North American Indians Paper Topics - Pilakowski

**Paper 1 Topic (all students write on this)**

**Topic**: Choose one of the 20 stereotypes from the first day of class and demonstrate why it is false, how it originated, or why some people might believe it to be true. You don’t need to cover all three of these possibilities!

**Paper 2 and 3 Topics (do any two different topics you wish for papers 2 and 3)**

1. Discuss two major ceremonies of Native people, comparing and contrasting them (It might be best to choose ceremonies from two different culture areas).

2. One person can have a dramatic impact on his or her own culture. Discuss one such Native person and the impact he or she had on Indian people in America and on the nation as a whole. This is not a biographic report.

3. Discuss one or two of the beliefs about the origins of people in the Americas, citing the merits and flaws of each. Where does current scholarship stand?

4. The kinship systems of many Native people we have discussed are significantly different from the modern Anglo-American tradition. How can one thing (in this case kinship systems) pervade so many other aspects of a culture? What other societal systems or aspects of personal worldview are changed in a society using either a solely matrilineal or patrilineal system? Advantages and disadvantages? Use examples from Native culture to support your answer. In effect, explain to me why the group you have chosen uses the kinship system that it does.

5. Native people have contributed much more to the twentieth century than what we see in movie theaters and on television. What sorts of contributions have Native people made to the United States and the world?

6. Native people are very much active in their own self-determination and cultural revitalization, yet still have many obstacles to overcome. How have Native people tried to revive their heritage in the past 100 years? Has it worked? What sorts of obstacles do they still face?

7. How has ethnocentrism influenced relationships between Indian groups and between Indians and the rest of the world (focusing on Europeans)?

8. Revitalization movements have been important in the histories of several Native groups. Discuss one or two of these movements, their histories, their functions, and their effects upon the people whose lives they touched.

9. Attend an event of significance to local Native people. Discuss the event with reference to revitalization of indigenous culture. Talk about the pros and cons of the event, what its function was, and your impression of the event. Be sure to include references that support your points, and make sure that some of the references are not interview-based.

10. Follow a Native story in the media and provide background on the legal, historic, or ethical background for its prominence in the media. Cite both news articles and more in-depth background data for your report.

11. As we will discuss in class, the introduction of the horse had tremendous effects on the Plains Indians – changing their cultures’ subsistence, technology, wealth, mobility, and even mythology. Discuss the introduction of something to us today that has had similar far-ranging impacts on western culture, using the frame of reference of the Plains Indians and the horse as a comparison. **DO NOT JUST REITERATE OUR DISCUSSION ABOUT THE HORSE!!!**