



# *HIST 397*

## *First Nations of North America*

**Instructor: James Paxton**  
**Moravian College**  
**Winter 2006**  
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**Office Hours: Tuesday 1:00–2:30;**  
**Thursday 2:00–3:30.**

Welcome to First Nations of North America. This course is an intensive reading and writing course that will culminate in you writing an article-length paper (20-25 pages) based on primary research. The study of First Nations presents historians with special challenges. How can historians, who are trained in the use of documents, write the history of oral peoples? Can non-Aboriginal scholars write Native history? If so, how do we bridge the cultural distance between western society and Native cultures? In order to help you to begin answer these questions, the first part of the course is designed to introduce you to the disciplines and methodologies scholars employ to study First Nations' culture and history. You will become familiar with oral history, autohistory, anthropology, archeology, and ethnohistory. Since North America was home to approximately 2,000 distinct cultures at contact, the course will treat major themes in the history of Native North America rather than individual cultures. You will have an opportunity to study the people and topics that interest you most in the final paper.

### **Goals of the Course**

In this course students will learn to:

- appreciate the complexities and challenges of writing the history of Native people.
- employ a multidisciplinary approach to writing history.
- approach writing as a process.
- integrate primary and secondary sources
- employ the conventions appropriate to the discipline of history

- learn to give and receive constructive criticism.

### **Class Organization**

The class consists of one seminar each week. The seminars will focus on student-led discussions of the readings.

### **Required Texts**

The following required texts may be purchased in the bookstore. Other required readings will either be on reserve in Reeves Library or on JSTOR. Please bring readings with you to class.

Georges Sioui, *For an Amerindian Autohistory: An Essay on the Foundations of a Social Ethic* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992).

Ila Bussidor and Ustun Bilgen-Reinart, *Night Spirits: The Story of the Relocation of the Sayisi Dene* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1997).

Gregory Evans Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

### **Attendance**

The seminar provides a forum to discuss ideas and issues arising from the week's reading. Seminars work only when everyone is a contributing member. Therefore, you should attend all classes and be prepared to discuss the week's readings. Students who miss more than two seminars without a doctor's note will have a third of a grade deducted from their final mark. So a student with a B+ average who misses three classes will receive a B.

As a courtesy, please turn off or mute all electronic devices in the classroom.

### **Grade Distribution**

Participation	25%
Journals (11; 2% each)	22%
Bibliography/Outline	5%
Revised Outline/Introduction	8%
Critique	10%
Research Essay	20%
Presentation	10%



## **Assignments**

### **1. Research Essay**

During the course students will write a research paper based on primary and secondary sources. Writing is a process. You will write the paper in stages throughout the semester in order to give you an opportunity to write, reflect on what you have written, and rewrite. As part of the process, you will read and critique someone else's paper and they will do the same for you. Due dates are listed in the syllabus. Final papers should be polished, article length (20-25 pages), typewritten, double-spaced, with one-

inch margins, and contain footnotes and bibliography. At the end of the course, we will hold a mini-conference, where you will present your findings to your colleagues. Final papers are due on the last day of class. Essays sent via email will not be accepted.

### **2. Journals**

Each week you will write and turn in a two-page journal of your reflections on that week's readings. The journals should succinctly state the author(s) main arguments. When you are writing your journals, consider how the readings relate to one another and how they affect the way you think about your topic. Journal entries should be typed, double-spaced, with a one-inch margin. In terms of style, journal entries may be less formal, but they will still be marked for spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

## **Academic Dishonesty**

According to the Moravian College Student Handbook, the following constitutes plagiarism: "as the use, deliberate or not, of any outside source without proper acknowledgment." Plagiarism will result in the offender receiving zero in the course. Please consult the Student Handbook for fuller details.

## **Students with Disabilities**

Students with physical, learning, or medical disabilities should speak to me and contact Laurie Roth, Director of the Learning Center, to arrange the appropriate accommodations. Please make these arrangements in the first weeks of the semester.

## **Class Schedule**

### **Week 1**

Jan. 18 – Introduction

## Week 2

Jan. 25 – Writing the History of First People

Deborah Doxtater, “Inclusive and Exclusive Definitions of Difference: Native and European Concepts of Time, History, and Change,” in *Decentring the Renaissance: Canada and Europe in Multidisciplinary Perspective, 1500-1700*,” eds. Germaine Warkentin and Carolyn Podruchny (1996), 33-47. Library Reserve

Toby Morantz, “Plunder or Harmony? On Merging European and Native Views of Early Contact,” in *Decentring the Renaissance: Canada and Europe in Multidisciplinary Perspective, 1500-1700*,” eds. Germaine Warkentin and Carolyn Podruchny (1996), 48-67. Library Reserve

Robin Brownlie and Mary-Ellen Kelm, “Desperately Seeking Absolution: Native Agency as Colonialist Alibi?” *Canadian Historical Review* 75 (1994): 543-556.

Douglas Cole, J.R. Miller and Mary-Ellen Kelm, “Desperately Seeking Absolution: responses and a Reply,” *Canadian Historical Review* 76 (1995): 628-39.

## Week 3

Feb. 1- Ethnohistory

James Axtell, “Ethnohistory: An Historian’s Viewpoint,” *The European and the Indian: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America*, (1981), 3-15. Library Reserve

Bruce Trigger, “Ethnohistory: Problems and Prospects,” *Ethnohistory* 29 (Winter 1982): 1-19. JSTOR

Raymond D. Fogelson, “The Ethnohistory of Events and Nonevents,” *Ethnohistory* 36 (Spring 1989): 133-147. JSTOR

James T. Carson, “Ethnogeography and the Native American Past,” *Ethnohistory* 49 (2002): 769-788. JSTOR

- Essay topics due.

## Week 4

Feb. 8 – Autohistory

Georges Sioui, *For an Amerindian Autohistory: An Essay on the Foundations of a Social Ethic* (1992).

## Week 5

Feb. 15 – Culture

Clifford Geertz, “Thick Description: Toward an Interpretative Theory of Culture,” *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973), 3-32. Reserve.

Robert Brightman, “Forget Culture: Replacement, Transcendence, Relexification,” *Cultural Anthropology* 10 (1995): 509-46.

William Hart, “Black ‘Go-Betweens’ and the Mutability of Race, Status, and Identity on New York’s Pre-revolutionary Frontier,” *Contact Points: American Frontiers from the Mohawk Valley to the Mississippi, 1750-1830* (1998), 88-113.

- Thesis, bibliography, and outline due

## **Week 6**

Feb. 22 – Disease and Responses to Disease

Henry F. Dobyns, “Depopulation as a Dynamic of Cultural Change,” *Their Number Become Thinned: Native American Population Dynamics in Eastern North America* (1983): 297-344. Library Reserve

Paul Kelton, “Avoiding the Smallpox Spirits: Colonial Epidemics and Southeastern Indian Survival,” *Ethnohistory* 15 (Winter 2004): 45-71. JSTOR

Daniel Richter, “War and Culture: The Iroquois Experience,” *William and Mary Quarterly* (1983): 528-59. JSTOR

## **Week 7**

Mar. 1 – Trade

Bruce Trigger, “Early Native North American Responses to European Contact: Romanticism and Rationalism,” *Journal of American History* (1991): 1196-1215. JSTOR

Denys Delâge, *Bitter Feast: Amerindians and Europeans in Northeastern North America, 1600-64* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1993), 132-55, 158-62. Library Reserve

Laurier Turgeon, “The Tale of the Kettle: Odyssey of an Intercultural Object,” *Ethnohistory* 44 (1997): 1-29. JSTOR

Christopher Miller and George R. Hammel, “A New Perspective on Indian-White Contact: Cultural Symbols and Colonial Trade,” *Journal of American History*, (1988): 311-328. JSTOR

- Revised outline, introduction, and conclusion due.

## **Week 8**

Mar. 8 – **No Class** – Spring Recess

## **Week 9**

Mar. 15 – Genocide

Ila Bussidor and Ustun Bilgen-Reinart, *Night Spirits: The Story of the Relocation of the Sayisi Dene* (1997).

## **Week 10**

Mar. 22 – Native Political Organization: The Iroquois

Arthur C. Parker, “The Constitution of the Five Nations,” in *Parker on the Iroquois*, ed. William N. Fenton (1968), 7-34. Library Reserve

Mary Druke Becker, “Linking Arms: The Structure of Intertribal Diplomacy,” in *Beyond the Covenant Chain: The Iroquois and Their Neighbours in Indian North America, 1600-1800*, eds. Daniel K. Richter and James H. Merrell (1987), 29-39. Library Reserve

Michael M. Pomedli, “Eighteenth-Century Treaties: Amended Iroquois Condolence Rituals,” *American Indian Quarterly* 19 (1995): 319-339. Library Reserve

Cadwallader Colden, *The History of the Five Nations of Canada* (London 1755), 46-51. Library Reserve

**Week 11**

Mar. 29 – Contact: Middle Grounds, Crossroads, and Kinship

Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), ix-xvi, 50-93.

Jane T. Merritt, *Indians at the Crossroads*.

- Draft essays due.

**Week 12**

April 5 – Essay Workshop

An opportunity to discuss problems you might be having with your essays. Come to class with a journal entry that reflects and how your paper has evolved over the semester and what still needs to be done. Bring two or three questions of issues that still need to be resolved.

- Return comments.

**Week 13**

April 12 – Spiritual Power

Gregory Evans Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815* (1993).

**Week 14**

April 19 – Presentations

April 21 – Carlisle Indian Boarding School

In conjunction with Dr. St. John's class, we will have an opportunity to tour the Carlisle Indian Boarding School. The trip will cost about \$15.

**Week 15**

April 26 – Presentations



### *Ideas for your research paper*

- How did First People understand and incorporate Christianity into indigenous systems of belief? Consider either the case of the Jesuits among the Huron, Samuel Kirkland's mission to the Oneidas, or one of the Moravian missions.
- Write an ethnohistorical account of a single incident.  
Why did the Iroquois torture Father Brebeuf?  
Why did the Aztecs kill Montezuma?
- Consider the life of a single individual, such as Joseph Brant, Louis Riel, John Ross, William Johnson, or Russell Means.
- How did First People respond to European diseases?
- Interpret the gender/kinship metaphors that suffuse treaty documents in northeastern North America.
- Why were the Aztecs unable to defeat the Spanish?
- Write about a single village, Canajoharie or Kanowarohale in the Mohawk Valley for example?
- How did the Cherokee defend themselves against Andrew Jackson's Indian removal policy?
- Consider how indigenous sources of power changed over time?
- How did the Powhattans understand the English settlers at Jamestown?
- Consider the changing role of Aboriginal women following contact.
- What role did Aboriginal women play in the fur trade?
- To what extent did the fur trade disrupt or benefit First Nations' communities?
- Why did the Mohawks return to New York in the 1970s?
- Analyze the role of alcohol in First Nations' communities?
- Analyze the boarding school experience in the U.S. or residential schools in Canada.
- Consider the role of casinos in a contemporary Aboriginal community?
- Analyze one event or figure in the Red Power Movement or AIM in the 1960s.
- Analyze the successes and failures of contemporary Aboriginal political organizations.
- Have First People in Canada been successful in using the courts to win recognition of their Aboriginal rights?
- Analyze the Oka crisis in Quebec.

### *Some journals you will find useful in your research*

*Ethnohistory*

*American Indian Quarterly*

*American Indian Culture and Research Journal*

*William and Mary Quarterly*

*Journal of American History*

*American Historical Review*

See also, state historical society publications such as *New York History*, *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, or *Pennsylvania History*.

## *Some primary sources you may find useful in your research*

- Reuben Gold Thwaites, *The Jesuit Relations*, also available online, 73 vols.  
Reuben Gold Thwaites, *Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, 1804-1806*, 8 vols.
- Reuben Gold Thwaites, *Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin*, 10 vols.  
*The Papers of Sir William Johnson*, 14 vols. (Iroquois and others)  
*Narratives of New Netherlands, 1609-1664* (Iroquois)  
*Documentary History of the State of New York*, 4 vols. (Iroquois)  
Charles Johnston, *Valley of the Six Nations* (Iroquois)  
Cadwallader Colden, *History of the Five Nations of Canada* (1747). (Iroquois)  
Horatio Hale, *Iroquois Book of Rites* (1883)  
Paul Wallace, *The White Roots of Peace* (Iroquois)  
Thomas S. Abler, *Chainbreaker: The Revolutionary Memoirs of Governor Blacksnake* (Seneca Iroquois)  
James Everett Seaver, *Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison* (Seneca Iroquois)  
*The Journals of Reverend Samuel Kirkland* (Oneida Iroquois)  
William Beauchamp, *Moravian Journals Relating to Central New York, 1745-1766* (Iroquois)
- John Ross, *The Papers of Chief John Ross* (Cherokee)  
Elias Boudinot, *Cherokee Editor, The Writings of Elias Boudinot* (Cherokee)  
*Cherokee Phoenix* (Newspaper, 1828-1834), <http://library.wcu.edu/CherokeePhoenix/>  
Theda Perdue and Michael Green, *The Cherokee Removal: A Brief History and Documents*  
*Indian Removal Papers*  
*Paper of William Penn*  
*Papers of Henry Bouquet*  
*William Penn's Own Account of the Lenni Lenape or Delaware Indians*  
*The Paxton Papers*  
*Narratives of Early Pennsylvania, West New Jersey and Delaware, 1630-1707*  
*Colonial Records of Pennsylvania*  
*Diary of the Moravian Indian Mission of Fairfield, Upper Canada, 1792-1813*  
*Tuscarawas Valley in Indian Days, 1750-1797*  
*Moravian Indian Mission on White River, Diaries and Letters, 1799-1806*  
William Beauchamp, *Moravian Journals Relating to Central New York, 1745-1766*  
John Heckewelder, *Narrative of the Mission of the United Brethren among the Delaware and Mohegan Indians from its Commencement in the Year 1740 to the close of the Year 1808*
- John Heckewelder, *First Description of Cincinnati and other Ohio Settlements: The Travel Reports of Johann Heckewelder*  
John Heckewelder, *The Travels of John Heckewelder*  
John Heckewelder, *History, Manners, and Customs of the Indian Nations Who Once Inhabited Pennsylvania and the Neighboring States*  
John Heckewelder, *Thirty Thousand Miles with John Heckewelder*  
*History of the Girtys: Being a Concise Account of the Girty Brothers*