



## CREE CULTURE, NATURAL RESOURCES, AND SUSTAINABILITY

NRC 579 (3 cr)  
SPIRE #: 64710  
Time and place:  
to be determined\*

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\*and a Spring Recess experiential learning  
component (March 9-20, 2016) in

conjunction with the **Hulbert Outdoor Center**, Fairlee, Vermont ... <http://www.alohafoundation.org/hulbert-outdoor-center/adult-programs/cree-culture-snowshoe-trip/>. Katie Seivwright (blue jacket, Cree mittens) and Paul Barten (back row, left side, grey sweater) will be the co-leaders of the 2016 trip. See page 3 for schedules.



### BOOKS (Please complete your first reading of both books before January 19, 2016)

Carlson, Hans M., 2008. *Home Is The Hunter: The James Bay Cree and Their Land*. University of British Columbia Press, Vancouver, 317 pp. <http://www.ubcpres.ubc.ca/>

Richardson, Boyce., 1991. *Strangers Devour the Land*. Chelsea Green Publishing, White River Junction, VT, 376 pp. (first published by Alfred A. Knopf, 1976) <http://www.chelseagreen.com/>

### 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 descendents. 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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 this fragile Earth, our island home (BCP 1979:370), and the cumulative demand and impact of 320,000,000 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, many years. It is time to listen and learn.



## 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. Before you stop reading, please consider the following:

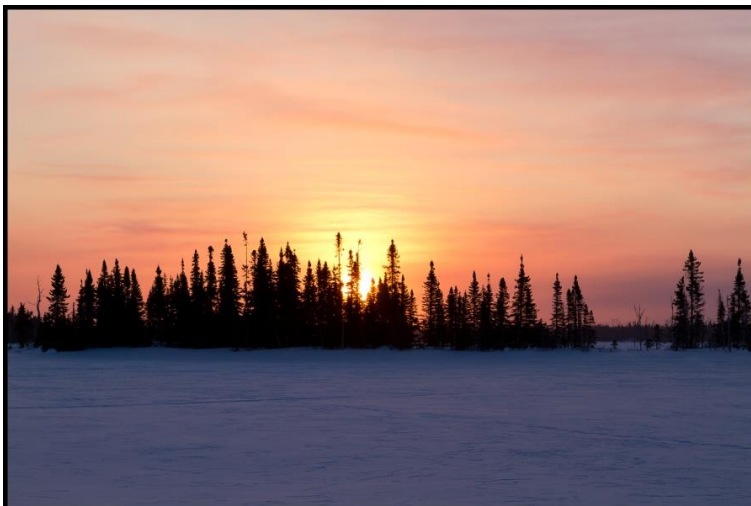
1. I always pay my own way (...and have since 2010).
2. I actively seek partial scholarships for students. Additional support may be available through your department, college, fellowship office, etc. Take the initiative to ask!
3. Much specialized winter camping equipment (~\$600) will be provided (waterproof 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)

— Weekly Schedule —

Week of ...	Topic/Activity (~2.5 hours, once per week)	Primary Readings
18 January	Introductions and syllabus highlights, Discuss Joseph Marshall essay, "Cesar's Bark Canoe"	course website
25 January	The Cree and their land, "Ikwe"	Carlson, through Ch. 2
1 February	...continued, "Mistress Madeline"	Carlson, Ch. 3, 4, 5
8 February	...continued, <b>Equipment Check</b> (with Katie Seivwright) ...your questions about the trip	
15 February	...continued	Carlson, Ch. 6, 7, 8
22 February	Hydro-Quebec and the Cree, "Cree Hunters of Mistassini"	Richardson, thru Chap. 2
29 February	Hydro-Quebec and the Cree, "Our Land is Our Life"	Richardson, Ch. 3- 5
7 March	No class ...packing and arrangements <b>personal journal →</b>	<b>Pre-trip reflections</b>
<b>9-20 March</b>	<b>Hulbert Outdoor Center experiential module (details below)</b>	Packet from Hulbert
21 March	No class ..."re-entry" <b>personal journal →</b>	<b>Post-trip reflections</b>
28 March	Hydro-Quebec and the Cree	Richardson, Ch. 6-8
4 April	Hydro-Quebec and the Cree, "Power"	Richardson, Ch. 9-12
11 April	Hydro-Quebec and the Cree, "Riding the Great Whale"	Richardson, Ch. 13-17
18 April	Logging in <i>Eeyou Istchee</i> , Idle No More and other groups	Heindel article
25 April	Reading highlights from our essays, "Northern Greetings"	<b>Personal essays due</b>

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

Wed, 9 March	~4 pm arrival at Hulbert Outdoor Center, Introductions, equipment check, dinner
Th, 10 March	early departure ...Travel to <i>Oujé-Bougoumou</i> , Quebec ...meals and rest stops <i>en route</i>
Fri, 11 March	Tour Cree Cultural Institute and <i>Oujé-Bougoumou</i> , welcome from our Cree hosts: David and Anna Bosum, and their family and friends ...pack for the bush
Sat, 12 March	Travel to trailhead, snowshoe to bush camp, tea, settle in, explore, supper ...
13-17 March Sunday-Thurs	Life in bush camp: exploring, gathering spruce boughs, fetching water, helping to prepare meals, learning about traditional life ways and folklore, <b>journals</b> , craft work, etc.
Fri, 18 March	Breakfast, break down camp, snowshoe out to trailhead, return to Ouje Bougoumou, hot showers, free time, hosting farewell dinner and gifts for our Cree friends, packing for the road south and "re-entry"
Sat, 19 March	<i>Early</i> departure, breakfast, ...travel to Hulbert (group dinner and discussion, overnight stay)
Sun, 20 March	Breakfast, clean and store equipment, travel to UMass Amherst and home (arrive ~2pm)



**A valid U.S. Passport is required.**  
**This takes time. Please start NOW!**

Sunrise on *Gahmeechmoosachegan* ("Full of Food Lake") by the Bosum Family winter camp on David Mianscum's hunting territory. Photo: Will Cooney

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!

An excerpt (pages xix-xx) from the Introduction to the Reprint Edition (1987) by Roger L. Welsch to “*Prairie Smoke*” by Melvin R. Gilmore (1929), Minnesota Historical Society Press, St Paul, 225 pages.

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** ❖

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- Anderson, Robert B., and Robert M. Bone., 2009. *Natural Resources and Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: Readings, Cases, and Commentary*. Second Edition, Captus Press, Inc., Concord, Ontario, 586 pp.
- Brightman, Robert A., 1993. *Grateful Prey: Rock Cree Human-Animal Relationships*. Canadian Plains Research Center, University of Regina, Saskatchewan, 396 pp.
- Brown, Joseph Epes., 2007. *The Spiritual Legacy of the American Indian: With Letters While Living with Black Elk*. World Wisdom, Bloomington, Indiana, 148 pp.
- Carlson, Hans M., 2008. *Home Is The Hunter: The James Bay Cree and Their Land*. University of British Columbia Press, Vancouver, 317 pp.**
- Frenette, Jacques., *The History of the Chibougamau Crees: An Amerindian Band Reveals Its Identity*. Cree Indian Centre of Chibougamau, Quebec, 122 pp.
- Hagan, William T., 2013. *American Indians*. Fourth Edition, Daniel M. Cobb (Editor), University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 219 pp.
- Kimmerer, R.W., 2013. *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*. Milkweed Editions, St. Paul, MN., 320 pp.
- LaDuke, Winona., 2005. *Recovering the Sacred: The Power of Naming and Claiming*. South End Press, Cambridge, MA, 294p.
- Lopez, Barry., 1990. *The Rediscovery of North America*. University of Kentucky Press, Lexington, 56 pp.
- Marshall, Joseph M. III., 2010. *To You We Shall Return: Lessons About Our Planet from the Lakota*. Sterling Ethos, New York and London, 184 pp.
- Mohawk Nation., 1978. *Basic Call to Consciousness*. Book Publishing Company, Summertown, Tennessee, 120 pp.
- Olson, Sigurd., 1976. *Reflections from the North Country*. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 172 pp.
- Richardson, Boyce., 1991. *Strangers Devour the Land*. Chelsea Green Publishing, White River Junction, VT, 376 pp. (first published by Alfred A. Knopf, 1976)**
- Rutstrum, Calvin., 1975. *The Wilderness Life*. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 241 pp.
- Rutstrum, Calvin., 1968. *Paradise Below Zero*. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 244 pp.
- Sam-Cromarty, Margaret., 2002. *James Bay Memoirs*. Lettresplus, Hull, Quebec, 117 pp.
- Sam-Cromarty, Margaret., 2001. *Indian Legends and Poems*. Lettresplus, Hull, Quebec, 153 pp.
- Sam-Cromarty, Margaret., 2000. *Cree Poems and Stories*. Lettresplus, Hull, Quebec, 155 pp.
- Stevenson, Marc G., 2009. *Ethics and research with aboriginal communities*. Sustainable Forest Management Network, University of Alberta, Edmonton, 15 pp.
- Stevenson, Marc G., and David C. Natcher (Editors)., 2009 *Changing the Culture of Forestry in Canada: Building Effective Institutions for Aboriginal Engagement in Sustainable Forest Management.*, CCI Press, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada, 210 pp.
- Tanner, Adrian., 1979. *Bringing Home Animals: Religious Ideology and Mode of Production of the Mistassini Cree Hunters*. Institute of Social and Economic Research, Memorial University, Newfoundland, 237 pp.
- Time-Life Books (Editors) 1995. *Hunters of the Northern Forests*. The American Indians (18 volume series), Alexandria, Virginia, 184 pp.
- Wyatt, Stephen, Jean-François Fortier, Garth Greskiw, Martin Hébert, Solange Nadeau, David Natcher, Peggy Smith, and Ron Trosper., 2010. *Collaboration between aboriginal peoples and Canadian forest industry: A dynamic relationship*. Sustainable Forest Management Network, University of Alberta, Edmonton, 84 pp.
- 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/>
- Aanischaukamikw** -- Cree Cultural Institute, <http://www.creeculturalinstitute.ca/en> Ouje-Bougoumou, *Eeyou Istchee*

**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](http://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)

A	≥ 92.5
A-	90.0 – 92.4
B	87.5 – 89.9
B	82.5 – 87.4
B-	80.0 – 82.4
C+	77.5 – 79.9
C	72.5 – 77.4
C-	70.0 – 72.4
D	60.0 – 69.9
F	<60



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

❖ Further reading ❖

- Fenn, Elizabeth A., 2014. *Encounters at the Heart of the World: A History of the Mandan People*. Hill and Wang, NY, 456 pp.
- King, Thomas., 2005. *A Short History of Indians in Canada*. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 229 pp.
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- King, Thomas., 2012. *The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of the Native People of North America*. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 287 pp.
- Mowat, Farley., 2001. *Walking on the Land*. Steerforth Press, South Royalton, VT, 208 pp.
- Nerburn, Kent., 1994. *Neither Wolf Nor Dog: On Forgotten Roads With An Indian Elder*. New World Library, Novato, CA, 336 pp. (revised in 2002)
- Nerburn, Kent., 2009. *The Wolf at Twilight: An Indian Elder's Journey through a Land of Ghosts and Shadows*. New World Library, Novato, CA, 346 pp.

