

STANFORD UNIVERSITY
CASA
Fall Quarter 2002

CASA 110A:

Playing Indian: (European) Appropriations of Native American Identity

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Office Hours: Tues 3:15-4:15, Thurs 3:15-4:15

Course Description: This course explores the dense texture of destroyed, appropriated, preserved and revived Native American cultural identities. It weaves through the last 150 years of cultural interactions between Native Americans and Euro-Americans accumulating on its way *transcultural* experiences of “white captives”, anthropologists, Native American participants in the Wild West shows and war veterans, boy scouts, homesteaders, “medicine men” and present-day “Wannabe Indians”. The experiential bundle tying together Native Americans and non-natives should not be reinforced by suggesting that Native Americans and Euro-Americans have some sort of “connection”, either inherently racist and detrimental or infinitely romantic and rewarding. Rather, it needs to be disentangled by showing the equal validity but mutual incompatibility of their respective claims to what only *appears* to be the same *thing* (i.e. “traditional Native American culture(s)”). “Indian” has grown out of a racial stereotype into a kind of indexical sign that produces historically and situationally contingent meanings. The “appropriation of Native American cultures”, consequently, becomes a catchall phrase (in the same way, as particular practices of appropriation become catchall symbols) covering individual performances that range from downright racism to self-denying humanism. Moreover, the mere official membership in a tribe or a high blood-quantum by themselves mean nothing because the abuse of the “stereotype” and the abuse of blood-quantum as well as their responsible use belong on the same ethical plane and can make anybody into a native American or any Native American into an “Indian”. Several analytical frameworks (aesthetic, mimetic and constructivist) are explored in an attempt to situate the phenomenon of “playing Indian” within the general field of humanistic knowledge.

Course Requirements: The course is an undergraduate seminar. (Graduate students may enter the seminar through the negotiation with the instructor.) As such, it will rely on each student’s active participation in class discussions grounded in careful and critical attention to the readings.

Written and oral work required for the course will consist of:

- a) “reading notes” – weekly one-page assignments (due in class every Tuesday) in which the students are expected to explore questions provoked by the texts. The notes should be not merely descriptive of the content of a text but also reflective and interrogating.
- b) mid-term paper (5-7 pages) on a topic derived from the readings is due in class on November 5.

- c) “Playing Anthropologists and Natives”, or the *Interview Game*. The students are invited to perform the role of an anthropologist in the field. They will interview (i.e. toss out 2-3 questions) the instructor about his youthful involvement in the reenactment of “traditional American Indian cultures” in Russia.
- d) Final oral presentations where the students can team up in groups of two or three depending on the ultimate size of the class. The topics of the presentations should obviously be *related* to the topics discussed in class and/or in the texts.
- e) Final paper (10-12 pages) due on December 5. The topics of the final papers should be negotiated with the instructor by November 21 (in person or over e-mail) and they can continue the topics of the oral presentations. The citation system should follow the pattern adopted by *American Anthropologist* (see Bibliography). At the request, the bibliography can be e-mailed to the student.

Grading layout:

- 20% class attendance and participation;
 15% weekly reading notes;
 20% mid-term paper;
 15% final presentation;
 30% final paper.

Primary Texts:

Philip Deloria, *Playing Indian*
 June Namias, *White Captives*
 Erdrich, *A Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner*
 Charles Eastman, *Light on the Indian World*
 Hungry Wolf, *Mountain Home*
 John Neihardt, *Black Elk Speaks*
 Claude Smith, *Red Men in Red Square*
 Vine Deloria, *Custer Died For Your Sins*

Recommended Texts:

Elijah Wilson, *The White Indian Boy*
 Hungry Wolf, Adolf and Beverly, *Shadows of the Buffalo: A Family Odyssey Among the Indians*
 Joane Nagel, *American Indian Ethnic Renewal*
 Leslie Silko, *Ceremony*

The primary and recommended texts are available from the bookstore and the *Green Library reserve desk*. There is also a required course reader that is available for purchase from the *CASA front desk*.

Week 1

October 1: **Introduction**

October 3: **“What is the American, this new man?”: Adoption and adaptation on the American frontier - I**

Deloria, *Playing Indian*, Introduction, Chapter 1 and 2

Namias, *White Captives*, Introduction, Part I, Conclusion

Week 2

October 8: **“What is the American, this new man?”: Adoption and adaptation on the American frontier - II**

Erdrich, *A Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner*

Fierst, *Strange eloquence: Another look at The Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner* – in reader

Strong, *Captivity as convergent practice and selective tradition* – in reader

Axtell, *The white Indians of colonial America* – in reader

Ebersole, *Going native, going primitive: White Indians, sexuality, power, and the problem of identity* – in reader

Stahl, *Joe True: Convergent needs and assumed identity* – in reader

Recommended: Wilson, *The White Indian Boy*

October 10: **From love to knowledge: Lewis H. Morgan and the invention of anthropology**

Philip Deloria, *Playing Indian*, Introduction, Chapter 3

Aquarius (Lewis H. Morgan), *Vision of Kar-is-ta-gi-a, a sachem of Cayuga* – in reader

Schenk, *William W. Warren’s History of the Ojibway people: Tradition, history, and context* – in reader

Gronewold, *Did Frank Hamilton Cushing go native?* – in reader

Harkin, *Ethnographic deep play: Boas, McIlwraith, and fictive adoption on the Northwest Coast* – in reader

Week 3 – American Indians in Europe: From Wild West Shows to Code Talking

October 15

Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Image of American Indians*, Chapters 1-3 – in reader

Wood, *The role of romantic West in shaping the Third Reich* – in reader

October 17

Britten, *American Indians in World War I: At Home and at War*, Chapter 5 – in reader

Townsend, *World War II and the American Indian*, Chapters 2, 6 – in reader

Week 4

October 22: **Ernest Thompson Seton and the Boy Scout Movement**

Deloria, *Playing Indian*, Chapter 4

Anderson, *The Chief: Ernest Thompson Seton and the Changing West*, Chapters 13, 14, 20, 21 – in reader

Thompson Seton, *The Gospel of the Red Man* – in reader

Thompson Seton, *Sign Talk. Introduction* – in reader

October 24: **The “true” image of the Indian: Between Charles (Ohiyesa) Eastman and Black Elk**

Eastman, *Light on the Indian World*

Hertzberg, *The search for an American Indian identity*, Chapters 2, 9, 13 – in reader

Neihardt, *Black Elk Speaks*

Powers, *When Black Elk speaks, everybody listens* – in reader

Powers, *Trends toward ecumenism in American Indian religions* – in reader

Porterfield, *American Indian spirituality as a countercultural movement* – in reader

Week 5

October 29: **Archibald Belaney (Grey Owl) – the first self-proclaimed Indian**

Billinghurst, Jane. *The Many Faces of Archie Belaney, Grey Owl* – in reader

Film: “Grey Owl” (director: R. Attenborough, starring P. Brosnan)

October 31: **Adolf Hungry Wolf and the Reinvention of Blackfeet Indian Culture**

Hungry Wolf, *Mountain Home*

Recommended: Hungry Wolf, Adolf and Beverly, *Shadows of the Buffalo: A Family Odyssey Among the Indians* – on reserve

Optional: Hungry Wolf, *The Blood People* – on reserve

Interview game.

Week 6 – Historical reenactment, New Age, Indian hobbyism and Indianism in Europe and the United States

November 5

Deloria, *Playing Indian*, Chapters 5-6

Green, *The tribe called Wannabee: Playing Indian in America and Europe* – in reader

Torgovnick, *Medicine Wheels and spirituality: Primitivism in the New Age* – in reader

Torgovnick, *Of drums and men* – in reader

November 7

Feest, *Indians and Europe?* – in reader

Smith, *Red Men in Red Square*

Belk and Costa. *The Mountain Man Myth: A Contemporary Consuming Fantasy* – in reader

Taylor, *The Indian hobbyist movement in Europe* – in reader

Week 7 – Native Americans Declare a War against Indians: Some responses to the appropriations of Native American cultures

November 12

Bordeaux, “Renegades’ Desecrating of Indian Religion” – in reader

Churchill, *Indians Are Us?* – in reader

November 14

The Declaration of War Against the Exploiters of Native American Spirituality – in reader

Thornton, *Who owns our past?* – in reader

Film: “If Only I Were Indian” (“Indian reenactors” in Czech Republic)

Week 8 – Recapturing Tradition: Native American Ethnic Renewal

November 19

Deloria, *Custer Died For Your Sins*

Deloria, *Tribal religions and contemporary American culture*

Warrior, *Intellectual sovereignty and the struggle for an American Indian future* – in reader

November 21

Nagel, *American Indian ethnic renewal: Politics and the resurgence of identity* – in reader

Strong, Van Winkle, “Indian blood”: *Reflections on the reckoning and refiguring of Native North American identity*

Beinart, *Lost tribes: Native Americans and government anthropologists feud over Indian identity* – in reader

Recommended: Nagel, *American Indian Ethnic Renewal*

Silko, *Ceremony*

Week 9 – Indianists Without Indians: Exploring Theoretical Frameworks

November 26

Bakhtin, *Author and hero in aesthetic activity*

Girard, *Triangular desire*

November 28

Schneider, *Kinship, nationality and religion in American culture*

Hall, *Cultural identity and diaspora*

Strong, *To forget their tongue, their name, and their whole relation*

Readings to be handed out.

Week 10

December 3: **Final Presentations**

December 5: **Final Presentations**

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