

California State University, Chico
College of Humanities and Fine Arts/Department of Philosophy

Philosophy 336

American Indian Environmental Philosophies*

Syllabus version 3.0, September 12, 2009

Section 01-4559

Fall 2009

MW 4:00 p.m. – 5:15 p.m.

Langdon 106



Prof. Robert C. Jones

Trinity Hall 112

530.898.4506

Office hours: Monday 2 – 3:30, and by appointment

E-mail via Vista only: <http://vista.csuchico.edu>

All non-classroom communication from me will go through Vista exclusively.

Please login to Vista *daily*.

Course Description and Goals

To what degree does the image of the “ecological Indian” faithfully reflect Native North American ideas and philosophies about the environment through time? To what extent have American Indians been ecologists? Conservationists? The answers to these questions are not simple, and attempting to answer these questions is the goal of this class. To do so adequately and fairly, we will explore various philosophical and historical perspectives on traditional and contemporary American Indian thought regarding their relationships to the human and nonhuman worlds.

Philosophy 336, American Indian Environmental Philosophies, is an upper-division general education philosophy class. There are no prerequisites.

Required Texts

Callicott, J. Baird and Nelson, Michael P., *American Indian Environmental Ethics: An Ojibwa Case Study*, ('AIEE'), Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2004, ISBN: 0-13-043121-4

Harkin, M. and Lewis, D., eds., *Native Americans and the Environment: Perspectives on the Ecological Indian*, ('NAE'), Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007, ISBN: 978-0-8032-7361-0

Jamieson, Dale, *Ethics and the Environment: An Introduction*, Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2008, ISBN: 978-0-521-68284-8

Krech, III, Shepard, *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History*, ('EI'), New York: W.W. Norton, 1999, ISBN: 0-393-04755-5

All other readings can be found on electronic reserve on [our course Vista page](#).

* The design of this course and a great deal of the content and syllabus are used by permission from its creator, [Professor Michael P. Nelson](#) at the University of Idaho.

Student Learning Objectives

Course Content Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

- a. understand, compare, and critically evaluate the philosophical foundations of traditional and contemporary American Indian environmental ethical thought.
- b. understand the role that ethnic, racial, and social relations/identities play in the formation of an informed environmental ethic.
- c. synthesize data and ideas that are historical, ecological, and philosophical in order to form a better understanding of the environment and the world.
- d. become familiar with and able to use ethical concepts in thinking about moral environmental conflicts.

Dropping and Adding

You are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drops, academic renewal, etc., found online at <<http://www.csuchico.edu/catalog/>>. You should be aware of the new deadlines and penalties for adding and dropping classes.

This course meets only the following CSU General Education (GE) requirements:

- Upper-Division Theme G: Global Issues
- U.S. Diversity Requirement

Grading System and Policies: The Functions of Grading

Underlying the rationale for grades is the theme of communication. Grades communicate one or more of the following functions:

1. Recognize that classroom instructors have the right and responsibility to provide careful evaluation of student performance and the responsibility for timely assignment of appropriate grades according to published Student Records and Registration procedures;
2. Recognize performance in a particular course;
3. Act as a basis of screening for other courses or programs (including graduate school);
4. Inform the student as to level of achievement in a specific course;
5. Stimulate students to learn; and
6. Inform prospective employers and others of student achievement.

Philosophy 336, American Indian Environmental Philosophies, will employ standard letter grading described below.

Definition of Letter Grading Symbols

A – Superior Work: a level of achievement so outstanding that it is normally attained by relatively few students.

B – Very Good Work: a high level of achievement clearly better than adequate competence in the subject matter/skill, but not as good as the unusual, superior achievement of students earning an A.

C – Adequate Work: a level of achievement indicating adequate competence in the subject matter/skill. This level or higher will usually be met by a majority of students in the class.

D – Minimally Acceptable Work: a level of achievement which meets the minimum requirements of the course.

F – Unacceptable Work: a level of achievement that fails to meet the minimum requirements of the course. Not passing.

Grades in this class will utilize the plus/minus symbols and grade points. For a full explanation of the University's grading system and policies see [Executive Memorandum 09-10](#).

Assignments and Grading Policy

The following three components are intended to align with our Course Content Learning Outcomes. The grades you earn on these components should be seen as reliable indicators of your success in achieving our Course Content Learning Outcomes.

Your performance in this class will be assessed through the following three equi-valuable components:

1. QUIZZES (1/3 of your grade)

You will be required to take 10 online multiple-choice quizzes. Each quiz will cover material from that day's reading/video as well as material covered in class from the previous class. You will have limited time to complete the quizzes once you start one and you must take the quiz by 3 p.m. No exceptions. The precise schedule of quizzes will be announced weekly either in class or via weekly announcements or emails on Vista. The quizzes will comprise one-third of your final course grade.

2. MIDTERM EXAM (1/3 of your grade)

An in-class "bluebook" (or "greenbook") essay midterm examination will be administered **on Monday, November 9**. Seven days prior to the date of the midterm exam, a set of midterm study questions will be posted in Vista. The study questions and instructions will be posted on our course Vista page. On the day of the exam, from that set of midterm exam questions, I will choose a subset of questions for you to answer. The midterm will cover all material presented in class up to that point. The midterm exam will comprise one-third of your final course grade.

3. TERM PAPER (1/3 of your grade)

The term paper should be 2400 words in length and should be turned in as a PDF file via Turnitin on our course Vista page. No hard-copy submissions will be accepted. The term paper is due on Monday, December 14, by 7:50 p.m. Late papers will be docked 1/3 grade per day. The term paper will comprise one-third of your final course grade.

Extra Credit Policy

There will be no opportunities for so-called "extra credit" in this course. Grades for the course are entirely determined by each student's comprehension of the material, as reflected by her performance on the quizzes, the midterm, and final term paper. Also, except in cases of instructor error, it is impossible to improve one's grade after the class is over and grades have been assigned.

Your Primary Responsibility: The Assigned Readings

Each student should understand that her main task in this course is to understand the assigned texts. Because the philosophy is difficult, the texts are often difficult. Therefore, you will have to put a lot of work into this task. The general idea is that students are to come to class prepared. Prepared for what? Prepared to understand what goes on, and to take part in the discussion. This will require, at a bare minimum, that the student has carefully read the assigned readings. The weekly quizzes are intended and designed to help guide you and keep you on task.

Here're some suggestions. While doing the reading, make notes (i) summarizing what you understand, and (ii) noting what you do not (yet) understand. Also, make a note of any words whose meanings you do not know and look them up in a dictionary. Write down the definitions. Philosophy is hard and a philosophical text rarely yields up its full meaning on the first attempt. It is your responsibility to make sure that you have not only looked over the assigned readings, but have made a significant and genuine effort to understand their meanings. You should always be able to answer basic, straightforward questions about the readings, thus, the quizzes.

Classroom Conduct: The Classroom As Free Speech Zone

It is important that students feel free to express or bring up any idea that they may wish to discuss. It does not matter if you are sure that an idea is true, if you think it might be true but is likely false, if you think it might offend somebody—what matters is whether you think it worth discussing. The point of philosophy is to try to get at the truth (or as near the truth as possible) and that will only happen if people are committed to free and open discussion. The philosophy classroom, then, ought to be a free speech zone—with one important exception. (I'll get to that in a minute.)

Note what the phrase “free speech zone” *does* mean and what it *does not* mean. It *does* mean that students should be free to, and should not be prevented from, introducing and discussing any idea they think is worthy of discussion—even ideas that might strike some people as offensive. It *does not* mean that everything that is said must be “respected” or treated (by the professor or by other students) as true or reasonable. And it does not mean that there are no standards, or that it does not matter what is said in the classroom since, after all, “anything goes.” Some contributions are better—more reasonable, more articulate, better-thought-out—than others, and **in the context of the classroom, students should always be trying to think and speak at the highest level possible.**

The one exception to the free speech rule

The one exception to the free speech rule is this: no one, student or professor, may address another individual, people, culture, race, gender, creed, or religion in an abusive manner.

Anti-Native American Bigotry

Please check all bigotry and racism at the door. Bigoted comments are inappropriate and will not be tolerated in class discussion or in your essays:

If you are prejudiced, before you open your mouth or take to your computer keyboard and release more hate and ugliness into the universe, I suggest you first read Ward Churchill's *Struggle for the Land* or his *A Little Matter Of Genocide* or Chapter 1 of Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States*. If this is problematic, I suggest you take a different class.

More on Classroom Conduct

The following are **not permitted** during class time:

- the use of laptops
- the use of a cell phone for any reason including text messaging
- reading newspapers, magazines, etc.
- doing homework for another class
- excessive talking or whispering or note-passing
- any other behavior(s) deemed inappropriate by me, your professor

This class meets for only 75 minutes twice a week. I trust that we can all behave like intelligent, respectful adults for that brief amount of time per week, no?

A Note About Emailing Me

All email will take place through [Vista](#). If you email me with a question and I do not respond within 24 hours, that most likely means that the answer to your inquiry can be found somewhere in this syllabus and that your email will be permanently ignored/deleted.

University Policies and Campus Resources

Academic integrity

Students are expected to be familiar with the University's Academic Integrity Policy. Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at California State University, Chico, and the University's Academic Integrity Policy requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs. For further information, see the [Policy on Academic Integrity](#).

Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours.

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with [Disability Support Services](#) to establish a record of their disability. Special accommodations for exams require ample notice to the testing office and must be submitted to the instructor well in advance of the exam date.

Student Computing

[Computer labs for student use](#) are available at located on the 1st floor of the Merriam Library Rm. 116, Tehama Hall Rm. 131, and the BMU Rm. 301.

Student Services

[Student Services](#) are designed to assist students in the development of their full academic potential and to motivate them to become self-directed learners. Students can find support for services such as skills assessment, individual or group tutorials, subject advising, learning assistance, summer academic preparation and basic skills development.

Student Learning Center

The mission of the [Student Learning Center](#) is to provide services that will assist CSU, Chico students to become independent learners. The SLC prepares and supports students in their college course work by offering a variety of programs and resources to meet student needs. The SLC facilitates the academic transition and retention of students from high schools and community colleges by providing study strategy information, content subject tutoring, and supplemental instruction. The University Writing Center has now been combined with the Student Learning Center.

Furlough Days

On days designated by the University as **State Budget Closure Days** (SBCD or “furlough” days) I cannot participate in any University related work on those days including teaching, meeting with students, or checking/answering email. SBCD that fall on class days are noted in this syllabus.

American Indian Environmental Philosophies
Philosophy 336
Course Schedule

Week 1

Introduction to Environmental Ethics

Monday, August 24

Introduction to the course

Wednesday, August 26

Jamieson, D., *Ethics and the Environment*, "Normative Ethics" (Chapter 4, pp. 76–101)

Week 2

The Value of Nature

Monday, August 31

Jamieson, D., *Ethics and the Environment*, "The Environment as an Ethical Question" (Chapter 1, pp. 1–25)

Wednesday, September 2

Jamieson, D., *Ethics and the Environment*, "The Value of Nature" (Chapter 6, pp. 145–180)

Week 3

Monday, September 7

Jamieson, D., *Ethics and the Environment*, "The Value of Nature" (Chapter 6, pp. 145–180) (continued)

Wednesday, September 9

Background on Indians as Environmentalists

Some Preliminary and Early Positive Accounts

Speck, F., "Aboriginal Conservators" (Vista)

MacLeod, W., "Conservation Among Primitive Hunting Peoples" (Vista)

Strong, D., "The Indian and the Environment" (Vista)

More Preliminary and Positive Accounts: Indians as Environmentalists

Callicott, J. and Nelson, M., *AIEE*, excerpt from "Introductory Essay" (pp. 1–13)

Highwater, J., *The Primal Mind* (video found on Vista)

Week 4

Monday, September 14

More Preliminary and Positive Accounts: Indians as Environmentalists (continued)

Callicott, J. and Nelson, M., *AIEE*, excerpt from "Introductory Essay" (pp. 1–13)

Highwater, J., *The Primal Mind* (video found on Vista)

Wednesday, September 16

Dr. Catie Cadge-Moore

"Native American Art and Environmental Crisis along the Lower Klamath River in Northwestern California"

Class meets in Student Services Center (SSC) 304

Attendance is mandatory.

Week 5

American Indian Environmental Practices **Challenged**

Monday, September 21

Preliminary Voices of Dissent: Martin, Guthrie, Hutchinson, and Regan

Martin, P., "Pleistocene Overkill" (Vista)

Guthrie, D.A., "Primitive Man's Relationship to Nature" (Vista)

Hutchinson, W.H., "The Remaking of the Amerind: A dissenting voice raised against the resurrection of the myth of the noble savage" (Vista)

Wednesday, September 23

Preliminary Voices of Dissent (continued): Regan

Regan, T., "Environmental Ethics and the Ambiguity of the Native Americans' Relationship with Nature" (Vista)

Week 6

Monday, September 28

A Preliminary Voice in Defense: Callicott

Callicott, J., "Traditional American Indian and Western European Attitudes Toward Nature: An Overview", (This is a brief excerpt (pp. 315–318) that criticizes the Regan paper.) (Vista)

Callicott, J., "American Indian Land Wisdom? Sorting Out the Issues" (Vista)

Wednesday, September 30

State Budget Closure/Furlough Day: No class

Shepard Krech, III: The Myth of the Ecological Indian

1. Introduction

The 1971 *Keep America Beautiful* "Crying Indian" campaign ad (Vista)

Krech, S., *EI*, Introduction (pp. 15 – 28)

Week 7

Monday, October 5

State Budget Closure/Furlough Day: No class

2. Native Impacts: The Overkill Hypothesis

Krech, S., *EI*, Chapter 1, "Pleistocene Extinctions" (pp. 29–43)

Wednesday, October 7

2. Native Impacts: The Overkill Hypothesis (continued)

Krech, S., *EI*, Chapter 5, "Buffalo" (pp. 123–149)

Week 8

Monday, October 12

3. The Pristine Myth

Krech, S., *EI*, Chapter 3, "Eden" (pp. 73–99)

Denevan, W., "The Pristine Myth: The Landscape of the Americas in 1492" (Vista)

Wednesday, October 14

4. Reflections

Krech, S., "Beyond *The Ecological Indian*" in *NAE*, Chapter 1 (pp. 3–31)

Week 9

Monday, October 19

Responses to The Myth of the Ecological Indian

Ranco, D., "The Ecological Indian and the Politics of Representation: Critiquing *The Ecological Indian* in the Age of Ecocide" in *NAE*, Chapter 2 (pp. 32–51)

Krech, S., "Afterward" in *NAE*, (pp. 343–354)

Wednesday, October 21

Kelly, R. and Prasciunas, M., "Did the Ancestors of the Native Americans Cause Animal Extinctions in Late-Pleistocene North America?: And Does It Matter If They Did?" in *NAE*, Chapter 4 (pp. 95–122)

Week 10

American Indian Environmental Philosophies: Affirmed

Monday, October 26

Nadasdy, P., "Transcending the Debate over the Ecologically Noble Indian: Indigenous Peoples and Environmentalism" (*Vista*) (excerpt, pp. 291–315; 321–331)

Wednesday, October 28

White, L., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis" (*Vista*)

Week 11

Monday, November 2

State Budget Closure/Furlough Day: No class

Midterm questions posted on *Vista* before midnight

Callicott, J., "Traditional American Indian and Western European Attitudes Toward Nature: An Overview" (*Vista*) (excerpt, pp. 293–311)

Wednesday, November 4

The Ojibwa Narratives

Callicott, J. and Nelson, M., *AIEE*, Chapter 2, (excerpt), "Narratives" (pp. 32–72)

Week 12

Monday, November 9

MIDTERM EXAM

Wednesday, November 11

Callicott, J. and Nelson, M., *AIEE*, Chapter 3, "An Interpretive Essay: An Ojibwa Worldview and Environmental Ethic" (pp. 100–135)

Week 13

Monday, November 16

Callicott, J. and Nelson, M., *AIEE*, Chapter 3, "An Interpretive Essay: An Ojibwa Worldview and Environmental Ethic" (pp. 100–135)

Wednesday, November 18

The Athabascan Koyukon People of Alaska: Make Prayers to the Raven

Documents: Nelson, R., "The Watchful World" (*Vista*)

Make Prayers to the Raven (video found on *Vista*)

Part 1: "The Passage of Gifts"

Week 14

Monday, November 23

Thanksgiving Break: No class

Wednesday, November 25

Thanksgiving Break: No class

Week 15

Monday, November 30

State Budget Closure/Furlough Day: No class

Make Prayers to the Raven (video found on Vista)

Part 2: "The Bible and Distant Time"

Part 3: "The Forest of Eyes"

Wednesday, December 2

State Budget Closure/Furlough Day: No class

Make Prayers to the Raven (video found on Vista)

Part 4: "Grandpa Joe's Country"

Part 5: "The Life in the Bear"

Week 16

Monday, December 7

Discussion, review, reflection

Wednesday, December 9

State Budget Closure/Furlough Day: No class

Work on final essay