CREE CULTURE AND SUSTAINABILITY – SPRING 2017

NRC 579 (3 cr)
SPIRE #: 15381
Time and place: T, W, or Th evening ...To be determined
312A Holdsworth Hall

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Environmental Conservation, 219 Holdsworth Hall
pkbarten@eco.umass.edu
860.461.6946 (cell) or 413.545.2665
and a Spring Recess experiential learning
component (March 8-19, 2017) in conjunction with
the Hulbert Outdoor Center, Fairlee, Vermont ...
http://www.alohafoundation.org/hulbert-outdoor-center/adult-programs/cree-culture-snowshoe-trip/. Katie Cole (front row, left) and Paul Barten (back row, right) will be the co-leaders of the 2017 trip. See page 3 for schedules. Both leaders are SOLO-wilderness first aid certified.

BOOK

BACKGROUND AND COURSE CONTEXT

The Cree people have been part of the boreal forests of what is now northern Quebec for at least 5,000 years. The traditional knowledge and the cultural, spiritual, and personal attributes developed over more than 250 generations lead them to refer to their homeland as a “garden” ...not the forbidding wilderness so often described by Europeans and their descendants. There is, of course, much that we can learn from these self-reliant and resourceful people. Our two worlds met when Henry Hudson arrived in 1610. The Hudson’s Bay Company, the North West Company and other fur traders introduced European goods, technologies, and vices from ~1700 to 1960. Mining companies, forest products companies, and Hydro-Quebec rolled north in the 20th century. Each episode of what Boyce Richardson has called “force-fed acculturation” has compelled the Cree to adapt and change in order to sustain their cultural identity and time-tested way of life.

As we strain the ecological limits of the Earth’s ecological systems and the cumulative demand and impact of 325,000,000 Americans comes more clearly into view, it seems prudent to for us to learn about and willingly acculturate the key principles, practices, values that have sustained the Cree people for millennia. We also need to come to terms, in an ethical and objective way, with our society’s use of energy and natural resources (a significant portion of the electricity used in New England and New York comes from Hydro-Quebec’s massive James Bay system) and the social, cultural, and economic effects on other people and places. This is, to a large extent, what Marsh, Burroughs, Muir, Leopold, Olson, Carson, Maathai, Kimmerer, and others have been *trying* to tell us for many years. It is time to listen and learn with *Nuuhchimi Wiinuu* [Cree forest people].
COURSE DESCRIPTION

This small, interdisciplinary course (first offered in 2011) combines intensive study at UMass and an experiential learning component with a Cree family (David and Anna Bosum and Lawrence Capissisit) in northern Quebec during Spring Recess. Weekly discussions of reading assignments and documentary films help us to prepare for the trip then, later, to process our exploration of (1) traditional and contemporary Cree culture, (2) the local, regional, and international use of natural resources (wood fiber, minerals, hydropower), and (3) fundamental issues of sustainability, stewardship of the environment, and social justice. [David and Anna Bosum and Lawrence Capissisit, all wearing sunglasses, center of photo above.]

This course is designed for highly motivated undergraduate and graduate students with well-articulated interests in native cultures, the conservation and stewardship of natural resources, and the lessons of history as they inform our individual and societal efforts to live more sustainably. The high demand for and limited capacity (10 students) of this course necessitates an application process. Please contact Prof. Barten for details.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

A letter grade (see matrix on page 6) will be calculated and assigned on the basis of the following activities and products:

1. Thorough preparation for and active participation in class discussions and brief ~weekly essays related to the readings and documentary films (at UMass and on the trip). (45%)

2. Active, flexible, adaptive, and mature participation in the Spring Recess experiential learning component. (30%)

3. An end-of-semester essay that describes changes in your awareness, perspective, values, attitudes, and behavior that have resulted from this course. (25%)

Cost of Experiential Learning Trip

The all-inclusive student fee for the Hulbert Outdoor Center trip is $1,900.

1. I always pay my own way (…and have since 2010).

2. I actively seek partial scholarships for students. Additional support may be available through your department, college, fellowship office, etc. Take the initiative to ask!

3. Much specialized winter camping equipment (~$600) will be provided (waterproof duffel bag, winter sleeping bag, sleeping pad, parka, and mittens) by UMass Amherst.

4. This is a unique, logistically challenging “studies abroad” experience in a remote area of northern Quebec.

5. The largest share of the fee goes to the Bosum family; this is their well-earned livelihood. (Photo credit: Will Cooney)
Our Weekly Schedule: Thursday, 6:30 to 9:00 pm, 312A Holdsworth Hall

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date*</th>
<th>Discussion topic and “film”</th>
<th>Primary Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21 January</td>
<td>Introductions and syllabus highlights, crowdfunding prospects, discuss Rutstrum chapter and Marshall essay, watch “Cesar’s Bark Canoe”</td>
<td>course website and via email</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 January</td>
<td>The Cree and their land, “Ikwe” <em>(UMass Loaner Equipment out)</em></td>
<td>Compendium of readings on Moodle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 February</td>
<td>... discussion continued, “Mistress Madeline”</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9 February</td>
<td>Complete discussion of historical and cultural context readings</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>16 February</td>
<td><strong>Team Building 1 and Equipment Check</strong>, medical forms, (PB and Katie Cole)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>23 February</td>
<td>Hydro-Quebec and the Cree, “Cree Hunters of Mistassini”</td>
<td>Richardson, thru Chap. 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 March</td>
<td>Hydro-Quebec and the Cree, “Our Land is Our Life”</td>
<td>Richardson, Ch. 3-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-19 March</td>
<td><strong>Hulbert Outdoor Center experiential module (details below)</strong></td>
<td>Packet from Hulbert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 March</td>
<td>Hydro-Quebec and the Cree (...and sharing trip photos)</td>
<td>Richardson, Ch. 6-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 March</td>
<td>Hydro-Quebec and the Cree, “Power”</td>
<td>Richardson, Ch. 9-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 April</td>
<td>Hydro-Quebec and the Cree, “Riding the Great Whale”</td>
<td>Richardson, Ch. 13-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 April</td>
<td>Logging in <em>Eeyou Istchee</em>, “Northern Greetings”</td>
<td>Heindel article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 April</td>
<td>Dinner at the Barten’s, 5-9 pm ...everyone briefly summarizing or reading highlights from their essays (return equipment)</td>
<td>Personal essays due</td>
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* The evening of the week (e.g., Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday), ~3 hour, to be determined from our collective schedules.

Itinerary for Cree Culture Trip *(Hulbert Outdoor Center)* *(subject to minor changes)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wed, 8 March</td>
<td>Meet behind Holdsworth Hall with all your gear at 1:30pm, load van and trailer, up I-91 ...~4 pm arrival at Hulbert Outdoor Center, team building 2, re-pack trailer, dinner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Th, 9 March</td>
<td>Early departure ...Travel to Oujé-Bougoumou, Quebec ...meals and rest stops en route</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri, 10 March</td>
<td>Tour Cree Cultural Institute and Oujé-Bougoumou, welcome from our Cree hosts: David and Anna Bosum, and their family and friends ...pack for the bush</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat, 11 March</td>
<td>Travel to trailhead, snowshoe to bush camp, tea, settle in, explore, supper, deep sleep ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-16 March</td>
<td>Life in bush camp: exploring, gathering spruce boughs, fetching water, helping to prepare meals, learning about traditional life ways and folklore, journals, craft work, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday-Thurs</td>
<td>Huge Breakfast, pack up camp, snowshoe out to trailhead, return to Oujé-Bougoumou, free time, hosting farewell dinner and gifts for our Cree friends, packing for the road south and “re-entry”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri, 17 March</td>
<td>Early departure, breakfast, ...travel to Hulbert (group dinner and discussion, overnight stay)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sat, 18 March</td>
<td>Breakfast, clean and store equipment, travel to UMass Amherst and home (arrive ~1pm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun, 19 March</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

A valid U.S. Passport is required.

*This takes time. Please start NOW!*

Sleeping tents on *Mistamikap Sakahikan* (“Big Important Spawning Place Lake”) at the Bosum Family camp on David Mianscum’s hunting territory.
Read the following, substituting “boreal forest” for “Plains” and “Cree” for “Plains Indian” (or “Omaha”). This will give you a clear sense of why I am so focused on this course and how it is likely to affect you. As Professor Emeritus Sidney Simon puts it, we all are in need of “values clarification.” This unique opportunity for advanced study, in-depth discussion, and living and learning with Cree people is a great start on that lifelong endeavor!


There is, I believe, a predictable progression of attitudes that develops within any sensitive person who spends time on a landscape as distinctive as the Plains or with a cultural group as attractive as the Plains Indians. First the observer is curious about and fascinated by what he sees; there is almost a bewilderment at what appears to be a denial of what was clearly fact before. What seemed to be a matter of human nature is suddenly and clearly no more than a matter of cultural learning. Concepts as fundamental as the nature of time and the value of property are swept away as the fieldworker discovers that what had seemed to be the “normal order” of things is simply a set of ideas taught by one’s parents, and, what is worse, that these ideas can seem venal and petty in the face of another culture that languishes in a distinctly inferior position. What seemed right becomes wrong, and what seemed unthinkable becomes logical. When that happens to the anthropologist, folklorist, or even casual cultural traveler, the person has made the step of cross-identification that is crucial to substantive field work. Gilmore did that.

Then there is a period of sadness as the transcultural explorer worries about the injustice that the culture he is experiencing has suffered at the hands of the dominant, majority group – in our case, the imminent destruction of the Plains Indian culture by the dominant Anglo-American one. Why, the observer asks, have others not seen and appreciated the beauty and nobility that is so obvious to him? And the observer now takes steps, usually small and perhaps even pathetic, to alleviate what he perceives as mistreatment.

Next the outsider comes to realize that in addition to struggling on behalf of this new advocacy, it is even more important to continue learning what the landscape and its peoples have to share; the only way the rest of the world is going to find a similar appreciation is to know the same sorts of things that have brought the observer to a new understanding. In my own case, I found that far from stealing too much from the Omaha, we had actually not stolen enough. Having taken land, game, and place names, we left behind the most valuable of the treasures – the knowledge the Omaha still have of the Plains, its plants, its ways.

from Melvin Gilmore’s (1929) Dedication…

…To those first inhabitants of this land we now inhabit – that something of their appreciation, of their love and reverence for the land and its native life, something of their respect for its sacred places and holy associations, something of their sense of its charm, its beauty and wonder, may come to us, that we may more worthily occupy and more sympathetically enjoy our tenure on this land.
**Bibliography and Resources**


Wyatt, Stephen, Jean-François Fortier, Garth Greskiw, Martin Hébert, Solange Nadeau, David Natcher, Peggy Smith, Delphine Théberge, and Ron Trosper., 2010. Can aboriginal land use and occupancy studies be applied effectively in forest management? Sustainable Forest Management Network, University of Alberta, Edmonton, 72 pp.

**Documentary films and television programs:**

“Cesar’s Bark Canoe”, “Cree Hunters of the Mistassini”,”Our Land is Our Life”,”Ikwe”, “Mistress Madeline”, “Power”, “Northern Greetings” and “Riding the Great Whale” (National Film Board of Canada)

“The Last Walk” (Cree Regional Authority)

“Twilight of a Land” (Jean-Guillaume Caplain)

**Maamuitaau** “We Are Still Here: Journey of Nishiyuu” Parts 1 & 2

http://www.cbc.ca/player/Shows/Shows/More+Shows/Maamuitaau/ID/2380967526/

http://www.cbc.ca/player/Shows/Shows/More+Shows/Maamuitaau/ID/2411843978/

Accommodation Policy Statement

The University of Massachusetts Amherst is committed to providing an equal educational opportunity for all students. If you have a documented physical, psychological, or learning disability on file with Disability Services (DS), Learning Disabilities Support Services (LDSS), or Psychological Disabilities Services (PDS), you may be eligible for reasonable academic accommodations to help you succeed in this course. If you have a documented disability that requires an accommodation, please consult with me before enrolling in the course to ensure that we may make appropriate arrangements (including the option to enroll in the course without participating in the trip). Because of the special nature of this class and the partnership with and legal liability of the Hulbert Outdoor Center, it is necessary that all students fully meet the terms and conditions established for the trip to northern Quebec. Please contact Jason Knowles, Director of the Hulbert Outdoor Center, for more information about these requirements (http://www.alohafoundation.org/hulbert-outdoor-center/).

Statement on Academic Honesty

It is expected that all students will abide by the Academic Honesty Policy (available online at www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty). Sanctions for acts of dishonesty range from receiving a grade of F on the paper/exam/assignment or in the course, loss of funding, being placed on probation or suspension for a period of time, or being dismissed from the University. All students have the right of appeal through the Academic Honesty Board.

Letter Grade Matrix (numerical score is calculated from the grading components on page 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Numerical Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>≥ 92.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90.0 – 92.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>87.5 – 89.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>82.5 – 87.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>80.0 – 82.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>77.5 – 79.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>72.5 – 77.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>70.0 – 72.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt; 60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Our Rich Culture”

Painting in Cree Cultural Institute lobby by Tim Whiskeychan, Waskaganish Cree Nation, 2013
Further reading


David and Anna Bosum, Elders, *Oujé Bougoumou* Cree Nation
*Nuuhchimi Wiinuu* [Forest People] Cree Cultural Tours
[https://www.facebook.com/nuuhchimiwiinuu/](https://www.facebook.com/nuuhchimiwiinuu/)