**Contemporary American Indian Law and Politics LPS 137 (9256)**

**Tuesdays/Thursdays 12:30 – 1:45 Meredith 235**

**Professor Renee Ann Cramer Office: Medbury 201**

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**Drop In Hours: Tuesdays/Thursdays 11:00 – 12:00 and 2:00 – 3:00**

This course examines contemporary issues in American Indian law and politics, among them: casino ownership, environmental stewardship, electoral politics, cultural protection and revitalization, tribal courts, and territorial sovereignty. In all of these cases, there are debates about the proper role for tribal people, tribal governments, federal and state entities, and the non-Indian public. In this course, we will focus on several arenas: tribal cultural spaces, tribal public representations, courtrooms and Congress, academia, and the media. We will attempt to understand the competing worldviews of those engaged in these dialogues about tribal sovereignty and survival, and the very real economic and political interests at stake in these debates. In some of these cases, the debate hasn’t moved forward, and the issues lack acceptable resolution; in other cases, productive dialogue has created truly innovative solutions to seemingly intractable problems of poverty, powerlessness, and racism.

# Responsibilities of the Instructor

As a professor, I bring knowledge and experience to the classroom, as well as a love and passion for the topic. I view my responsibilities to you, as a class, as four-fold. I will be accessible to students, and I hope you will come by during my office hours. I also encourage all students with documented disabilities to see me as soon as possible so that I can make reasonable accommodations for your differing abilities.

I have assigned readings that I find lively and informative, and I will bring outside materials to the class that will help focus the material and our study of it, as well as offer broader perspectives on the topics at hand. I will give the class opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of these materials and make suggestions for change for future courses. I will also provide opportunities for evaluating my performance as a professor, and solicit suggestions for improvement. Third, I will provide detailed and clear instructions for the completion of the homework assignments and examinations, as well as detailed information on my grading standards. I will gladly discuss students’ exams and grades with them. Finally, I will come to class prepared, awake, and enthusiastic; I will respect the thoughtful contributions of all class-members, and encourage an atmosphere of collegial sharing and conversation.

# Responsibilities of the Students

Students, similarly, have four areas of responsibility. Please come to class prepared (having engaged our course materials far enough in advance to think about them), and ready to participate by answering and asking questions, offering opinions, and bringing in relevant outside materials for class discussion. Please act respectfully towards each other and me, and operate in this classroom with compassion and curiosity.

Second, you will complete each homework assignment on time, and turn in typed, legible pages. An assignment is considered late at the end of the class period for which it was due. I do not accept electronic submissions of work. For every day an assignment is late (weekends count), it will lose 10 points. Third, and related, you absolutely must carefully attribute all quotations, paraphrases, or summarization of others’ scholarship -- if you are unclear about what constitutes plagiarism, please see me, and refer to the statements on plagiarism and cheating located in the Drake University course catalog. Please do your own work. I expect honesty and diligence in this regard: students who cheat or plagiarize will fail the assignment (at my discretion they will earn between 0 and 65 points on it); at my discretion, they may simply fail the course, and be referred for disciplinary action to the Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences.

Finally, you are expected to use outstanding etiquette in class: be on time, and refrain from leaving early. I understand that many of you have tight schedules and are eating on the run – feel free to bring food and drink to class; however, I will not tolerate phones, or the use of computers for surfing the web. If electronic communication devices distract me, or others in class, I will simply ask you to leave. I’m absolutely serious about this.

**Policy on Absences and Withdrawals**

This is a seminar course - I expect your full, prepared, and enthusiastic participation. Students who must miss a class period are responsible for getting notes. It is not my responsibility to provide notes for missed classes, or review missed material. Students who have long-term, unanticipated medical or familial disruptions are responsible for making arrangements with me. Additionally, those students who have a paper due or exam scheduled during their absence related to a religious observance, an athletic or co-curricular event must make arrangements with me, prior to the event.

The University policy on Withdrawals applies. Please refer to the current Drake University class schedule/catalog for detailed information and deadlines regarding drop/add/withdrawal policies.

**Grading**

Your grade in this course will be based on two papers (3 – 8ish pages; 100 points each); four quizzes on required materials (25 points each); an in-class final that asks you to synthesize our materials (100 points); and your contributions to our class (100 points).

The paper assignments will be on BlackBoard at least two weeks prior to their due dates (and likely sooner) – please read them carefully, and ask questions about what is not clear. Papers must be typed, and turned in via paper (I do not accept electronic submissions); they must be on time (I assess 10 points off per date late, weekends included, starting at the close of the class period the paper is expected).

The quiz dates are noted on the syllabus. There are no make-up dates for these quizzes but I will permit an alternate assignment if you miss the quiz, at my discretion, in order that you can earn up to 25 points.

This is a class will operate as a seminar: you will learn from the readings, certainly, and from me – but also from each other. I expect everyone to be prepared when they come to class, and to share their preparation with each other in respectful dialogue. You will be able to earn up to 100 “contribution points” in this class. Some of these points will be based on your in-class work; you earn them primarily by being actively engaged in the material we cover this semester. Active and productive engagement will earn participation points; if you are consistently and obviously unprepared to participate in class discussion, your participation score will suffer. I encourage you to bring relevant and useful information to class; when you do, I will grant you participation credit. As well, some of the things that would usually be “extra credit” will, in this class, count as “participation” in the course. These include your attendance at relevant lectures, exhibits, rallies, and other events, as well as screening films, voting, and other activities. Opportunities for earning contribution credit in this way will be posted frequently on Black Board.

The in-class final will take place on Wednesday, December 11th from 2:00 – 3:50, and will be comprised of an open book and open note essay for which you are expected to use the resources we’ve encountered this semester.

**Summary of Assignments, Points, and Due Dates**

Quiz 1 25 pts September 3 Quiz 2 25 pts October 1

Paper 1 100 pts poss October 10

Quiz 3 25 pts October 29

Quiz 4 25 pts November 14

Paper 2 100 pts poss November 26

Final 100 pts poss December 11

Contribution 100 pts poss On-going

**Plus/Minus Grading**

I will assign grades on a plus/minus scale. Your final grade will be determined by the absolute number of points earned, which corresponds to a grade scale as laid out here:

A+ 100% 496 - 500 points 4.0 towards GPA + a ☺

A 94 – 99% 470 – 495 points 4.0 towards GPA

A- 90 – 93% 450 – 469 points 3.7 towards GPA

B+ 87 – 89% 435 – 449 points 3.3 towards GPA

B 84 – 86% 420 – 434 points 3.0 towards GPA

B- 80 – 83% 400 – 419 points 2.7 towards GPA

C+ 77 – 79% 385 – 399 points 2.3 towards GPA

C 74 – 76% 370 – 384 points 2.0 towards GPA

C- 70 – 73% 350 – 369 points 1.7 towards GPA

D 60 – 69% 300 – 349 points 1.0 towards GPA

F less than 59% less than 299 points no credit towards GPA

**Required Readings**

Deer, Sarah. 2015. *The Beginning and End of Rape: Confronting Sexual Violence in Native America*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Dunbar-Ortiz, Roxanne. 2015. *An Indigenous Peoples’ History of the United States.* Boston: Beacon Press.

Estes, Nick. 2019. *Our History is the Future: Standing Rock versus the Dakota Access Pipeline, and the Long Tradition of Indigenous Resistance.* New York City: Verso Books.

Treuer, David. 2019. *The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee: Native America from 1980 to the Present.* New York City: Riverhead Books.

Voyles, Traci Brynne. 2015. *Wastelanding: Legacies of Uranium Mining in Navajo Country*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

One of the two optional readings:   
Erdrich, Louise. 2012. *The Round House*. New York City: HarperCollins Publishers.

Orange, Tommy. 2019. *There, There.* New York City: Alfred A. Knopft.  
  
Additional materials, as assigned below, and found on BlackBoard

**Will the Course Materials and Conversation Trigger any Strong Emotional Responses?**

Probably.

If you have survived sexual assault, intimate partner violence, or other forms of sexualized abuse or harassment, you may experience strong emotions while reading and discussing some of these texts. One of them, Round House is optional; the other, The End of Rape, is not. If you care for or love anyone who has had any of these experiences, you may experience strong emotions while reading and discussing many of these texts. It is important for you to know that I am a mandatory reporter; I am available for conversation – but I must report any disclosures of sexual assault or abuse that occurred at Drake, that you bring to me.

Drake’s office for Sexual Violence and Healthy Relationship Promotion, directed by Lynne Cornelius, is one such resource for students, and is particularly useful for students who have been subjected to interpersonal [gender] violence including sexual assault/harassment, dating/domestic violence, gender-based discrimination, and stalking. Other services her office provides include crisis intervention (safety plan, crisis counseling, rights information), and assistance in academic and housing accommodations as needed. To contact Lynne, call [515-271-4141](tel:515-271-4141) or email [lynne.cornelius@drake.edu](mailto:lynne.cornelius@drake.edu) The Violence Intervention Partner (V.I.P.) program through this office provides peer-based 24/7 confidential advocacy services. To access a V.I.P. advocate call or text [515-512-2972](tel:515-512-2972). For more information about these services visit [www.drake.edu/sexual-assault/](http://www.drake.edu/sexual-assault/)

If your ancestors were held in conditions of slavery, or were part of a population that had genocide inflicted on it, you may experience strong emotions while reading and discussing many of these texts. If you have been subject to racialized harassment, stereotyping, or violence, you may experience strong emotions while reading and discussing these texts.

As well, if you have begun to confront the privilege associated with your racial, gendered, and class identities, you may also experience strong emotions while engaging these materials.

In short – if you are a human living on this earth in the contemporary period, our readings and conversations and films might trigger feelings of panic, hopelessness, anger, guilt, and anxiety. They might also trigger feelings of efficacy, joy, enthusiasm, and commitment. Your emotional response to readings and conversations impacts your learning, and that being aware of your emotional response is an important part of personal growth. If a reading resurfaces trauma that you feel ill-equipped to deal with, I am absolutely ready to help you find the support you need.

**Course Outline**

**Tuesday, August 27 First Day of Drake Classes**

**Thursday, August 29**

Treuer, pages 1 – 19

Wilkins and Stark, pages 1 – 32, on BlackBoard

**Tuesday, September 3**

Dunbar-Ortiz, pages 1 – 77

First Quiz Today

**Thursday, September 5**

Treuer, pages 19 – 98

**Tuesday, September 10**

Pommersheim, pages 1 – 124

Special Event Tonight: **Tuesday, September 10th at 7:00 pm, Cowles Library**

**Iowa Native Nations’ Health**

**Dr. Joe D. Coulter, University of Iowa**

Dr. Coulter is an enrolled member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation of Oklahoma and currently active in teaching, research/scholarship, and community service in American Indian/Alaskan Native health.  He has had multiple leadership roles at the state, local, and national level and was appointed to the Iowa Commission on Native American Affairs.

**Thursday, September 12**

Dunbar-Ortiz, pages 78 – 132

**Special Event: Monday, September 16th from 5:30-8:00**

**Ethnobotany & Western Medicine:**

**Linda Black Elk, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe**

**5:30-6:30 pm Lip balm workshop**

**6:30-8:00 pm Presentation**

Linda Black Elk is an Ethnobotanist who currently works in Minnesota for the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe.  She studies Native American medicinal and edible plants as well as prairie restoration and ecology.  Additionally, Linda Black Elk attended the recent protests at Standing Rock against the proposed Dakota Access Pipeline. She also had a medical camp at the protest site where she worked with Western-trained physicians to combine Native healing ways and Western medicine.  Prior to her presentation, Linda Black Elk will host a hands-on workshop in which she makes lip balms with students and the Des Moines community.

**Tuesday, September 17**

Treuer, pages 99 – 176

Pommersheim, pages 125 - 154

**Thursday, September 19**

Dunbar-Ortiz, pages 133 – 196

**Tuesday, September 24 No Class**

**Thursday, September 26**

Treuer, pages 177 – 232

Pommersheim, pages 155 – 210

**Tuesday, October 1**

Treuer, pages 233 – 280

Wilkins and Stark, pages 169 – 197 on BlackBoard

Second Quiz Today

**Thursday, October 3**

Voyles, pages 1-54

**Tuesday, October 8**

Voyles, pages 55 – 184

**Thursday, October 10**

Voyles, pages 185 – 218

First Paper Due Today

**Tuesday, October 15 Fall Break, Drake**

**Thursday, October 17**

Treuer, pages 281 – 361

**Tuesday, October 22**

Dunbar-Ortiz, pages 197 – 236

**Thursday, October 24**

Pommersheim, pages 211 – 258

**Tuesday, October 29**

Truer, pages 361 – 406

Third Quiz Today

**Thursday, October 31**

Deer, pages ix – 30

**Tuesday, November 5**

Deer, pages 31 – 91

Information on Tribal Courts and Sexual Assault, on BlackBoard

**Thursday, November 7**

Deer, pages 92 - 170

**Tuesday, November 12**

Estes, pages 1 – 66

**Thursday, November 14**

Estes, pages 67 – 132

Fourth Quiz Today

**Tuesday, November 19**

Estes, pages 133 – 200

**Thursday, November 21**

Estes, pages 201 – 258

**Tuesday, November 26**

Treuer, pages 407 – 456

Second Paper Due Today

**Thursday, November 28 Thanksgiving Day**

**Tuesday, December 3**

Book Group: *The Round House*

**Thursday, December 5**

Book Group: *There, There*

**Wednesday, December 11**

**2:00 – 3:50 Open Notes, Open Book Final**