

Course Descriptions

American Indian Studies--Cultural Studies

AIS 1124 Pawnee Language I

This course will introduce post-secondary students to the basic structures, sounds, and syntax of the Pawnee language. Areas of emphasis in this class include conversational practice, vocabulary-building, and the history and culture of the Pawnee Nation.

AIS 1224 Pawnee Language II

Students will continue to build upon the skills they acquired in the introductory language class and delve into more complex conversational practice and vocabulary building. As such, this intermediate course is designed for the student who wants to gain the skills necessary to begin using complete sentences to converse in Pawnee.

AIS 1324 Pawnee Language III

Students in this class will be expected to have knowledge of the Pawnee language (both dialects) and will continue to pursue advanced studies of the language. To that end, students will begin to differentiate the subtleties between the Skidi and South Band dialects. They will also be able to demonstrate various degrees of fluency. As part of the class, students will conduct an outreach program that seeks to teach elementary students beginning Pawnee.

AIS 1423 American Indian Languages

This course offers students a survey of North American Indian Languages. The overview of native languages of North America will include topics such as history, distribution, diversity, government policy, language endangerment, elaboration of cultural domains, language and world view, speech styles, language structure (phonology, morphology, grammatical categories), performance (narrative, song), and writing systems.

AIS 2123 American Indian Music Studies

This course utilizes historical and contemporary sources to survey the music and music-related traditions of Native North America. In addition, students will examine traditional music and context from the Northwest Coast, Arctic, Southwest, Great Basin, Plains, Plateau, California, and Eastern Woodlands music-style areas, as well as contemporary neo-traditional and popular genres of American Indian music.

AIS 1523 Indian Art Studies I

This course introduces students to major American Indian art traditions of North America and to representative works ranging from traditional/tribal art to contemporary Indian art, thus enhancing aesthetic appreciation and deepening understanding. Periods covered will include pre-contact and early-contact-era traditions and the evolution of Indian art forms in contemporary times.

AIS 2223 Indian Art Studies II

This course offers a study of Native American Indian art forms which embrace history, myth, and tribal cultures as found in pottery, textiles, wood, and stone carving, basket making, jewelry, and other visually representative genres. Major consideration will be given to stylistic and aesthetic organization of the study of North American Indian Art. The course places an emphasis on contextualizing art as cultural manifestation. Cultures considered will range from the Plains to the Mississippi basin, to the eastern woodlands, the northwest, and southwest. Within the scope of this broad survey, the course emphasizes Plains Indian art and the development of the Native American Fine Arts Movement.

AIS 2323 Indians in Film, TV & Popular Culture

Students will examine depictions of American Indians in film, tv, and popular culture, which covers a span of some five centuries—beginning with Columbus' notebooks. The thrust of the course will be spent considering images of Indians as represented in Hollywood films and on television. More often than not, most images of Indians rely on stereotypes as opposed to well-developed characterizations. Students will scrutinize both historical and popular depictions and will delve into various reasons why such depictions were established and perpetuated. Once completed, students should have a broad knowledge of racial (Indian) stereotypes as maintained in Hollywood and promulgated by Popular Culture, the development and use of various archetypes (and how those types originated), as well as the kinds of imagery employed at this particular moment.

AIS 2423 American Indian Literature & Oral Tradition

This course offers a study of the development of two different types of communication within certain

Indian cultures so as to provide an overview of the significance of written and verbal forms in Indian Country as it has been used over time. The role of storytelling in Indian communities cannot be overstated as it serves as a teaching device that allows members to gain an understanding of their historical context. Through written and oral stories, identities of Indian nations, different clans, families, and individuals are reinforced. By studying various genres of literature and oral stories, students will become familiar with structural patterns—in both written and verbal stories—major authors and orators, as well as issues relating to identity within certain Indian communities. As a result, students will gain a knowledge of the various forms of traditional oral literature, including narratives, oratory, and songs.

AIS 2443 American Indian Studies

This course offers a survey of American Indian people, cultures, and issues. Focus will be placed on both historical and modern experiences through readings from Native American autobiographies, contemporary narratives and literature, and reports of important topical issues such as land rights, Indian gaming, treaty law, etc.

AIS 2523 Creative Writing & Journalism in Indian Country

Since the role of storytelling in Indian Country is a central component to community identity, written forms of communication are also significant— whether through creative writing or reporting. Students in this class will be expected to write poems, short stories, memoir (autobiographical writing), as well as feature stories and reports. While working on these various projects, students will also read some of the works of major Indian writers so as to familiarize themselves with the movements of the last century. In order to achieve the course's goals, students will become oriented with the literary landscape in Indian Country and all its various nuances and be encouraged to submit their works to both Indian-related literary journals and newspapers.

AIS 2623 Pawnee Cultural Studies & History (including Astronomy)

This course will examine both aspects of the Pawnee culture and the Nation's major historical moments. Concerning specific cultural aspects, students will become familiar with certain matters of traditional religion, family life, social structures, gender roles, and storytelling (teaching) dynamics. Students also will learn about traditional Pawnee (Skidi) astronomy, especially the ways in which they charted the stars and how daily planning and certain religious ceremonies were dictated by the appearance of various star patterns. By studying as much, students will learn about specific Pawnee traditions from presentations by tribal elders, by conducting research, and by visiting museums. Students will be encouraged to work with multimedia so that much of the information gathered in the class can be documented and preserved.