

ANS/ED 461 – F01: Native Ways of Knowing
CCS F608 - F01: Indigenous Knowledge Systems

Summer Session 2008
July 7 – August 8, 2008
12 – 1:50 p.m., MTWRF, U-Park 104

Course Prospectus
by
Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley, PhD, Instructor

Course Description

The course will focus on how culture and worldview shape who we are and influence the way we come to know the world around us, with a particular emphasis on Alaska Native knowledge systems and ways of knowing.

Course Purposes

Students enrolling in this course can expect the following;

1. to gain an understanding and appreciation of how culture and worldview shape who we are and influence the way we come to know the world around us.
2. to explore other peoples' ways of knowing about the world and environment around them.
3. to critically think about how the Western worldview(s) interacts with the Native worldview(s).
4. to understand that Native peoples' rituals and ceremonies are vehicles of cultural transmission and self-discipline.
5. to understand how the Native person interacts with the surrounding environment and integrates actions in ways that demonstrate respect for the human, spiritual and natural realms.
6. to learn about 'the tradition-bearers' responsibilities with regard to traditional values, governance and leadership.
7. to recognize the Native person as an inquisitive explorer of seen and unseen phenomena, as a perspicacious inventor of technological tools and techniques, and as a careful creator of dances, songs, games, stories, arts and crafts.
8. to recognize that Native people adapt and change in response to the changing environment and world around them as a means of survival.
9. to be faithful to our own religion or spirituality, and to be citizens of the world but tolerate the fact that others are different.
10. to recognize that it is not only the indigenous people who confuse or lose identity, that others do also.

Course Credit

Completion of the course will lead to three semester hours of undergraduate or graduate credit at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. [The ANS/ED 461 course has been approved by the state of Alaska Department of Education and Early Development to fulfill the State of Alaska certification requirement for "Multicultural/Cross Cultural Communication."]

Course Design

The primary focus of the course is centered in Alaska, so much of the discussion will use examples drawn from Alaska Native situations, though the issues addressed are relevant and readily generalizable to other cultural contexts as well. The course consists of readings, videotapes, class discussions and a half-day field trip to Gaalee'ya Spirit Camp (tentative), with written assignments for each week.

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Course Materials

The following book is required for this course:

Cruikshank, Julie - *Do Glaciers Listen?*

The class will be formed into four groups, each of which will be responsible for selecting and critiquing a chapter from the *Do Glaciers Listen?*. And, in addition, each group will prepare a presentation for the third week of the course in which you may choose A CHAPTER or portion of a chapter, and readings to incorporate into singing-dancing-drumming, perform a skit, invite guests to speak, or use any other means to convey the main ideas within the chapter and readings. Use your imagination. Part of grade B.

A selection of articles will also be required for the course, associated with each of the issues listed in the outline that follows.

Course Outline

The course is organized around the following topics/readings (read one article per day in the order listed and be prepared to participate in class discussion of the material, if it comes up):

Oquilluk, "People of Kauwerak" (through chapter four)

Kawagley, "Alaska Native Holotropic Mind and Science"

Griffin, "The Kwig Dig"

Kawagley, "Why Should Yupiaq Literacy Slow Student Progress"

Clayton, "A productive, but taxed, Earth"

Teicher, "A school built on Navajo values"

Kizzia, "Identity search"

Price, "Of Science & Spirit"

Johnson, "Dene Traditional Knowledge"

Klein, "Wilderness: A Western Concept Alien to Arctic Cultures"

Nelson, "Understanding Eskimo Science"

"Chapter VIII. Epilogue: Synchronicities and Incremental Advance"

Kay, "Polar Warning"

Whitty, "The Fate of the Ocean"

Miller, "The Midas Touch"

Merculieff, "Western Society's Linear Systems and Aboriginal Cultures"

Stark, "Shepherd man's floating structures remove excess nutrients"

Shledrake, "Morphic Fields"

Walle, "The Full Implications of Native Ways of Knowing: A Broadened Perspective of Oscar Kawagley"

CCS 608 students - additional readings required:

ATLANTIC MONTHLY, March 2002 – 1491 by Charles C. Mann

Native Communities and Climate Change: Protecting tribal resources a part of national climate change

NOAA guide to climate change

"On the Cosmic Order of Modern Physics and the Conceptual world of the American Indian" by Phillip H. Duran, WORLD FUTURES 63:1-27, 2007, ISSN 0260-4027 print/1556-1844 online

Project Green Lite by Dave Gilson

The Bluefin in Peril by Richard Ellis

Course Expectations and Grading

Write a two and a half page response paper each week in which you address your understanding as it relates to one of the readings included in the course packet. Each of the papers are to be submitted at the last class session each week. Submission of the five two and half-page papers, along with regular participation in class discussion, share our feelings and findings each week, will give you a final grade of C.

For a grade **B**, you will have to select a quiet place outdoors — a place where there will be a minimum of interruption whereby you can reflect on the days' activities and sharpen your ability to absorb deeply of Nature. Drawing on the ideas outlined in the text and readings, focus on honing your consciousness or awareness skills to a higher degree. Make it a point to visit your quiet place at least daily or as often as you can. It takes at least 20 minutes to quiet the mind, so plan to be there a bit longer. "Attempt to heighten your senses - touching, tasting, hearing, smelling, seeing and feeling; learn to focus - concentrating on gathering many clear images; framing - enclosing scenes which you want to examine, grouping - looking for arrangements in forms and lines; perceiving wholes or expanding- observing the overall aspects of a scene; surveying - examining things from varying viewpoints; observing - letting the natural world engulf you; orchestrating - using all of your senses to fuse the facets of awareness; scrutinizing - looking for the small things; empathizing – role-playing natural qualities; silencing - working at turning off that voice in the back of your head; waiting - becoming an empty vessel waiting to be filled." Reflect upon and maintain a journal of your experiences. During the fifth week of class, look through your journal and prepare a three to five page summary and submit both the journal and summary to me by August 6. What were some positive things that you became aware of? How can you use your experiences in your work?

"He (the American Indian) believes profoundly in science – the sign of a perfect equilibrium. Science is the absolute poise or balance of body, mind and spirit. The man who preserves his selfhood ever calm and unshaken by the storms of existence – not a leaf, as it were, astir on the tree; not a ripple upon the surface of shining pool – his, in the mind of the unlettered sage, is the ideal attitude and conduct of life. If you ask him: "What is silence?" he will answer, "It is the Great Mystery!" "The holy silence is His voice." OHIYESA

The other is the choosing a chapter and readings and putting into a play, skit, song, mind-map, and so forth, followed by questions and answers.

GRADE A -- ANS/ED F461 students:

From the information learned in your readings, discussions, dialogues, talking circles, you should have begun to have an understanding of the Native socializing process. Our Alaska Native people are on the losing end as far as Native languages and cultures are concerned. Based on two or three alarming on-going events, rapidity of life events, rapid changes, and climate change, which seem to debilitate the efforts of Native people to revitalize their Native languages and cultures, write your thoughts how these act as barriers to creating a unique and special people. News media, TV, rap, designs, fast travel, fast foods, fast passage of time, spiritual bankruptcy, and many more possible deviations extant in our lives make this difficult. Five to seven pages. Due at the end of the class.

OR

You can write your understanding(s) and perception(s) of the above quote from OHIYESA 5 – 7 pages due at end of course.

Check the following for more information:

www.ankn.uaf.edu

www.nativescience.org

www.alaskool.org

www.nativeknowledge.org

GRADE A -- CCS 608 students: (in addition to the above)

From the information learned in your readings, discussions, dialogues, talking circles, you should have begun to have an understanding of the Native socializing process. I have mentioned in class that many of our Native youngsters of today will have difficult times formulating new Native identities and new cultural knowledge. Why is that Native youngsters will find it complicated or confusing to do this? There will be some who do not attain the goal but will have some modicum of understanding, but others

who will not even come close. Perhaps, dwell on two issues that may make this difficult or impossible. This should be 8 – 10 pages long. Due at the end of the session.

OR

There is a need for environmental justice! Up to the late 1970s and 1980s, environmental mainstream was the work of a few people, such as fighting against the erection of a refinery, or a landfill near poor communities. Why was this not fair? Who were the people who ran these? Why were they funded? Such as, Greenpeace and their save the whales project? Were these projects downsizing mega-projects? Why or why not? How is the new environmental fairness to all, different from the above? How is the movement of today different? What are they responding to? Were visits to poor neighborhoods, and locations of people of color necessary (global warming knows no color)? Will this lead to more healthful living and more healthy jobs? Does this make the environmental movement proactive? Is diversity necessary? Why or why not? Eight – 10 pages long. Due at end of course.

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We will have a talking circle each Friday including the last day. Each person may talk about anything that has sparked her/his interest from the readings, discussions, quiet time, observation of Native people in activities, or anything of importance to you. A feather or some natural object will be passed around. The person who has the object has the floor and is not to be interrupted nor asked questions. If a person is uneasy, the feather may be passed on to the next person with or without comment. What is said by the participants, is not to leave the room or outdoor setting (weather permitting).

We will visit Howard Luke's Gaalee'ya Spirit Camp on Friday, July 25, with transportation to Perkins Landing off Rosie Creek Road around 11:30 am. Plan to spend about six hours at the camp. This means that we will be heading back to the landing around 6:00 pm. Make sure you carry some refreshments for the trip. As this will involve several hours, we may choose to have a three day weekend.
