

Department: Anthropology

Course No: 3504 [218]

Credits: 3

Title: New World Prehistory

Contact: Kevin McBride

Content Area: CA4 Diverist and Multiculturalism

Diversity: CA4 International

Catalog Copy: 3504. New World Prehistory Either semester. Three credits. McBride
The entry of early hunters into the New World, the origins of agriculture and sedentary life, and the rise of complex societies in North America, Mesoamerica and South America

Course Information: a. Course description: New World Prehistory will examine the history of Native Americans in North and South America from the Prehistoric Period (ca. 20,000 years ago) through the Early Historic Period (ca. 1600 A.D.). Course content will be drawn from archaeology and primary (European) sources. The first half of the course will outline the prehistory and early history of South America. The second half of the course will outline the prehistory and early history of North America.

b. Course Format: Lectures expand on issues addressed in assigned weekly readings chosen to provide relevant historical and cultural context to the weekly topic. Assigned readings complement lectures. Course Requirements: Students will take three exams which will be based on readings lectures and discussions. Each exam will be worth 1/3 of the final grade,

c. Major Themes: Peopling of the Americas, History of Hunters and Gatherers and Horticulturalists, Rise of Complex Societies, European Contact, Methods of Reconstructing Native Histories.

Meets Goals of Gen Ed: 1. Acquire intellectual breadth and versatility: Students will be introduced to the methods and techniques used to reconstruct the histories of the indigenous peoples of the western hemisphere. Readings, lectures, films, and discussions will elicit reactions and opinions from students which they will have to articulate orally and in written exams. This course introduces students to current issues in anthropological and archaeological theory and historiography. Students will integrate and synthesize data from a variety of sources (archaeology, history, oral history, linguistics) and learn the value of interdisciplinary approaches for reconstructing the histories of native peoples.

2. Acquire moral sensitivity: This course will help students empathize with peoples from cultures other than their own and reflect on Native American cultural stereotypes (e.g. primitive, culturally homogeneous). Students will acquire an understanding of the impacts on native societies following the arrival of Europeans. Readings, lectures, films and discussions will present current and historical issues of importance to native peoples in the Americas including genocide, slavery, ethnicity and identity.

3. Acquire consciousness of the diversity of human culture and experience: Through the readings, lectures and films students will be introduced to the rich history and diversity of Native American cultures in North and South America as expressed through oral history/tradition, folklore and the archaeological, historical and material records.

CA4 Criteria: 1. Emphasize that there are varieties of human experiences thoughts, values, and/or modes of creativity: The course will examine the histories, world view and perspectives of Native Americans through an examination of the archaeological and historical records. Students will be introduced to Native perspectives of themselves and of “others” (both natives and Europeans) as expressed through art, mythology and folklore. Students will be introduced to the richness, complexity and diversity of past cultures in North and South America from the earliest inhabitants of the Americas (ca. 20,000 B.P.) to the rise of complex societies. The diversity of belief systems and cultural practices in the Americas will be discussed using specific case studies based on socio/cultural complexity, adaptation and mortuary ritual (e.g. hunter-gatherers/horticulturalists and bands/tribes/chiefdoms). The differing world views and belief systems of indigenous peoples in the Americas will be discussed as expressed through art, mortuary ritual and religious practices, and contrasted with Euro-American perspectives. Students will understand the importance of becoming aware of their own cultural biases while attempting to understand native societies of the past and today.