The Black Indian Experience in the United States

Fall 2013
W 3:00-6:00 PM, SAC 4.118

Professor Circe Sturm
Office: SAC 5.122 (232-1561), circe@austin.utexas.edu
Office Hours: Mondays 2:00-4:00 PM

Course Description

This course explores the entwined histories, cultures and identities of African American and Native American people in the United States. Long neglected in popular and scholarly accounts, the Black Indian experience sheds light on comparative histories and legacies of racial formation, as well as the conjoined role that these two groups played in the emergence of the United States as an independent nation. Students will be exposed to a range of voices, including Black Indian artists, scholars and activists, as well as other scholars working in a variety of disciplines, including anthropology, history, Native American Studies, African American Studies, American Studies and women’s studies. The readings will range from primary historical documents and ethnographies, to creative and autobiographical accounts. Course content will cover key issues and topics critical to Black Indian communities, such as US settler colonialism, American Indian slaveholding, cultural and linguistic exchange, kinship practices, forms of resistance, and ongoing struggles for tribal citizenship, with an in depth focus on several different tribes as they are represented in the required texts. Throughout the course, we will focus particular attention on how American race making practices have shaped Native American and African American views of one another and overshadowed the contexts in which they have interacted. Students are also required to consider how their own perceptions of race, culture, and indigeneity might limit their understanding of how American Indians, African Americans, and those of both heritages, answer the question, “Who am I,” for themselves.

Course Objectives

By the end of the semester, students in the class should be able to:

- Recognize the diversity of encounters and relationships that have existed between African/African Americans and Native Americans
- Utilize a range of conceptual frameworks for understanding Black-Indian interaction, including natural affinity and antipathy, land vs. labor, mixed-race and mixed-blood, the triangulation of Black, White and Red relations, racial formation, emancipation, freedom, civil rights and sovereignty.
- Understand the critical and intersecting roles that Blacks and Indians have played in American nation building.

Requirements

Because the course relies upon a lively in-class discussion, reading in advance is required. Students should arrive with questions and ideas, and be prepared to discuss readings in class. Students are also required to keep up with the key points presented in
each class. If you are having difficulty with any of the ideas presented in class, then it is
your responsibility to meet with other students or to attend my office hours to clarify
course materials. Please use these opportunities to your advantage!

**Grading and Assignments**

You will be evaluated on the basis of (1) a mid-term and final examination; (2) one
writing assignment (the Identity Study); (3) one in-class oral presentation based on your
own independent research, and (4) active participation in classroom exercises and
discussion. Assignments will be due at the beginning of class and there will be no make-
up exams, incompletes, or time extensions, except in the case of emergencies. The points
for the course are assigned as follows:

1) **Examinations**: Mid-term Exam (20 pts.) and Final Exam (20 pts.); format will be
objective and essay. You will need to bring a blue book to class on exam days. The final
exam will be cumulative.

2) **Research and Writing Assignments**: (a) Identity Study, a 6-8 page-paper due mid-
semester (25 pts.) and (b) Research Presentation, an oral presentation based on your
own independent research, due throughout the term (20 pts.). More details will be given
in class.

3) **Classroom Participation** (15 pts.): based on attendance, “keepers” exercise, evidence of
having read class materials (assessed via pop quizzes, if needed), active engagement in
discussion, staying up-to-date with writing and research assignments, and a willingness
to lead discussion with thoughtful questions, observations and critiques.

The scale for final grades is such that 90 to 100% = A; 80 to 89% = B; 70 to 79% =
C; 60 to 69% = D; 59% and below = F.

**Students** will be evaluated on the following basis:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term examination</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final examination</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identity Study</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-class research presentation/paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course participation and attendance</td>
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<td>Reading quizzes</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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**Readings**

**Books**

   Experience in North America*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

2. Lowery, Melinda Maynor. 2010. *Lumbee Indians in the Jim Crow South: Race,
   Identity and the Making of a Nation*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina
   Press.


6. Selected Articles (Online Course Reader).

Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating their other abilities should contact me personally as soon as possible so we can discuss the necessary accommodations to ensure your full participation in the class and to facilitate your educational opportunities. If not already registered, students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 512-471-6259, [http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssp/](http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssp/)

Cheating will not be tolerated! Anyone caught cheating will be charged under the academic misconduct code. Please see the University Honor Code for more information: [http://registrar.utexas.edu/catalogs/gi09-10/ch01/index.html](http://registrar.utexas.edu/catalogs/gi09-10/ch01/index.html).

No cell phones or electronic devices are to be used in class, including laptops. This is very distracting to other students. Please turn cell phones off upon arrival. If we catch you texting or web surfing, you will be asked to leave the class.

*** I reserve the right to change or amend the course syllabus as necessary, primarily due to any unforeseen circumstances that may arise during the course of the semester. However, any changes in the syllabus will not adversely affect your grade or your workload. In other words, there will be no changes to the grading system and no additional assignments.

Relax and have a great semester!
## Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic and Reading</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I. Framing Black/Native Histories</td>
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<tr>
<td>August</td>
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<td>W 28</td>
<td>Introduction to Course: Exploring the term “Black Indian” View Film <em>Black Indians</em> READ: Miles and Holland, Foreword, Preface and Introduction, pp. ix-24 (CW).</td>
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<tr>
<td>September</td>
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<td>II. Colonial Encounters</td>
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III. Slavery and Resistance in Native Communities

October

W 2  Race and Gender in Indigenous Slaveholding: East
Tiya Miles, The House on Diamond Hill, pp. xi-108 (Miles).

W 9  Removal and Rebuilding: West
READ: David Chang, “Where Will the Nation Be at Home? Race, Nationalisms, and Emigration Movements in the Creek Nation, pp. 80-99 (CW).
Celia Naylor-Ojurongbe, “Born and Raised Among These People,” pp. 161-191 (CL)
Towards Emancipation and Citizenship
Tiya Miles, The House on Diamond Hill, pp. 109-150 (Miles).

W 16  Midterm Examination
Tiya Miles, The House on Diamond Hill, pp. 151-199 (Miles).

IV. Continuing Struggles for Freedom, Equality and Self-Determination

W 23  Freedmen Experiences and Identities in Indian Territory
Mark Hirsch, Dan Agent, and Daniel Littlefield, three readings on contemporary Cherokee Freedmen controversy, pp. 117-131 (NDVZ).
DUE: Independent online research regarding Cherokee Freedmen controversy
Black Indians East: Racial Limits and Possibilities

V. Race, Recognition and Rights in Afro-Native Communities

November

W 6 Choosing Indian: Shared Histories and Blended Genealogies

W 13 View Short Films: Real Indian and Picking Tribes
READ: Melinda Maynor Lowery, Lumbee Indians, Chapters 4 and 5, pp. 121-264/end (Lumbee).

W 20 Black-Indigenous Creativity and Connection

VI. Contemporary Black Indian Identities, Communities, and Politics

W 27 Racist Legacies: When Indians Circle the Wagons
Melinda Micco, “Blood and Money:” The Case of Seminole Freedmen and Seminole Indians in Oklahoma, pp. 121-144, (CW).
***Thanksgiving Holidays Nov 28th-30th***

December W 4  Insistence, Naming and Knowing: Indigenous Epistemologies
Tamara Buffalo, “Knowing All of My Names,” pp. 218-225 (CW).

F 13  Final Examination, 7:00-10:00 PM, SAC 4.118

Reading Key:  CL = Confounding the Colorline  
CW = Crossing Waters, Crossing Worlds  
NDVZ = IndiVisible  
Miles = House on Diamond Hill  
Lumbee = Lumbee Indians in the Jim Crow South  
R = Online Course Reader