

Inconvenient Indians and the “American Problem”: American Indian History Since 1815
AIS/HSTAA 210

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Office Hours: Tuesdays (1:30-3:00), Wednesdays (2:30-3:30), & by appointment

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Overview

With the US victory at the end of the War of 1812, American Indian nations east of the Mississippi River faced an “American problem,” i.e., an expansive nation state and people intent on acquiring indigenous lands, waters, and resources. Unlike previous eras, Native nations could no longer manipulate alliances with other European powers and competing colonies to their advantage. Instead, they faced the settler colonial expansion of the new United States alone. More troubling, non-Native officials and citizens largely saw no place for indigenous peoples, much less Native nations, in the body politic or even within the territorial boundaries of the United States. Indians had become inconvenient and in the way of US expansion, of the development of resources and industry, and of the general progress of American civilization. Native peoples west of the Mississippi faced different situations. Some lived in lands claimed by the Spanish empire, while others engaged successfully in various forms of the land-based and maritime fur trades in the intermountain and far west. Large swaths of the Great Plains were the homelands of other expansive indigenous powers. It took another few generations until these indigenous peoples became engulfed by the United States and hence inconvenient.

Yet indigenous peoples—these inconvenient Indians—did not sit idly by, waiting for the United States to eliminate them bodily or culturally. Instead, they fought back in a variety of ways legally, diplomatically, and violently, and sought a range of cultural and economic opportunities that allowed them to survive and even thrive, at times. Indeed, the measure of self-determination that many American Indian nations have today is due to the efforts of savvy indigenous leaders and activists. As illustrated by ongoing Native activism, indigenous peoples continue to confront an aggressive nation state, international corporations, and populace that still see Indians as inconvenient.

This course examines the histories of indigenous peoples of North America from the nineteenth century to today. Students will explore a range of topics, including settler colonialism, indigenous power, American Indian–US relations, and Native governance and activism.

In this course, students will understand:

- The diversity of the American Indian experience throughout the history of the United States.
- The ways American Indian individuals, communities, and nations used commerce, diplomacy, and/or violence to confront the expanding settler colonial power of the United States and its lethal results.
- How to interrogate and complicate the notion of victimization of American Indians.

- The role of indigenous historical agency in enabling American Indian communities not only to survive, but also to thrive.
- The range of historical and contemporary challenges American Indians continue to face today.

Expectations & Responsibilities

You, the student, can expect the following from me, the instructor:

- Create and foster a safe and stimulating learning environment in which students can take intellectual risks.
- Facilitate historical inquiry.
- Clarify expectations and help students prepare for course assessments.

I, the instructor, can expect the following from you, the student:

- Share ideas and listen to others.
- Respect the learning environment.
- Punctually attend **all** class sessions—if you are late, please enter quietly.
- Come prepared to learn and participate: read your weekly assignment **before** scheduled class discussions.
- Alert me to any concerns you may have and seek help when needed.

Course Readings

You may purchase the required books at the university bookstore or any number of local and online retailers. Please feel free to purchase used copies of these texts, but be careful to get the correct editions, especially for the textbook (Calloway's *First Peoples*). Additionally, I will place copies of each book on reserve at the library. Finally, there are some readings that I will post online at the course Canvas site – these have an (OL) next to them in the weekly reading assignments.

The required books are:

- Colin Calloway, *First Peoples: A Documentary Survey of American Indian History* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2015). [**Please note that you need to get the 5th edition.**]
- Colin Calloway, *Our Hearts Fell to the Ground: Plains Indian Views of How the West Was Lost*, 2d ed. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2015). [**Please note that you need to get the 2nd edition.**]
- Daniel M. Cobb, *Say We Are Nations: Documents of Politics and Protest in Indigenous America Since 1887* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2015).
- Theda Perdue, *The Cherokee Removal: A Brief History with Documents*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2016). [**Either the 2nd or 3rd editions will be fine.**]

Note: The Calloway textbook *First Peoples* covers the full range of American Indian history, from origins to modern times. I am aware that we are only using the second two thirds of this book this quarter. Therefore, you might want to consider sharing a copy with a friend or relying on the copy in the library – please make a decision that works for you. However, if you are going to take the first half of this survey course in a later quarter, you will want to own this textbook since it will also be required then.

Class Sessions

This is a blended lecture and discussion course. The Calloway textbook will only provide you with a cursory overview of the material, so it is imperative that you attend class so that you can best understand the larger narrative of American Indian history. As you will see in the schedule below, I have also made considerable class time for in-class discussions.

I expect you to attend every class session. As you will notice, instead of standalone discussion sections, I have incorporated discussion activities into a number of class sessions. These are designed to give you experience at working with primary sources and thinking and writing historically. Additionally, you should finish the reading assignments so that you can participate in these discussions. Repeated absences and/or failure to stay caught up on the assigned readings will strongly hamper your ability to excel in this class.

Canvas

Although this is not an online course, having reliable and regular access to a computer and the Internet will be necessary. Including exams, all assignments will be uploaded to Canvas, which will allow me to leave detailed comments helping you to improve your writing and analytical skills. If this is going to be a problem for you, please bring this to my attention immediately so I can figure out how to support you. Some readings (marked “OL”) will be posted to this site. Handouts, PDFs of PowerPoint slides, instructions, and other helpful material will be distributed through Canvas; if, for some reason, you are unable to open or access these, please notify me immediately. I will use PDFs for material disbursed online, so having *Adobe Acrobat Reader* or *Preview* (Mac) installed on your computer will be critical.

Assignments & Evaluation

Each student earns his or her own grade. I assess your work along clearly articulated guidelines and expectations. I also value and reward improvement. Therefore, it is critical that you do all the assignments, attend all the class sessions, and engage with the course concepts. It is impossible for me to evaluate what you have not turned in or articulated! Please note that late work will be penalized 5% per day (with a maximum loss of 30%), including weekends and holidays.

Your final grade will be determined by:

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| • Short Writing Exercise* (due 10 PM, Oct. 19) | 100 pts. |
| • Midterm Exam* (online, Oct. 30) | 125 pts. |
| • Paper* (due 10 PM, Nov. 30) | 275 pts. |
| • Final Exam* (online, Dec. 12) | 250 pts. |
| • Discussion Reflections (online, throughout the quarter) | 150 pts. |
| • Public Talk Write-up (variable due date) | 100 pts. |

In order to be eligible to earn a passing grade for this course, you must complete all items marked with an asterisk.

Short Writing Exercise

I have scheduled one 500-word writing exercise early in the quarter. This is designed to practice the analytical writing skills that you will also use in the more formal paper. Moreover, this will alert me to any writing challenges you may have and provide you with some examples of what I am looking for when assessing student writing.

Paper

You will be required to write one historical essay synthesizing a variety of material, including lectures, readings, primary documents, media, and class discussions. This paper will be 1,500-2,000 words in length (about six to eight pages long). In this assignment, you will formulate an original argument; structure a formal, academic paper with an introduction, body, and conclusion; and support assertions using substantial and specific evidence. It is important that this essay argues a specific point of view that encourages the reader to agree or disagree. I also expect you to review the feedback from the short writing exercise, incorporating these recommended improvements into this paper. A higher percentage of the overall grade is assigned to the paper assessment in order to reward significant improvement in your writing.

I will provide a more detailed set of instructions for the paper well before the due date. These instructions will include the prompt, guidelines for writing an effective essay, proofreading checklist, formatting requirements, and any other relevant information. I strongly encourage you to visit me during office hours to discuss paper topics in advance. Please remember that late work will be penalized 5% per day (with a maximum loss of 30%), including weekends and holidays.

Exams

Both exams will be administered online and will ask you to engage with the IDs discussed in the lectures. On the midterm, you will have a set of IDs to address; on the final, you will have two sets to address. For the ID sets, I will give you several from which to choose. Students will detail the IDs in the set (or sets) of their choice, supplement it with an additional ID that fits with the others, and then write about how the IDs in the set are related. I will show you some examples of this before the midterm. Possible IDs you will be asked to write about will be listed on the lecture handouts.

Each exam will also have an essay-question section. These will require you to formulate an original argument demonstrating your command of broader course themes and to include IDs and other historical details from the lectures and readings to support the argument. The final exam is cumulative in the sense that you will be expected to reflect on the entire chronology of the class at the end of the quarter.

Discussion Reflections

I will assess several of our in-class discussion activities through online discussion reflections, accessible through Canvas. For these exercises, you will write a short reflective piece (250-300 words) about the discussion. You can write about one or two compelling discussion points that emerged, questions you still have about the reading or about a topic raised in the discussion, or a different perspective that struck you after thinking back on the discussion. You might also connect the discussion to other concepts and readings relative to the course. This is meant to be an open-ended exercise encouraging you to think critically about the discussion activity and demonstrate that you learned something from it. Of course, it will be impossible for you to do

well on specific reflections if you do not attend class that day, participate, and take notes. Please note that all reflections are due online by noon the day after the discussion activity.

Public Talk Write-Up

This quarter, there will be a number of Indigenous-themed talks and other events on campus and nearby in the greater Seattle area. You are to attend one of these and write up a 500-word response to the talk. Discuss how the talk intersects with one of the understanding goals (bulleted items on p. 1 on the syllabus). Before the talk, email me to tell me that you are attending the event; your write up will then be **due within one week after the event**. Scheduled events so far include:

- Oct. 2: 7:00-8:45, Roundtable Discussion – “What Is at Stake for Washington’s Native Nations Today” (Microsoft Auditorium, Seattle Public Library, Central Branch)
- Oct. 4: 6:00-8:00, Film Screening – *Return of the River* (William Gates Hall, UW Law School)
- Oct. 8: 9:30-3:30, Seattle Indigenous Peoples Day March & City Celebration (Westlake Park)
- Oct. 13: all day, Visit to the Elwha River (meet at the Elwha River Interpretive Center, west of Port Angeles, at 1:00 – you’ll need your own transportation)
- Oct. 24: 11:30-1:20, Lecture – “Tribal Canoe Journey, Past & Present” (Smith 313)
- Oct. 28: 1:00-3:00, Ceremony – “Putting the Canoe to Sleep for the Season” (UW Waterfront Activities Center)
- Oct. 29: 3:30-5:00, Book Talk – *In Defense of Wyam* (Petersen Room, Allen Library, 4th floor)

Before each of these events, more information—such as speaker, topic, location etc.—will become available. Additionally, I will advertise other events as I become aware of them.

Grading Scale

4.0	980-1,000 pts.	2.8	830-839 pts.	1.6	710-719 pts.
3.9	960-979 pts.	2.7	820-829 pts.	1.5	700-709 pts.
3.8	950-959 pts.	2.6	810-819 pts.	1.4	690-699 pts.
3.7	930-949 pts.	2.5	800-809 pts.	1.3	680-689 pts.
3.6	910-929 pts.	2.4	790-799 pts.	1.2	670-679 pts.
3.5	900-909 pts.	2.3	780-789 pts.	1.1	660-669 pts.
3.4	890-899 pts.	2.2	770-779 pts.	1.0	650-659 pts.
3.3	880-889 pts.	2.1	760-769 pts.	0.9	640-649 pts.
3.2	870-879 pts.	2.0	750-759 pts.	0.8	630-639 pts.
3.1	860-869 pts.	1.9	740-749 pts.	0.7	600-629 pts.
3.0	850-859 pts.	1.8	730-739 pts.	0.0	0-599 pts.
2.9	840-849 pts.	1.7	720-729 pts.		

Emergencies

In the event of illness, a death in the family, or other catastrophic, personal crisis, I will be sympathetic and flexible, provided that you alert me as soon as possible and preferably in advance of an assignment’s due date. Belated excuses will not account for poorly done or late work. You will need to support any medical excuses with the appropriate, written documentation.

Communication

Meeting in person with me during office hours is the best way to communicate. If you have more immediate needs, feel free to ask me at the end of class or to contact me via email.

At the beginning of each week, I send out a class announcement via Canvas. This reminds everyone what they should be working on, including readings and assignments. Additionally, I will remind/notify people if there is a change of venue for the class, if we have a guest speaker coming in, or if there are any changes to the schedule. Please be sure to set up your Canvas preferences so that you receive course announcements through your email.

Schedule

Below is the schedule for the quarter. Be sure to pay attention to the readings so that you can finish them in a timely fashion in order to participate in class activities.

Week 1 (Sept. 26-28)

Thursday

- Introductions

Readings

- Settler Colonialism Readings (OL)
- Excerpts from Thomas King, *The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Native People in North America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013) (OL)
- Optional: Calloway, pp. 14-265 – (for those who want to know what happened before 1815)

Week 2 (Oct. 1-5)

Tuesday

- Life as an Inconvenient Indian circa 1815
- Discussion Activity 1: Settler Colonialism

Discussion Reflection 1 due noon Wednesday, Oct. 3

Thursday

- American Indians in the Antebellum Far West

Readings

- Perdue, *Cherokee Removal*, Introduction & Chapters 1 & 2 (pp. 1-97 in 3rd ed)
- Calloway, pp. 310-319

Week 3 (Oct. 8-12)

Tuesday

- Expanding Indian Powers in the Great Plains

Thursday

- Indian Removal & Remaking of Native Nations

Readings

- Perdue, *Cherokee Removal*, Chapter 3 to the end (pp. 98-end in 3rd ed)
- Calloway (ed.), *Our Hearts Fell to the Ground*, Chapter 3 (“The Life and Death of Four Bears”)
- Calloway, pp. 266-281, 286-304

Week 4 (Oct. 15-19)

Tuesday

- Discussion Activity 2: Cherokee Removal Debate

Discussion Reflection 2 due noon Wednesday, Oct. 17

Thursday: No Class – (I’m at a conference)

Short Writing Exercise due 10 PM Friday, Oct. 19

Readings

- Excerpts from Greenberg (ed.), *Manifest Destiny and American Territorial Expansion* (OL)
- Treaty Documents (OL)

Week 5 (Oct. 22 – 26)

Tuesday

- Indian Treaties of the Mid-Nineteenth Century
- Discussion Activity 3: Negotiating Treaties

Discussion Reflection 3 due noon Wednesday, Oct. 24

Thursday

- American Indians in the Civil War Era

Readings

- Calloway, pp. 319-324
- Calloway (ed.), *Our Hearts Fell to the Ground*, Chapter 5 (“Massacres North and South”)
- Excerpts from *The Dakota Prisoner of War Letters* (OL)

Week 6 (Oct. 29 – Nov. 2)

Tuesday: **Online Midterm Exam** – (no class today)

Thursday

- US Invasion of the Great Plains
- Discussion Activity 4: Document Analysis

Readings

- Calloway, pp. 324-371
- Calloway (ed.), *Our Hearts Fell to the Ground*, Chapter 1 (“A Sioux Archive”), Chapter 6 (“Talking to the Peace Commissioners: The Treaty of Medicine Lodge, 1867”), Chapter 7 (“The Slaughter of the Buffalo”), Chapter 8 (“The Battle on the Greasy Grass”), Chapter 9 (“The End of Freedom”)

Week 7 (Nov. 5-9)

Tuesday

- Confronting Assimilation

Thursday

- Discussion Activity 5: The Struggle over Land in the US West

Readings

- Calloway, pp. 378-438
- Calloway, *Our Hearts Fell to the Ground*, Chapter 10 (“Going Home”), Chapter 11 (“Attending the White Man’s Schools”), Chapter 12 (“Killing the Dream”)
- Optional: Cobb, pp. 13-54

Discussion Reflection 4 due noon Friday, Nov. 9

Week 8 (Nov. 12-16)

Tuesday

- Indian New Deal & Twentieth-Century Tribal Governments

Thursday

- Termination
- Discussion Activity 6: Working with Quotations

Readings

- Calloway, pp. 444-459, 471-481, & 492-498
- Cobb, pp. 1-7 & 59-96

Week 9 (Nov. 19-23)

Tuesday

Reid

- Twentieth-Century Assault on Indian Lands & Waters

Thursday: Thanksgiving (no class)

Readings

- Calloway, pp. 460-470
- Cobb, pp. 97-151
- Oral History Selections from *Confluence Story Gathering Collection* (OL)

Week 10 (Nov. 26-30)

Tuesday

- The Beginnings of Twentieth-Century Indian Activism
- Writing Workshop

Thursday

- Indian Activism of the 1960s & 1970s: Fishing Wars in the PNW

Paper due 10 PM Friday, Nov. 30

Readings

- Calloway, pp. 481-491 & 502-538
- Cobb, pp. 153-201
- Indian Fishing War Documents (OL)
- Oral History Selections from *Confluence Story Gathering Collection* (OL)

Week 11 (Dec. 3-7)

Tuesday

- Indian Activism of the 1960s & 1970s: AIM & Occupations
- Discussion Activity 7: Indian Activism

Discussion Reflection 5 due noon Wednesday, Dec. 5

Thursday

- Indian Activism Today

Readings

- Calloway, pp. 539-566, & 572-638
- Cobb, *Say We Are Nations*, pp. 203-250

Online Final Exam: December 12

I RESERVE THE RIGHT TO EMEND THESE POLICIES AND THE SCHEDULE AT MY DISCRETION AND WILL GIVE ADEQUATE NOTICE OF ANY CHANGES.