



REL 3380

Native American Religions

Section: RVBB

Internet/Fully Online

Summer Term 2026

Course Time Zone: Eastern Time (ET). Course due dates and times are according to this time zone.

Professor Information

Stephanie Londono

Roles: Primary Instructor

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Office Hours: W and F: 11:30-12:30 PM - ZoomLinks to an external site. Or by Appointment

Office Location: DM 301

Department or Academic Unit: Religious Studies

Mohican Prophecy



A woman holds Pope Francis' head during his meeting with representatives of indigenous peoples at the Vatican on Feb. 15, 2017. L'Osservatore

A long time ago the Creator came to Turtle Island and said to the Red People: "You will be the keepers of Mother Earth. Among you I will give the wisdom about Nature, about the interconnectedness of all things, about balance and about living in harmony. You Red People will see the secret of Nature... The day will come when you will need to share the secrets with other people of the Earth because they will stray from their Spiritual ways. The time to start sharing is today."

Mohican Prophecy

Course Prerequisites

Course prerequisites, if any, are listed below.

Course Description





In this introductory course, we will be exploring the rich and diverse religious expressions of Indigenous peoples across the American continent, with a strong focus on North American nations.

Native American peoples approach the sacred, not as a separate category of life, but as part of a cosmovision that permeates every aspect of life, including human relations with nature, medicine, politics, economics, education, art, and war. A primary goal of our brief course is to analyze some of the archetypal characteristics of Native American spirituality, its constant transformation, and its role in the survival of Indigenous communal life and identity across the Americas, particularly after European colonization.

Students will be exposed to a plurality of indigenous perspectives on the meaning and purpose of the sacred through interdisciplinary methodologies, engaging texts from history, literature, policy, and gender studies. We will draw heavily from voices from within, including academic scholars, Elders, community leaders, and activists, to address pervasive stereotypes and misunderstandings about indigenous peoples. We will also tackle relevant questions about violence, colonialism, and Native American rights and sovereignty.

Texts from the course are accompanied by electronic readings, videos, and art posted in folders in the course content.

Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives

- understand the predicament of the "Indian Problem" as Indian movements strive to challenge and transform the narrow Indian stereotypes ingrained in the American imaginary.
- identify American indigenous peoples by region and tribal societies (Module

1)

- note the differences that exist among various groups in the US, Canada, in some cases, Mexico where borders are crossed by the indigenous cultures or tribes. (Module 1)
- understand that indigenous groups are grounded and engaged with the land as sacred—the Earth is the source of human existence that shapes the meaning of motherhood—that is, the land becomes Mother or Grandmother and is honored accordingly through ritual and ceremony (Modules 1-2)
- interpret tribes as their right to be considered sovereign nations
- define how indigenous life differs from religious life in Western culture as a reflection of the world's creation, the art of understanding about the Earth does not offer one species dominance over others, but all the Earth as interconnected and appreciated for its diversity (Module 2)
- describe the acts and laws by the US that govern American Indians, particularly AIRFA and NAGPRA
- describe “Indianness” through rituals, beliefs, regalia, and habitation in North America prior to and after colonization by the Europeans (Modules 2-3)
- explain the differences between Indian social gatherings like a “powwow” and sacred ceremony (Module 3)
- formulate global perspectives of indigenous peoples who share critical issues involving their loss of sacred land, language and culture that affects their survival (Modules 1-4)
- understand and explain the importance of drumming, dancing and the regalia worn by American Indian indigenous groups for ceremony and social gatherings (Modules 2-3)
- describe the indigenous position on protection of the peoples, preserving

their traditional cultural property and the safe keeping relics, many of which are endangered (Modules 1-4)

- explain the traditional use of masks from the tribes who use them; explain how masks are used in ceremony versus the common use in secular society for healing purposes (Module 3)
- identify problems that exist with “others” [those who are not indigenous members of tribes] who use Indian traditional property and "Indianness" for a personal economic gain (Module 1 & 4)
- identify the ancient and modern indigenous groups of South Florida (Module 4)
- identify ancient tribal groups of South Florida and peoples of the glades' cultures like Tequesta, the ancient Tequesta relic: the Miami Circle and the Tequesta Village; the Caloosa, northern Florida's Timucua, and today's tribes
- inhabitants of South Florida- the Miccosukees and the Seminole Tribes of Florida and illustrate their importance from past to present
- explain the importance of The Miami Circle and the Tequesta Village. (Module 4)
- define Seminole healing and the use of plants for healing purposes (ethnobotany) (Module 4)
- interpret and explain the economic factors for the major South Florida tribes relating their tradition that allowed them to become financially successful (Module 4)

Textbook and Course Materials

Native North America

Subtitle: Belief and Ritual

Required/Recommended: Required

Authors: Larry J. Zimmerman and Brain Leigh Molyneaux

Publisher: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000

Publication Date: 2000

Copyright Date: 1996

ISBN 10: ISBN-10: 0-8061-3286-8

ISBN 13: ISBN-13: 9780806132860

Chapters/Pages: All chapters

A Seat at the Table in Conversation with Native Americans

Required/Recommended: Required

Authors: Huston Smith

Publisher: University of California Press

Publication Date: 2007

Copyright Date: 2006

ISBN 10: 0520244397

ISBN 13: 9780520244399

Chapters/Pages: Chapters 1-5

God is Red

Subtitle: A Native View of Religion

Required/Recommended: Recommended

Authors: Vine Deloria Jr.

Publisher: Fulcrum Publishing

Publication Date: 2016

Copyright Date: 1973

ISBN 10: 168275314X

ISBN 13: 9781682753149

Chapters/Pages: Four chapters recommended

High Stakes

Subtitle: Florida Seminole Gaming and Sovereignty

Required/Recommended: Recommended

Authors: Jessica Cattelino

Publisher: Duke University

Publication Date: 2008

Copyright Date: 2008

ISBN 10: 0822342278

ISBN 13: 9780822342274

Chapters/Pages: Whole book recommended

Borderlands/La Frontera

Subtitle: The New Mestiza

Required/Recommended: Recommended

Authors: Gloria Anzaldua

Publisher: Aunt Lute Books

Publication Date: 2022

Copyright Date: 1987

ISBN 10: 0933216254

ISBN 13: 9781879960855

Chapters/Pages: Entire book is recommended

Panther Book Pack

Get all required course materials for \$20.50 per undergrad credit hour through Panther Book Pack. You'll be charged automatically unless you opt out within 3 days after the add/drop deadline.

For more details, to compare costs, and to learn how to access your course materials, visit the [Panther Book Pack information page on FIU OneStop](#).

Expectations of this Course

Asynchronous lectures & discussions will be assigned weekly using posted lectures VoiceThread assignments, & Discussion Board Assignments. These can be found in Canvas in the Modules. They will have due dates associated with them.

As an online course, most (if not all) of the course work will be conducted online. Expectations for performance in an online course are the same for a traditional course. In fact, online courses require a degree of self-motivation, self-discipline, and technology skills which can make these courses more demanding for some students.

Students are expected to:

- review the getting started module;
- introduce yourself to the class during the first week by posting a self-introduction in the appropriate discussion;
- take the practice quiz to ensure that your computer is compatible with Canvas;
- interact online with instructor and peers
- review and follow the course calendar
- log in to the course at least 3 times per week.

The instructor will:

- Log in to the course on a continual basis
- Respond to discussion board postings within 1-2 days or sooner
- Respond to emails within 1 days or sooner
- Grade assignments within 1 weeks or sooner of the assignment deadline
- Please resend email if you do not receive a response within 24 hours.

Assignments & Assessments

Discussion Forums

Keep in mind that your discussion forum postings will likely be seen by other members of the course. Care should be taken when determining what to post.

Discussion Forum Expectations:

- Provide clear guidance on the expectations and requirements
- Available dates (unlimited or for a specific time)
- Criteria for evaluating the originality and quality of students' comments and grade credit expected
(Rubric is highly encouraged)
- The expected turn-around time for feedback or grades.

Assignments

- Provide clear guidance on the expectations and requirements
- Provide due dates and late assignment policies
- Define if it is an individual or group assignment (groups: Let the students know how the groups will be formed)
- Specify and describe how to submit assignments
- State the criteria for evaluation (Rubric or list of criteria)
- The expected turn-around time for feedback or grades

Quizzes

In order to mitigate any issues with your computer and online assessments, it is very important that you take the Practice Quiz from each computer you will be using to take your graded quizzes and exams. Assessments in this course are not compatible with mobile devices and should not be taken through a mobile phone or a tablet.

- List all assessments (i.e. graded or practice)

- Provide the dates and times when assessments will become available (i.e. From Monday 10:00 am – Tuesday 11:59 pm)
- Provide assessment duration (i.e. 30 minutes, 1 hour)
- Provide details for results
- When will students be able to see the results (i.e. Immediately after the exam, after the availability period has ended, or not at all)
- What will they be able to see the results (i.e. Total score only, all of the questions and answers, etc.)
- The expected turn-around time for feedback or grades

Voice Threads

- Please follow the instructions to post video, audio, or text comments when asked to. When you are done, you should hit SUBMIT.
 - After you have posted your responses, please go BACK INTO the VoiceThread & REPLY to one of your peers' comments. **A meaningful reply** will not just agree but will add to their point by 1) providing another example, 2) making a connection to your own experience, 3) making a connection to a reading we did or something we discussed in class, or 4) thoughtfully disagreeing with evidence. A reply can be video, audio, or text.
 - Remember that VoiceThreads will replace attendance, participation, & discussion. They will also prepare you for the class test. So please take your time with it. Always feel free to post questions of any kind just like you would ask in class!
- [VoiceThread accessibility information \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

Creative Journal

This portion of the class is interested in providing a place where you can use/ explore your creative potential through different genres of art. The material of this

class can be intense/complicated/painful/frustrating, so feel free to react to our weekly readings and videos in the manner that you prefer.

- The only requirement is that you have four entries in your journal, which can be submitted as a document, video, podcast, song, etc. – or a mixture of these. Just make sure that if you are turning in a mixture of media, you convert your audio or video into a shareable YouTube link and paste this into a word doc (you can make it private to only share with me).
- Some artistic ideas: poems, sound clips, photos, articles, paintings, movie clips, and so on.

Open the assignment page for further details.

Quizzes

In order to mitigate any issues with your computer and online assessments, it is very important that you take the Practice Quiz from each computer you will be using to take your graded quizzes and exams. For quiz duration, grading criteria, and feedback response time, please review the important information about quizzes page.

Quiz Expectations (2 items)

- There will be 2 quizzes, 25 questions each.
- The quizzes should be completed within 35 minutes.
- Students will be able to take the quiz twice, and the highest score will be the one recorded.
- Quizzes are available from Thursdays 10:00 am – Sundays 11:59 pm.
- Students will be able to see the results immediately after the exam.
- Students will be able to see their total scores.

Religious Freedom Slideshow

For this assignment, you will be asked to examine a current issue of religious freedom in the United States. Because we are focusing on how religious freedom developed in the U.S., topics from other countries will not be accepted for this

assignment. **NOTE:** There are resources available for this assignment on our [Library](#) research site (see sidebar).

- **Choose** an issue of religious freedom **concerning Indigenous/First Peoples** currently being contested anywhere around the world - Preferably in the Americas (within the last 5 years or so).
- Find at least **(3) three sources** covering your topic. We are not looking for academic sources for this assignment, but reliable journalistic sources such as:
 - Newspaper articles (such as *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*)
 - Magazine articles (such as *Time Magazine*, *The Atlantic Magazine*, *National Catholic Reporter*)
 - TV news segments (such as *ABC news*, *PBS*)
 - Radio sources (such as *NPR news*, *The Dean Obeidallah Show* on *SiriusXM*, *Podcasts*)
 - Reliable online journalistic coverage (such as Religion Dispatches, Religion News Service, *Sightings*)
- Try these excellent research databases to find journalistic sources:
 - **US Newsstream:** <https://libproxy.temple.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/usnews/index?accountid=14270> (includes the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, and thousands more)
 - **Academic Search Complete:** <http://guides.temple.edu/go.php?c=2805666> (includes *Time*, *Newsweek*, *National Catholic Reporter*, *The Atlantic*, and thousands more)
 - **Search tip:** for both these databases, on the results list look at the **Source Type** and **Publication** limiters to narrow your results.
 - Please reach out to our librarian, Fred Rowland, if you need help locating sources: https://guides.temple.edu/prf.php?account_id=15115

- **Create** a (minimum) four-slide PowerPoint or Google slide presentation with images, captions, & links. That does the following:
 - **Describes** the facts surrounding the issue
 - **Explains** why it is a matter of religious freedom
 - **Explores** both the points of view of the Native People's religious community or individual **and** their opponents, and
 - **Advocates** a position (weigh in with your perspective)
 - **Reflect-** How did this exercise make you feel? What surprised you the most about your findings? What were the most significant difficulties and engaging aspects of the assignment?
 - **Peer Review-** You will be assigned a peer to reiview. Consider: 1. What was their strongest and weakest arguments?
- **Cite** the sources you used. On a final slide (which does not count toward the 4 slide minimum), list the sources you used. Include source title, article title, article dates, & working hyperlinks if source is available online. You may use any citation format (APA, Chicago, MLA) but be consistent. So, for example ...
 - "Religious Freedom after 50 Years?," *Sightings* (December 7, 2015).
<http://divinity.uchicago.edu/sightings/religious-freedom-after-50-years>
 - ([Links to an external site.](#))
 - "Conservatives Call for 'Religious Freedom,' But For Whom," *All Things Considered*, *NPR* (December 11, 2015). <http://www.npr.org/2015/12/11/458969192/conservatives-call-for-religious-freedom-but-for-whom>
- For guides on citing sources, see this page at the Temple Writing Center
<http://www.temple.edu/writingctr/support-for-writers/handouts.asp>
- **Tip:** If you use **Proquest Newsstand** or **Academic Search Complete** to find articles, use the "Cite" feature to format your citations. It's easy!

Research Paper

- **Please note that it is mandatory to meet with me at least once during the semester.** I very much recommend you do so for the preparation of your final paper. I will help you write your thesis and outline, as well as guide you with bibliography.
 - **Prompts and topics:** For the final paper, you will have the opportunity to focus on a topic of your choice. You will be provided a list of prompts to help you in the process, but feel free to propose your own. However, please keep in mind the topic has to address the intersection between RELIGION and NATIVE AMERICAN LIFE.
 - I encourage you to connect your paper with your academic major or interest. For example, if your studying Business Administration or Medicine, you can focus your paper on the Native American perspective on business or healing and how it is impacted by their view of the sacred.
- **Research papers must be written in academic style** (1st person for personal reflection and otherwise 3rd person; avoid 2nd person pronouns: you, your, yours) and proper MLA or Chicago referencing of quotations or concepts from any author to avoid plagiarism (See Canvas for MLA and Chicago citation style instructions).
- **DOUBLE-LINE SPACE** your essays; you may include a title page (optional), date, course, and your name; properly list all references in a bibliography, even if it is only one resource is referenced

Assignment Expectations and Technicalities

- **This paper has two parts: Part A and Part B**
 - **Part A:** Submit thesis, outline, and bibliography (10 points)- Please note your topic must be approved.
 - **Part B:** Submit your finalized paper (90 points).

- **Length:** The paper should be at least 1250-1550 words long (=5-6 pages doubled spaced).
- **Style:** MLA style or Chicago (be consistent) for in-text and bibliographic citations.
- **Bibliography:** Must include at least five sources. Please prioritize using sources from the class' materials.
- All essays are to be submitted through Turnitin.com. A link will be provided for you to submit your paper.
- Information material is posted in the course content: "Academic Papers/Essay Recommendations," and "Grading Rubric."
- **Grades** will be posted within a week.
- **Get extra credit:** 5 points by reviewing your paper at our [Writing Center](#). Just include the date of your appointment and name of your tutor.

Review the detailed Turnitin instructions on how to submit your assignments and how to review the Gradermark comments (feedback) from your professor. If you encounter any technical difficulties, please contact LMS Help Support Services.

Grading

- The instructor reserves the right to make any changes deemed necessary to the course regarding assignments, assessments, or course information.
- The syllabus is listed in weekly increments with modular titles for continuity within the course. Because this is online, it often requires more diligence than a classroom course. Check each assignment or assessment for due date to ensure you submit in a timely manner.
- A zero will be assigned to any item submitted late or missed. If you have any issue with an assignment or deadline, please email me as soon as possible to prevent a zero.

Course Grading Table

Course Requirements	Number of Items	Points for Each	Total Points Available	Weight
Quizzes	2	100	200	10%
Discussions	4	10	40	20%
Religious Freedom Slideshow	1	100	100	20%
Creative Journal	1	100	100	20%
Research Paper (Part A and B)	2	Part A: 10 Part B: 90	100	30%
Total	12	N/A	740	100%

Letter	Range %	Letter	Range %	Letter	Range %
A	95 or above	B	83-86	C	70-76
A-	90-94	B-	80-82	D	60-69
B+	87-89	C+	77-79	F	59 or less

Course Communication

- Communication in this course is best by **messages on Canvas**. You can also email me at slondono@fiu.edu, however, Canvas allows me to filter through my emails and give you priority for a speedier response.
- I will generally respond to emails within 24 hours of receiving them. If you

don't hear back from me within 24 hours, please resend your inquiry.

- If it is urgent, you may also call my personal number provided above. The Email feature on Canvas is an external communication tool that allows users to send emails to users enrolled within the course. Emails are sent to the students' FIU email on record. The Email tool is located on the Course Menu, on the left side of the course webpage.
- To facilitate communication, the university requires you to have an e-mail account ending in @fiu.edu.

Policies & Resources

Please review the [FIU's Policies webpage](#). The policies webpage contains essential information regarding guidelines relevant to all courses at FIU, as well as additional information about acceptable netiquette for online courses. For additional information, please visit [FIU's Policy and Procedure Library](#).

As a member of the FIU community, you are expected to be knowledgeable about the behavioral expectations set forth in the [FIU Student Conduct and Honor Code](#).

Nondiscrimination Statement

The **Office of Civil Rights** (OCR) is responsible for ensuring that FIU maintains a workplace and learning environment free from discrimination, where current and prospective faculty, staff, and students are treated equitably. If any student, employee, or applicant has a sincere and reasonable belief that they have been discriminated against or harassed based on age, color, disability, marital status, ethnic or national origin, race, religion, retaliation, sex, or any other protected category, they can report their concerns to the OCR team through report.fiu.edu.

Proctored Exams

Please note that the information contained in this section applies only if your course requires a proctored exam.

Through a careful examination of this syllabus, it is the student's responsibility to determine whether this online course requires proctored exams. Please visit our [Student Proctored Exam Instructions webpage](#) for important information concerning proctored exams, proctoring centers, and important forms.

Regarding AI in the Classroom: A Call to Reconsider the Value of Imperfect Human Work

While it is important to recognize the virtues of the quickly advancing technology of Artificial Intelligence, it is EVEN MORE essential to rethink and redefine the meaning and value of human-created knowledge. What makes human knowledge unique?

This is a question I encourage everyone of you to think as we dive into the meaning of "Sacred Knowledge" from the Native American Perspective. A key concept to keep in mind is that human knowledge is imperfect because it is always incomplete and in the process of expanding. Each of us have a different life curriculum very much shaped by our bodies, relationships, environment, interests, concerns, and talents.

As your professor I value your submission of "imperfect work." This doesn't mean effortless work, on the contrary, I'm looking for your struggle to articulate your ideas and questions in a coherent manner.

Thus, In this course, direct use of AI-generated content as your own analytical or creative work is strictly prohibited.

Misuse of AI tools—such as unauthorized use on assessments, failure to cite appropriately, or submission of fully AI-generated work as your own—will be treated as violations of academic integrity policies, potentially leading to disciplinary action as outlined in the University's Code of Conduct.

If you are unsure whether the use of an AI tool aligns with course guidelines, please reach out to me directly for clarification. Open communication helps ensure you understand expectations and remain academically successful.

