory is not a bad thing, and you will encounter plenty of ethnographic facts in this course.
But we will emphasize critically evaluating those facts, the theories that generated them, and the individuals and sociopolitical contexts that produced them. Our goal is to evaluate the researchers who created the theories that generated the questions that led to those facts in the first place.

The theories and methods that have shaped anthropological research have shifted dramatically over the last century. By the early 20th century there were several distinct research traditions, each making scientific claims that were in deep disagreement. Fundamental disputes over what should count as anthropology continue into the present. Today, much ethnographic writing on Native America rejects a scientific perspective, and instead embraces critical humanistic or historical perspectives. We need to ask: Why have the scientific ambitions of Americanists faded so dramatically?

Part of the answer is related to the larger historical context that embraces both anthropologists and the communities they study. North American history, to put it gently, has a persistently genocidal character. Very few ethnologists have been members of Native communities, though they have depended fundamentally on Native collaborators to complete their research. The work that has resulted is often judged very differently from inside and outside academia. Anthropologists have worked in complex political situations since the beginning of the discipline, and its raises many difficult ethical issues. In many ways, it may be that the retreat from science reflects an effort to achieve greater political solidarity with the peoples studied. Whether it is reasonable to view science as an obstacle to such solidarity is one question I want you to reflect on.

**Our Learning Objectives**

The learning objectives of this course can be subdivided into two broad categories.

The first category centers on exercising specific academic skills that have general applicability. This means these skills have relevance beyond this class, and beyond anthropology. Specifically, this course will require you to develop through application your ability to do the following:

1. Closely read academic essays from professional journals, extracting and critically evaluating core arguments and decisive evidence.

2. Effectively utilize library resources in pursuit of research questions, locating and evaluating the quality, appropriateness, and significance of diverse sources of evidence.

3. Write clear, well-organized, carefully edited prose that presents and analyzes evidence and concepts in a convincing and thoughtful manner.

4. Develop focused research questions and relate them to empirical evidence.
5. Interact with other students online in a small group, seminar-like setting, focusing your discussion on topics of intellectual substance.

6. Effectively take notes and analyze material presented in oral lectures, as demonstrated by your ability to accurately identify and explain key ideas and themes.

The second variety of learning objectives are specific to this course. They center on introducing you to the results of ethnological research in Native North America, and developing your ability to make critical use of the results of that research. These objectives can be broken down into four broad knowledge-based learning objectives, each of which can be subdivided in turn.

1. Identify, compare and contrast, and critically evaluate the contributions made to anthropological knowledge of the most productive Americanist research traditions (specifically, the five that follow):

   (a) The tradition of social anthropology inaugurated by Lewis Henry Morgan in the middle of the 19th century, centering on the study of kinship and sociopolitical organization within a civilizational framework that emphasized differential human progress;

   (b) The tradition of cultural anthropology launched by Franz Boas in the early 20th century, emphasizing the arts, worldview, and belief systems within a relativistic, historical framework emphasizing human equality;

   (c) The research program of cultural materialism, initiated by Julian Steward’s “cultural ecology” in the mid-twentieth century, focusing on subsistence systems and the interaction of technological and sociopolitical adaptations, within a framework that attempted to balance historical relativity and directional change;

   (d) The critical tradition of historical political economy, which emerged from the ethnohistory movement of the 1960s (which in turn emerged from legal battles between Native peoples and the federal government). Later, Marxist perspectives and Native American political activism strongly influenced this tradition. Political economists emphasize historical interconnections and the social institutions and ideological justifications that accompanied the violent political and economic displacement and marginalization of Native communities, both in the past and in the context of contemporary American and Canadian society;

   (e) The scientific research tradition of evolutionary ecology / human behavioral ecology, which began to influence Americanist research late in the 20th century, but remains marginalized. This perspective emphasizes the rigorous collection of objective, quantitative data to test explicit hypotheses in a scientific manner, and the application of explanatory principles of broad and general applicability - drawn from contemporary evolutionary science - to explain both variation and universals in human social life and behavior.

I will address each of these perspectives in the lectures this semester – roughly in chronological order – and assign readings related to each.
2. Characterize, compare, and identify key aspects of the social and cultural diversity of “traditional” aboriginal North America, frozen within the timeless convention of the “ethnographic present” and presented in a geographic framework.

   In our ethnographic survey, we will rely on geographic conventions defining ten “culture areas”: the Arctic, Subarctic, Northwest Pacific Coast, California, Southwest, Great Basin, Plateau, Plains, Northeast, and Southeast.

   Dimensions of variation you should be able to address geographically will include the distribution of language families, the location of specific peoples, variation in environmental constraints in relation to historically changing subsistence systems, as well as variation in kinship systems, political systems, economies, and key aspects of belief systems.

   Your understanding of culture areas will include the ability to identify the traditions of research that have been most significant in shaping inquiry in each area (for example, the significance of Boasian cultural anthropology on the Northwest Coast, or of cultural ecology to the history of research in the Great Basin).

3. The second objective above is somewhat pinned down by the convention of the “ethnographic present.” Because we want to go beyond that, you will also develop the ability to identify, discuss, and critically evaluate key causal forces related to the historical impact of Euroamerican expansion on indigenous people in North America, and the demographic, sociopolitical, and cultural consequences of that expansion, as well as the forms of incorporation of contemporary Native individuals and communities within American and Canadian society.

   This includes the ability to accurately characterize the population history of Native North America, as well as to identify and discuss key Canadian and American policies and legal decisions that have significantly impacted the survival, organization, rights, and status of indigenous North Americans as citizens of both the larger societies and Native nations.

   We will give considerable attention to the relationship between Euroamerican expansion and contemporary understandings of genocide and ethnic cleansing, and to the impact the history of conquest, removal, and subordination has had on the identity and politics of contemporary Native peoples.

4. On completing the course you should be able to present your reasoned and informed opinion on the strengths and weaknesses, and on the limits and potentials, of the varied approaches to anthropological research we have explored. Specifically, you should have an opinion on their scientific, humanistic, ethical, and political implications. In short, you should be able to summarize your vision of what Americanist research has been, and what you think it can or should aspire to become in the future.
Required Readings

There are no required books. I do recommend Alice Kehoe’s *North American Indians* as an optional text (optional means there are no required readings from that book, nor will any specific assessments be tied to it - it is, however, an excellent, detailed culture area survey synthesizing archaeological, ethnographic, and historical research. If you have a limited budget, you might consider the older 1992 edition 0136243622 which usually sells for less than one dollar). As an optional complement or alternative to Kehoe, a briefer survey is provided by Mark Sutton’s *Introduction to Native North America* (the older 2nd edition of 2003 - ISBN 0205388485 – is quite inexpensive).

There will, however, be required readings in this class. I have posted them separately on Blackboard in the Schedule of Assignments. In addition to the readings I assign, you will be locating relevant readings in anthropological journals on your own, using the online collections of the Boise State library. You should plan on reading a minimum of four to five hours outside of class each week. Return to Menu

There are Six Required, Graded, Learning Activities

The following six activities will be scored and thus contribute to your course grade. Point breakdowns are given in the section on grading.

1. **I expect to see you at almost every lecture:** By enrolling in this class you are indicating your willingness to attend the lectures. If you know going in that you cannot attend, please reconsider enrolling. Assessments requiring attendance will be given daily in class.
   - Expect in-class assessments each day on the readings and/or on the preceding lecture. Details will be given in the Schedule of Assignments. **There will be no make-up quizzes** due to absences. However, you can replace up to five scores by means of the optional cumulative midterm and final exam (see Grading below).
   - **You must attend the entire lecture** when a quiz is given to receive full credit. You cannot simply take a quiz and leave.
   - **Creating lecture notes is your responsibility.** Learning to take effective notes is an undervalued, fundamental skill. Attending lectures without taking notes is like going to the gym and watching other people lift weights, and expecting to bulk up or trim down. Taking notes requires active engagement, capturing key points and making connections as a lecture progresses. There is nothing passive about effective note-taking.
   - **Getting notes for the days you are absent is your responsibility.** Learn the names of the people around you, and if you are occasionally absent, ask another student to share their notes for that day. You might make a new friend!
2. You will need to **carefully complete the required readings as detailed in the Schedule of Assignments**. Expect a quiz on the readings every Thursday. Reading without taking detailed notes is like trying to feed yourself through catch and release fishing. Taking effective notes requires actively engaging with a piece of writing, extracting key ideas, discovering key ideas, finding the structure, the logic, and the gaps in logic.

3. You will **conduct online library research**, in appropriate, professional anthropological research journals. Your research will focus on an assigned or chosen topic. You will share your findings with your online small discussion group, and produce a research paper at the end of the term that derives from your work. Details will be provided in the My Assignments folder on Blackboard.

4. You will **participate in online small discussion groups** in a timely, substantial, and thoughtful manner. Details will be provided in the My Assignments folder on Blackboard.

5. You will **research and write a formal academic paper** that you develop over the length of the semester. Details will be provided in the My Assignments folder on Blackboard.

6. You will **participate as an external editor and reviewer** of the term papers of other students in the class, and submit your own paper to external review by your peers. Details will be provided in the My Assignments folder on Blackboard.

As you may have gathered, **this is a “hybrid” course**, combining in-class lectures with online discussions using Blackboard. In addition, assignments and grades will be distributed using Blackboard. You will need to routinely log in to Blackboard in advance of each class to learn about your assignments.

**Return to Main Menu**

**Where is the Schedule of Assignments?**

Visit the **My Schedule** folder on the main menu of our Blackboard course site to review the detailed Schedule of Assignments. The schedule lists due dates and points possible. Additional documents explaining what is required, and how your work will be assessed, will be posted separately in the **My Assignments** folder on Blackboard. Both folders will be revised and updated over the course of the semester.

**All About Grading**

Your grade in this class is based on points accumulated across the **required learning activities**. Taken together, they add up to 2,500 points!

- **1400 points** – 28 low-stakes, 50 point quizzes (a maximum of five quizzes, or 250 points, can be “made up” via two optional cumulative exams, given week eight and final exam week).
- **400 points** – participation in four small group discussions, as assigned.
200 points – participation in two rounds of reviewing peer papers.
500 points – research paper, due by Friday, at the end of week fourteen.

Extra credit: There is no individualized extra credit, with one exception - occasionally I may add extra points for particularly outstanding required work, especially in online discussions and peer reviews. Late work will generally not be accepted.

Course grades will be based on the 2,500 point scale below. I do not think it is fair to either negotiate grades individually, nor exercise sweeping judgment over course grades. So I set precise point distributions, and I follow them. Here is the breakdown:

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\begin{array}{c c}
2500 – 2425 points &= A+ \\
2424 – 2325 points &= A \\
2324 – 2250 points &= A-
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c c}
2249 – 2150 points &= B+ \\
2149 – 2050 points &= B \\
2049 – 1950 points &= B-
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c c}
1949 – 1801 points &= C+ \\
1800 – 1701 points &= C \\
1700 -1501 points &= C-
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c c}
1500 -1251 points &= D \\
Below 1250 points &= Failing
\end{array}
\]

Personal Crisis / Late Withdrawals / Incompletes

We can all encounter personal or family crises, including illnesses, that temporarily diminish our level of activity. I have built significant flexibility into this course to allow you to cope with temporary life crises without impacting your grade (see Grading). However, if circumstances prevent your participation for more than two weeks, a withdrawal from the course may be the most reasonable accommodation. Please contact me, and visit with your advisor, before making that decision. Review these links at the Office of the Registrar:

http://registrar.boisestate.edu/registration/withdrawing-from-classes/
http://registrar.boisestate.edu/forms/student-forms/

What about an incomplete? Incomplete grades apply only to the final three weeks of the course, and are only available to students with passing grades and solid attendance up to that point. See the registrar’s discussion: http://registrar.boisestate.edu/grades/

An incomplete does not allow you to retake any portion of the course. It simply defines an extended deadline for completing the closing assignments (such as a final exam). Incompletes are a contract, whose terms are specified through consultation between faculty and students. They are neither automatic, nor obligatory. Contact me if you have questions.
Dean of Students – Counseling Resources

Be aware that Boise State provides students with a wide array of support, including both personal and academic counseling. See the links below for more information:
http://ecampus.boisestate.edu/students/support/boise-state-resources/
http://deanofstudents.boisestate.edu/

Important Institutional Academic Policies

Academic Integrity
http://deanofstudents.boisestate.edu/student-code-of-conduct/
http://deanofstudents.boisestate.edu/scp-codeofconduct-section7/
The Boise State University Student Code of Conduct and policies on academic misconduct are located at the websites linked above. We encourage you to read these carefully. Students are expected to perform according to the standards of academic honesty and integrity as outlined in Boise State University policies. As stated in the Student Handbook, ‘Plagiarism in written works whether in hard copy, print or in electronic communications, will not be tolerated and may be cause for failure in the course and/or University dismissal. Academic dishonesty in any form may result in failure in the course or dismissal from the Program and/or the University.’ I have provided detailed guidelines defining academic integrity in relation to each assignment. See the My Assignments folder on the main Blackboard menu for details.

Statement of Shared Values
http://deanofstudents.boisestate.edu/statement-of-shared-values/
In addition to policies governing academic integrity, Boise State University has adopted a Statement of Shared Values You will be expected to demonstrate civility, abide by norms of decorum, and adhere to the principles of civil discourse. We encourage you to read the Statement of Shared Values carefully, and consider those values whenever you are interacting with faculty, fellow students, and members of the campus community.

Disabilities Accommodations and ADA Compliance
http://drc.boisestate.edu
In compliance with the ADA, your instructor is committed to creating effective accommodations for you to successfully participate in this class. However, such accommodations are not determined by the instructor. Students requiring accommodations to fully participate in this class should contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC). All accommodations must be designated and approved through the DRC. Please call 208-426-1583 or email drcinfo@boisestate.edu. Please make an appointment with the DRC as soon as possible. Accommodations are not retroactive.

This course utilizes Blackboard as a Learning Management System (LMS). Blackboard is committed to accessibility. Please review the following webpage and contact your instructor if you have concerns:
http://www.blackboard.com/Platforms/Learn/Resources/Accessibility.aspx
Boise State CARE Alert Program

http://care.boisestate.edu/
The CARE Team provides assistance to the university community to help assess and find solutions for managing distressing, disturbing, disruptive, and dangerous behaviors. Please report such behaviors to your instructor and/or the CARE Team.

Student Privacy Notices

http://oit.boisestate.edu/learning/learning-technologies/blackboard-learn/student-online-privacy-notice/
Information in electronic form is easily reproduced and easily distributed. For this reason, it is important that you review the guidelines and limitations regarding the use of email and other technologies for this course in Boise State’s Student Online Privacy Notice.

http://registrar.boisestate.edu/general-information-and-policies/student-records/ferpa/
All faculty are required to comply with the FERPA Act. This means, most directly, that I cannot release information regarding your enrollment or performance to anyone outside the university without your explicit permission. To help me protect your privacy please utilize only your assigned BSU email address, and please do not share access to your account with parents, friends, spouses, or others.

Copyright Compliance

http://ecampus.boisestate.edu/faculty/guidelines/copyright/
Some materials utilized for instructional purposes in this course may be copyrighted, including the content of presentations. They are intended for use only by students registered and enrolled in this course, and only for instructional activities associated with and for the duration of the course. They may not be retained in another medium or disseminated further. They are provided in compliance with the provisions of the Teach Act. This means that not all course materials may be downloaded for permanent use or sharing. Some course materials may be saved or printed for use only during the current semester by enrolled students. For re-use of any materials beyond this class, permission should be obtained from the instructor. Materials used in this course may be restricted from sharing or future use by the copyright provisions of the publisher.

Instructor’s Right to Revise this Syllabus

I reserve the right to modify and revise this syllabus as needed during the semester. All such revisions will be posted on Blackboard, and the update will be noted adjacent to the Syllabus.

This syllabus is an ephemeral document. I will maintain an accessible copy at Blackboard only during the current academic term. Please save a copy for your future use (often students transferring between universities must present syllabi from their courses to receive transfer credit).

Return to Menu