

Spring 2025

Native American History

HIST 1125

Instructor: Dr. Peter Olsen-Harbich

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Class Time: MW, 1:45-3:14 PM

Location: EDUC 202

Office: McNeil Center for Early American
Studies (3355 Woodland Walk), #222

Office Hours: M, 9:00-11:00 AM, and
by appointment



Nicholas Galanin (Tlingit), *Architecture of return, escape* (CRC Smithsonian), 2024

Course Description

This course introduces the history of North America's Indigenous nations from the continent's first peopling through the close of the twentieth century. We will analyze the basic sequence and consequence of events such as: pre-Columbian migrations; the development of settled North American societies; the establishment and spread of European colonies; the contestation of and alliance with imperial projects by Indigenous nations; the construction of Indian racial and cultural identity; the formation of the United States, the process of "Indian Removal"; the creation of reservations; the growth of assimilative programs through residential schooling; and the rise of modern tribal bureaucracy. Particular attention will be paid to the various strategies employed by Indigenous nations across time to establish and uphold government-to-government relationships with Western powers. Throughout, we will assess the history of Native America as flowing through its own channels—ones now intertwined with, but discrete from, those of the United States.

Course Objectives

Students who enthusiastically engage with this course will develop:

1. Proficient knowledge of the basic sequence of events and their principal consequences in Native American history from the pre-Columbian era to 2000 A.D.
2. Historical reasoning—a type of fact-based logic—used to comprehend current and future events relative to this sequential and consequential context.
3. Critical capacity to evaluate the use of historical reasoning by others.

Required Texts

Michael Leroy Oberg & Peter Jakob Olsen-Harbich, *Native America: A History*, 3rd ed. (Wiley, 2022). *Note: Three copies of this text are reserved for your use at Van Pelt Library. All other texts will be made available via Canvas.*

Evaluation

1. Participation: 15%
2. Reading Quizzes: 15%
3. Object Study Paper: 15%
4. Midterm: 25%
5. Final: 30%

93% – 100%	A
90% – 92%	A-
87% – 89%	B+
83% – 86%	B
80% – 82%	B-
77% – 79%	C+
73% – 76%	C
70% – 72%	C-
67% – 69%	D+
63% – 65%	D
0% – 64%	F

Participation & Reading Quizzes

Attendance in this course is mandatory. Short reading quizzes will be given at the beginning of approximately half of our meetings to ensure attendance and completion of the assigned reading. You are also expected to participate in discussions of our assigned reading, which requires you to complete the reading before each class. These discussions will take up about a third of our in-class time.

Object Study Paper

This paper (1500 words) will analyze one object in the collections of the Penn Museum or the Philadelphia Museum of Art, or one displayed at the annual [Powwow at Penn](#). Your analysis should contextualize the object in a historical trend covered in our reading or class discussions and explain how the object represents or challenges aspects of that trend. More details will be given in a separate prompt, but please note that your selection of object and 200 words of background are due 4/2.

Midterm & Final

The majority of your overall grade for this course will be earned through in-class examinations. The purpose of these exams is to test your completion and comprehension of our coursework as objectively as possible. You will be assessed on your ability to order major historical events sequentially and match them with their principal consequences. The final will be cumulative.

Academic Integrity:

Students are expected to observe the University of Pennsylvania's Code of Academic Integrity: <https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/code-of-academic-integrity>. All code violations will be referred to the Center for Community Standards and Accountability.

Accommodations:

Students with documented disabilities will be accommodated. Requests for reasonable accommodations may be made through the Weingarten Center website: <https://weingartencenter.universitylife.upenn.edu/academic-accommodations>.

Readings & Assignments

Week 1. Introduction

January 15. Introduction to *Native American History*: Scope, Objectives, Expectations.

Week 2. Paleo-America

January 20. No Class, MLK Day.

January 22. First Peopling.

Reading: *Native America*, pp. 1-23. Calloway, "A Navajo Emergence Story and an Iroquois Creation Story."

Watch: *Ancient Americas*, "[The Settlement of the Americas: New Discoveries](#)" (37:30, 2x speed recommended).

Week 3. Classical America

January 27. Surplus, Settlement, and "Civilization?"

Reading: Townsend, "Agriculture-Based Societies in the Southwest...[and] Eastern Woodlands" (pp. 17-31). Calloway, "Picture Essay: Early American Cities, Settlements, and Centers" (7 pp.). *Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca Travels through North America, 1542* ([American Yawp](#)).

Watch: *Ancient Americas*, "[Cahokia: Mississippian Metropolis](#)" (45:00, 2x speed recommended).

January 29. Eastern Woodlands on the Eve of Contact.

Reading: *Nave America*, pp. 23-44. Hurtado, *Major Problems in American Indian History*, 47-50. Thomas Hariot, *A Briefe and True Report* (Excerpts).

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Watch: "[Learning how the indigenous people of Massachusetts lived at the Plimouth Patuxet Museum](#)" (5:04); "[Paramount Chief Powhatan: A Brief Biography](#)" (5:59).

Week 4. The Invasion of America

February 3. First Confrontations.

Reading: "Declaration of the Indian, Juan" (1681) [Townsend 94-95]. "Cooperation, Contagion and Conflict in New England" and "A Jesuit Assesses the Hurons and a Mik'maq Assesses the French" [Calloway 104-117].

Watch: [Strangers in Our Midst | Saints & Strangers](#) (2:37)—*after* reading above.

February 5. *Visit to the Penn Museum.*

Reading: *Native America*, 45-79.

Week 5. First Resistances, First Accommodations

February 10. Penn's Woods: Exception or Rule?

Reading: *Native America*, 80-90. William Penn Advertises for Colonists for Pennsylvania, 1683.

February 12. Tributary Systems of the late 1600s: The End of Sovereignty?

Reading: Dylan Reudiger, "Neither Utterly to Reject Them, Nor Yet to Draw Them to Come In": Tributary Subordination and Settler Colonialism in Virginia," *Early American Studies* 18, No. 1 (Winter 2020), pp. 1-31.

[Treaty of Middle Plantation](#) (1677); "Indian Reasons for going to War" [Calloway 167-170].

Week 6. Surviving Colonial America

February 17. Behind the Frontier

Reading: *Native America*, 90-98. Samson Occom, "[Short Narrative](#)" (1768). David J. Silverman, "The Curse of God: An Idea and Its Origins among the Indians of New York's Revolutionary Frontier," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 66, no. 3 (2009): 495-534.

February 19. The Imperial Periphery

Reading: "Horses, Guns, and Smallpox," in *Our Hearts Fell to the Ground*, pp. 37-55. "The Emergence of the Colonial South: Colonial Indian Slaving, the Fall of the Pre-Contact Mississippian World, and the Emergence of a New Social Geography in the

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American South, 1540-1715,” in *Native American Adoption, Captivity, and Slavery*, 47-64.

Week 7. Crisis of Empire

February 24: The Seven Years War

Reading: *Native America*, 99-121. Documents & Essays, *Major Problems in American Colonial History*

February 26: Outbreak of the American Revolution

Reading: *Native America*, 122-142. Documents & Essays, *Major Problems in the Era of the American Revolution*

Week 8. Indian Nations and the New Republic

March 3. Democracy and the “Indian Problem” in the Ohio

Reading: “Just and Lawful Wars, 1783-1795” in Jeffrey Ostler, *Surviving Genocide*, 82-122. “[Address of Little Turtle](#)” (1802).

March 5. **Midterm Examination.**

Week 9. Eastern Removal

March 17. Race and Southern Tragedy

Reading: *Native America*, 143-174. “Documents on Cherokee Removal,” in Francis Paul Prucha, *Documents of United States Indian Policy*, Docs. 39-45.

March 19. Northeastern Resistance

Reading: John P. Bowes, “American Indian Removal beyond the Removal Act,” *NAIS: Journal of the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association* 1(Spring 2014): 65-87.

Week 10. Invading the Great West

March 24. Empire & Civil War

Reading: *Native America*, 175-201. “The Losing of the West,” *American Indian History: A Documentary Reader*, 122-153.

“Watch: [Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee | Sitting Bull meets Colonel Miles](#) (4:24).

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March 26. Beyond the Plains

Reading: *Native America*, 201-214. Hurtado, "Indians in the Far West," in *Major Problems in American Indian History*, 286-324.

Week 11. The Age of Dispossession

March 31. Reservations

Reading: *Native America*, 215-231. "Resistance, Restrictions, and Renewals On and Off Reservations, 1865–1890," in *Major Problems in American Indian History*.

April 2. Allotment

Reading: *Native America*, 231-253. "Education, Land, and Sovereignty in the Assimilation Era, 1890–1920," in *Major Problems in American Indian History*.
Artifact selection and background statement on Object Study due.

Week 12. "Kill the Indian, Save the Man": Assimilation Programs and Cultural Sovereignty

April 7. Boarding Schools

Reading: Brenda Childs, *Boarding School Seasons: American Indian Families, 1900-1940* (100 pp.)

April 9. "Remembering" the Indian

Reading: "The Struggle for Cultural Identity, 1877-1910" [Townsend, 405-423].
"Popular Images of Indians: Cartoons and Commentary, 1913–1916" in *Talking Back to Civilization*.

Week 13. Citizens and Patriots All?

April 14. WWI and the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924

Reading: "World War I" and "After the War: Reservation Indians Speak Out" in Hoxie, *Talking Back to Civilization*

April 16. Economic Crisis in Indian Country

Reading: "The Great Depression, 1929-1940" [Townsend, 521-556].

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Week 14. A New Age for Whom?

April 21: New Deals, Old Deals

Reading: *Native America*, 253-284. “Two Views from the BIA of the Indian Reorganization Act” (Calloway 476-485).

April 23: Not all Cold Warriors

Reading: *Native America*, 285-296. Magaret Jacobs, “Remembering the ‘Forgotten Child’: The American Indian Child Welfare Crisis of the 1960s and 1970s,” *American Indian Quarterly*, 37 (Spring 2013), 136-159. “The Upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s,” in *American Indian History: A Documentary Reader*, pp. 184-197.

Week 15. Sovereign Renaissance

April 28. Arts, Crafts, Cards, Oil: Indigenous Economic Self-Determination at Century’s End

Reading: “Identity, History, and Economic Development in the 21st Century”, in *Major Problems in American Indian History*.

April 30: A New Century of Sovereignty

Reading: *Native America*, 297-311. “The Supreme Court and Tribal Sovereignty” (Calloway). Taiaiake Alfred, “Sovereignty,” in *A Companion to American Indian History*.

Object Study paper due.

May [TBD]. **Final Examination.**

Location TBD.