Cree Culture, Natural Resources, and Sustainability —2015

University of Massachusetts Amherst
and the
Hulbert Outdoor Center
Fairlee, Vermont

Nuuchiiimi Wiinuu (Cree Cultural Tours, video made by Harry and Willy Bosum)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dZJgOXprfmc
Eeyou Istchee: Land of the Cree (book overview by Louise Abbott and Niels Jensen)
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R-wJ5CzpVa8
Annischaaukanikw (The Cree Cultural Institute, Ouje Bougoumou)
http://www.creeculturalinstitute.ca/en
Ouje Bougoumou weather (Note to parents: “Don’t worry, we are ready for anything!”)
http://www.theweathernetwork.com/weather/canada/quebec/ouje-bougoumou

 dévelopements

Professor Barten and all the students in Cree Culture, Natural Resources, and Sustainability (2015) gratefully acknowledge the continuing support of: (1) Jason Knowles, Katie Seivwright, Lynn Daly, and Hans Carlson of the Hulbert Outdoor Center, (2) Professor Curtice Griffin and Roxann Cormier, Department of Environmental Conservation, and Dean Steve Goodwin and Associate Dean Martha Baker, College of Natural Sciences, at UMass Amherst. In addition, Professor Lauret Savoy and President Lynn Pasquerella of Mount Holyoke College were instrumental in helping the first MHC student to participate in this Five College Consortium class. Thank you!

First and foremost, this unique learning opportunity is made possible by the warm welcome extended to us by David and Anna Bosum and their family, Lawrence Capissisit, and many other members of the Ouje Bougoumou Cree Nation. Their generosity and enthusiasm for sharing their knowledge, experience, and culture are great gifts to each of us. We also owe a debt of gratitude to Deb Williams and Paul Wertman for the developing this idea and personal connection so many years ago. Meegwetch!
Paul Barten  
West Suffield, Connecticut (born and raised in Kingston, New York)  
Professor of Forestry and Hydrology, University of Massachusetts Amherst  

This will be my seventh trip to Ouje Bougoumou and David and Anna Bosum’s winter camp on David Mianscum’s hunting territory. As always, I am looking forward to renewing friendships and learning more about Cree culture, traditional life ways, and the northern forest. I still have much to learn, but the knowledge and experience I’ve gained by organizing and leading this class now influences every aspect of my personal and professional life.

As interest in this class and experiential learning trip has grown (since 2010), this marks the first year that UMass and other Five College students have filled every available slot on the trip. This provides us with a rare “community of learning” opportunity before, during, and after the trip to Ouje Bougoumou and winter camp on Gahmeechmoosachegan (“Full of Food Lake”). Enthusiasm for and support of the class continues to grow with my faculty colleagues in the Five College Native American and Indigenous Studies program. In fact, our traditional moccasin circle picture (initiated by Deb Williams) is featured on the cover of the new program brochure. Photos from our trip have been used on the “big screen” during the welcome slide show for undergraduate commencement ceremonies and college faculty meetings for several years. All of the above leads to questions and conversations that bring about positive changes.

I addition to my work at UMass, I enjoy reading, traveling, woodworking, leatherworking, baking bread, working in our garden, orchard, and woodlot, hiking and canoeing, and spending time with my family and friends.

Hans Carlson (Co-Leader of Hulbert Outdoor Center trip)  
Norfolk, Connecticut  

Hans was born, and has lived most of his life, in rural New England, where he is engaged with issues of land use and stewardship. These have been lifelong concerns, but have been brought into sharper focus by his decades of friendship with James Bay Cree people, in northern Quebec, and other Indigenous people in North America. Trying to integrate Indigenous ideas of land use into modern practice is the central feature of his writing and activism.

He is the author of Home Is The Hunter: The James Bay Cree and Their Land, as well as other articles about the Cree, and he has traveled extensively in northern Quebec and Labrador, since the early 1980s. In addition to carrying out research on the north, he has led wilderness canoe trips, and has been leading Cree experiential-learning trips for Hulbert Outdoor Center since 2008. He has taught in the American Indian Studies Department, at the University of Minnesota, as well as at the University of Maine where he completed his PhD in 2005.

Katie Seivwright (Co-Leader of Hulbert Outdoor Center trip)  
Fairlee, Vermont  

Katie works at Hulbert Outdoor Center as a program coordinator and trip leader. She earned her BS in Education and General Science and is a graduate of a NOLS Outdoor Educator Course. She has been involved in outdoor education for eight years with Hulbert Outdoor
Center, Keewaydin Environmental Education Center, and Adventure Treks. This is her first trip
to Ouje Bougoumou and hopes to return year after year. She admires the Cree peoples’ use of
their land, strong community bonds, and commitment to their traditions. Katie enjoys downhill
skiing, running, canoeing, and crafting. Katie is a Wilderness First Responder and Leave-no-
Trace Trainer.

Charlotte Axthelm
Westport, Connecticut

I am a junior (Psychology major and Natural Resources Conservation minor) at the
University of Massachusetts Amherst. I first learned about this course when I was a freshman
taking Forests & People, and have had my heart set on going ever since. Having grown up along
the coast of Connecticut, in a relatively rural area, I have always loved the outdoors, and sought
to spend as much time outside as possible—hiking, ice skating, swimming, and enjoying as
much of nature as I could. Additionally, the plight of indigenous people, especially as
propagated by white people who came to North America, and more recently, with mega-
projects like the James Bay I and II, are a particular concern for me. Put another way, this
course is relevant to a wide range of my interests. The beautiful landscape of Eeyou Istchee
also sets the stage for my interest in photography. Eventually, I hope to make a career of
wildlife or portrait photography. I look forward to taking this course to broaden my horizons
culturally, and to experience coexistence with the land in a way that is uniquely Cree.

Eric Brown
Feeding Hills, Massachusetts

I am a junior at UMass, studying Natural Resources Conservation with a concentration in
Forest Ecology and Conservation. I grew up and still live in the small western Massachusetts
town of Feeding Hills. I spend most of my time outside: canoeing, hiking, camping, fishing,
hunting, snowshoeing, and making photographs. Music is a big part of my life; ranging from
playing trumpet in the UMass Marching Band to listening to music in my down time. Any other
free time I have I spend reading or on woodworking projects.

For every summer that I can remember my family and I have gone camping throughout
New England and New York. For the past few summers my father and I have gotten into more
intense canoe camping, trekking throughout the Adirondacks of New York. While I am from a
strong French Canadian descent, I have spent very little time north of the border. I look forward
to expanding my horizons, both literally and culturally, on this wonderful adventure.

Alicia Crook
Dallas, Texas

I am a senior at Hampshire College studying Film, Theater, and Native American Studies.
Currently I am working on a series of short films on Native American representation and
identity. Although it is not a part of my academic studies, I love being outdoors, hiking,
camping, etc. When I first learned about this course two years ago, I was so excited to see if I
would be able to do it—now that I am, I am even more excited! Not only do I get to spend time
outdoors in an environment I haven’t yet experienced, but I also have a wonderful opportunity
to gain a different perspective on my studies. I’ve spent my time as a student studying Native
American culture, history, and contemporary issues in an academic setting, but never have I
had the chance to spend time in a native space like the one we will be visiting. I’m sure this
class and trip will provide innumerable valuable learning experiences. I look forward to meeting new people, learning, and sharing.

**Benjamin Green**  
Conway, Massachusetts

Born to missionaries working in the highlands of central New Guinea, I moved to Massachusetts at a young age when the missions group lost funding. Shortly after graduating from high school, I joined the United States Marine Corps and was able to explore much of Southeast Asia and parts of the Middle East. After serving in the Marines, I spent six years working for a company that built large machining tools before a chance encounter led me to discovering the Stockbridge School of Agriculture. I completed an associates degree in Arboriculture and Community Forest Management in May 2014. I am now a junior in Natural Resource Conservation with a concentration in Urban Forestry and Arboriculture at UMass.

My free time is spent reading, hiking with my dog, snowshoeing, tree climbing, and pruning. Recently I’ve been dabbling in spoon carving and chip carving. I am greatly looking forward to learning more about the Cree and their culture. I am excited about our trip to a traditional winter camp and can’t wait to take part in this amazing experience!

**Matt Harbut**  
Chester, Virginia

I’m originally from Virginia, but have been in New England now for a few years studying Natural Resources Conservation at UMass. It’s a beautiful place that I’ve grown to enjoy and feel more at home in the Connecticut River valley.

I really love being outside and learning through experience and observation in nature. Nature has always sparked my curiosity and inspired an appreciation for life. Sunsets are amazing! I also enjoy good music and good food and good talks.

This class, for me, feels like an amazing opportunity to spend time with the Cree people and gain a brief window into their way of life. I feel that all our futures are connected and moving forward to find solutions to the challenges we face from the destruction of our environment is essential. I know I have a lot to learn from people who’ve done such a tremendous job of preserving and living in harmony with their surroundings for so many years. I’m excited to travel into Canada for the first time and I’m grateful to be able to part of this experience. I hope to learn a lot, connect with the land and everyone we meet, and bring some lessons home to share and bear fruit in our own culture.

**Isabella Maloney**  
Cranford, New Jersey

I am a second-year student at the University of Massachusetts Amherst majoring in Natural Resources Conservation (Environmental Conservation track). I love spending time in the outdoors—hiking, camping, and adventuring—and I am beyond excited to meet Anna and David Bosum and live and learn with them and their community. I’m very interested in seeing how the Cree people live in their homeland. Their way of life and values should be much more widespread in our world. I can’t wait to head up North!
Hannah McDonald
Upton, Massachusetts

As a graduating senior, it is my pleasure to be enrolled in the Cree Culture, Natural Resources and Sustainability class. My studies here at UMass have been engaging and fruitful, but I've always yearned for more hands-on experience. My goal in life is to work with various communities (human and non-human) and their environments, restoring them to their full ecological potential while providing nourishment and preparing for climate change. Through my studies and life experiences, I have seen the injustices within the social, environmental and economic systems that surround us. I question the values and morals that put profits before stewardship of and respect for the world around us. I want to become more engaged with different people and places in order to become more knowledgeable about different cultures and sustainable life ways. What a privilege it is to learn from a group of Native peoples, so experienced and connected with the natural world around them. I aspire to live in such a manner and to make the most of this incredible opportunity.

What led me to such a mindset is, in my opinion, atypical. I was born in a suburban neighborhood in the state of Kansas where life, looking back on it, was a façade. Let's just say I'm lucky we moved into the woods of Massachusetts, though it took me quite some time to appreciate this beautiful and meaningful change in scenery. I wasn't always immersed in nature like many other conservationists but instead found this focus through educational insight and a bit of anger (propelled by emotional capacity, Polish roots, and family ties). Specifically, my beautiful grandmother is resourceful, caring and intelligent. She even uses the bags from the cereal boxes to wrap her food instead of throwing them away, and doesn't waste a speck of food. From her example and my studies, I learned that wastefulness is immoral and ruins our environment. And also from her example, that sharing and giving is replenishing and inspiring. I now know that I am part of both human and ecological communities and that my actions have real implications. Education has been a light in my life, leaving me eager to learn more.

I'm interested in writing, poetry, music, and dance. I love my family, friends and cooking, as well as gardening and hard work.

Kayla Smith
Belchertown, Massachusetts

I am a junior at Mount Holyoke College (MHC) studying Ecosystem Sciences and Geology with a particular interest in wetlands of North America. I am fascinated by the depths and dimensions of learning about the earth and how people interact with their surroundings. This is largely what drew me to this course; I am eager to learn how the Cree people have established and maintained their relationship with nature, and how I can apply these philosophies by linking people and culture to my studies. To supplement my academic work in the environmental sciences, I spend much of my time outside of class as a member of the MHC Climate Justice Coalition where we work on a number of projects ranging from fossil fuel divestment on campus to connecting with the larger environmental movement. Outside of academics and activism, my passion is in visual arts. While I enjoy a variety of mediums including photography and painting, my favorite activity is making costumes.
Spencer Weinstein  
Mount Laurel, New Jersey  
I am a junior at UMass double majoring in Natural Resources Conservation and Geography, with a specific interest in marine science. I enjoy reading, spending time outdoors, and playing the saxophone (in the UMass Marching Band). I first learned about this course two years ago, and have been looking forward to taking it ever since. I’m excited to experience a new culture, see a new environment, and learn about living in harmony with the land. I am also interested in learning about the changes that the landscape has undergone as a result of hydroelectric projects. I look forward to all of the many new experiences that this trip will bring.