

SRS 4107
Dialogue, Imposition, and Resistance:
Aboriginal-EuroCanadian Religious Interactions, 1600-Present

Professor Emma Anderson
Mondays, 4:00-5:30 pm, Wednesdays 2:30-4:00 pm
Vanier Hall, Room 61

Office Phone: 562-5800, x 1176

Email: Emma.Anderson@uottawa.ca

Office hours: Mondays 1:00-2:30 pm, Wednesdays 11:00-12:30 pm

Course Description:

Religion has been and continues to be central to how aboriginal peoples and Euro-Canadians view one another, inflecting debate and confrontation over issues such as identity, self-determination, and education for the last four hundred years. Though pivotal, the religious dimension of historical and contemporary contact has often been neglected in favor of examining exclusively its political or sociological dynamics. This course will overview the history of religious interactions between aboriginal peoples and Euro-Canadians from the seventeenth century to the present, exploring patterns of dialogue, imposition, and resistance, and examining how contact has impacted both aboriginal and Euro-Canadian consciousness and historical experience. Lectures, readings, films, and guest speakers will evoke the tremendous variety, complexity, and dynamism of contact: exploring pre-contact aboriginal religions and worldviews, European preconceptions regarding aboriginal societies, the formation of a “middle ground” between native peoples and early traders, missionary-aboriginal religious dialogue, the rise of the residential school system, the dual role of Christianity in fueling aboriginal assimilation and resistance, Euro-Canadian appropriations of aboriginal cultural identity, and the continuing, critical role of religion in contemporary disputes regarding land, rights, and identity.

Required Texts:

4107 Course Packet. The packet of course readings is available for purchase at EnviroCopy, 404 Dalhousie Street, (613) 241-2679.

Evaluation:

- **Weekly Reflection Papers - 25% of the final grade.** Each week, students will prepare a one to two double spaced page essay responding to the assigned readings. This reflection paper, due **IN CLASS** each Wednesday, will present the student’s considered views on the material by briefly summarizing the week’s readings and analytically responding to their arguments. Preparation of reflection papers also facilitates informed student participation in class discussion. In the event that there are two different themes covered in one week, students have the choice of which they will write on.

- **Research Paper - 30% of the final grade, due December 6th.** Throughout the term, students research some aspect of aboriginal-EuroCanadian religious contact for their final thirteen-page research paper. While student initiative in the selection of their topics is encouraged, the topic must in some way touch on contemporary issues. Students are encouraged to discuss their ideas with the professor well in advance of the deadline for the research proposal. Students must submit their Research Proposal on **Wednesday, October 4**. Proposals must include a title, paragraph explaining their topic and thesis, and a provisional bibliography of a minimum of seven scholarly books and articles. Only one of these may be from the course packet. Web resources are in addition to this seven, and should be prudently chosen. Please note that Wikipedia is not an appropriate scholarly source. Students who do submit a research proposal will not be permitted to turn in their research essay, nor will they be permitted to present their research to the class.
- **Class Presentation - 15% of the final grade.** Students will make a formal presentation of their research to the class during the final two weeks of the course, focusing in particular upon the contemporary applications of their chosen topic.
- **Final Examination - 30% of the final grade.** The final examination will be a cumulative review of all of the topics addressed in class.

PLEASE NOTE:

All assignments are due on the dates indicated. Late papers (without certified evidence of ill health or other compassionate consideration) will be penalized for each day they are late. **Plagiarism (the unattributed use of the work of others) is absolutely unacceptable** and, if engaged in, will result in failure of the assignment, if not the course. For more information on plagiarism and its consequences, see <http://www.uottawa.ca/plagiarism.pdf>.

Also note that students are **strongly urged** to keep a back up digital and printed copy of each of their essays, including reflection papers. **DO NOT turn in your essay until you have a backup which can be used in the event that the original is damaged or misplaced, as the instructor cannot be solely responsible for safeguarding originals.**

Because this is an upper level undergraduate seminar, it is expected that each student will come to class sessions fully prepared to engage in informed discussion with their fellow students and the instructor, and they will be willing to clearly express their views and opinions on course materials and themes.

Course Overview:

(Please note: All of the readings listed here appear numbered and in this order in your course packet.)

September 11

Introduction to Rel. 227: Religions of Native Peoples

This first meeting will orient students to the course by briefly introducing the themes and scope of the course, overviewing its content and aims, answering student questions, and discussing the term's assignments and class participation components.

September 13

Theory and Method in the Study of Aboriginal-EuroCanadian Religious Contact

Scholars of the encounter EuroCanadian-aboriginal face a daunting range of methodological and theoretical conundrums. Because of the oral nature of North America aboriginal cultures, for the first centuries of this historic meeting the only written sources are authored by Europeans. The lecture and readings for this week will explore issues of source paucity and bias in early encounter, and explore the range of anthropological, archeological, and ethnohistorical techniques developed to combat these problems.

Readings:

- 1) Michael Dorris. "Indians on the Shelf" in Calvin Martin, *The American Indian and the Problem of History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987, p. 98-105.
- 2) Allan Greer. *The Jesuit Relations: Natives and Missionaries in Seventeenth-Century North America*. Boston: Bedford, 2000, p. 1-3, 14-19.
- 3) Theda Perdue, *Cherokee Women: Gender and Culture Change, 1700-1835*. Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 1998, "Introduction," p. 3-11.
- 4) Richard White. *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815*, Introduction, p. ix-xv.

September 18, 20

Pre-contact Aboriginal Religions and Cultures

This week's reading and lecture will explore the pre-contact religious universes inhabited by indigenous peoples: exploring their baseline assumptions about the nature of reality, time, human origins, the nature and purpose of life, and the conceptualization of human relationships with powerful non-human entities.

Readings:

- 5) Emma Anderson. "Take me not back Amongst the Beasts:" *The Religious Journey of a Seventeenth Century Native Convert*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, forthcoming, 2007, Chapter One, "Your God has not come to our Country."
- 6) Graham Harvey. *Animism: Respecting the Living World*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2006, p. 99-114, 139-152.

7) "The Woman Who Fell From the Sky," in Donna Rosenberg, ed. *World Mythology: An Anthology of the Great Myths and Epics*. Chicago: NTC Publishing, 1999, 625-633

8) "Give me Back my Father" and "The Ice Baby" in Lawrence Millman, ed. *Wolverine Creates the World: Labrador Indian Tales*. Santa Barbara: Capra Press, 1993, p. 68-69, 76.

September 25

Religious Life in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Europe and European Preconceptions Regarding Aboriginal Cultures

Long before European explorers and missionaries ever met actual North American aboriginal peoples, they entertained a variety of ideas and images about them that had religious, folkloric, Classical, and didactic elements. These images and ideas are important for what they reveal about the assumptions and expectations of Europeans, and their examination will help us to identify and interpret European biases in post-contact documents. Moreover, dizzying religious change and brutal conflict in European culture profoundly affected the way in which Europeans were to relate to the aboriginal peoples they encountered. **We are honored to have Prof. Cornelius Jaenen, Professor Emeritus of the University of Ottawa History Department, join us as a guest speaker.**

9) Emma Anderson, *Take me not Back Amongst the Beasts*, "Preface: Between Worlds"

10) Cornelius Jaenen, *Friend and Foe: Aspects of French-Amerindian Cultural Contact in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976, Chapter I, "Amerindian Nature," 12-34.

11) Michel Eyquem de Montaigne, "Of Cannibals," in *The Essays of Montaigne*. London: Oxford University Press, 1927, p. 202-215 (13 pages)

September 27-October 2

Establishing the "Middle Ground"

The readings and lecture for this week explore aboriginal people's initial impressions of missionary Europeans and how they and the European traders they encountered were able to forge a shared, mutually intelligible culture or "middle ground" during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This middle ground existed because it was felt by both groups to be in their best interest. The demographic dominance of aboriginal peoples and their control of the natural resources Europeans wished to exploit dissuaded Europeans from the use of force to change aboriginal lifeways, as was the case in New Spain. Their interest in the technology and material culture of the Europeans ensured their tolerance of their often strange ways.

Readings:

12) Cornelius Jaenen. "Amerindian Views of French Culture in the Seventeenth Century," *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. 55, #2, June 1974, p. 261-291.

13) Richard White, *The Middle Ground*, Chapter 2, Selections, p. 50-53, 60-82 (25 pages).

14) James Axtell, "The White Indians of Colonial America," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 32, 1975 selection, 325-337.

October 4-18

The Advent of the Missionaries

Contact with Christian beliefs and rituals constituted a decisive turning point in the history of aboriginal religions, a “second contact” which in many ways challenged the middle ground established by a hundred years of economic contact. Missionaries did not seek to engage aboriginal culture for the same reasons as did their secular counterparts: they sought to “save souls” rather than barter furs. Often perceiving aboriginal society as mired in sin and ignorance, Catholic missionaries sought to impose their own theological beliefs rather than negotiate a shared culture. Though their tiny numbers made this religious imposition a dream rather than a reality, seventeenth-century missionaries pioneered the assimilative educational techniques which would dominate nineteenth century aboriginal residential schools. Christian theology and imagery were received by aboriginal peoples with a variety of responses: intrigued curiosity, sophisticated theological debate, vociferous and violent rejection, indifference, and devoted belief. The lectures and readings for this section will introduce students to the range of aboriginal responses to Christianity, as well as to the changing missionization techniques employed by Protestant and Catholic missionaries.

Readings:

15) Emma Anderson, *Take me not Back Amongst the Beasts*, Chapter Two, p. 1-33.

16) Daniel Richter. “Iroquois vs. Iroquois: Jesuit Missions and Christianity in Village Politics, 1642-1686,” *Ethnohistory*, 32(1) 1-12.

17) Allan Greer. “Conversion and Identity: Iroquois Christianity in Seventeenth Century New France,” in *Conversions: Old World and New*, 2003, p. 175-192.

18) Rebecca Kugel, “Of Missionaries and their Cattle: Ojibwa Perceptions of a Missionary as Evil Shaman,” *Ethnohistory*, 41:2, p. 227-244.

October 23-30:

From Majority to Minority: Cultural Imposition and Resistance

After the cessation of continental hostilities in the early nineteenth century, conflicts in which aboriginal peoples played a central military role, aboriginal peoples, who had been decimated by disease and warfare, gradually became a minority within their own country. As EuroCanadians became demographically dominant, they repudiated their shared “middle ground” with aboriginal culture, and renewed their attempts dramatically to change the religious and cultural practices of First Nations people. Their campaign to alienate aboriginal peoples from their traditional religious beliefs and practices often targeted the youngest and most vulnerable members of native societies: their children. This section will examine the difficult legacy of aboriginal residential schools in Canada, examining the motivations of EuroCanadian educators and the experiences of the aboriginal children who attended the schools. **On October 30th we are honored to have Mike DeGagne, Executive Director of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, join our class.**

Readings:

19) Emma Anderson, *Take me not Back Amongst the Beasts*, Conclusion section, “Pastedechouan Now.”

20) George Fulford and Louis Bird: “Who is Breaking the First Commandment?” Oblate Teachings and Cree Responses in the Hudson Bay Lowlands in *Reading Beyond Words: Contexts for Native History*. Jennifer Brown and Elizabeth Vibert, eds. Peterborough:Broadview Press, 2003, p. 293-318.

21) “Residential Schools as Total Institutions” in Roland Chrisjohn and Sherri Young, *The Circle Game: Shadows and Substance in the Indian Residential School Experience in Canada*. Penticton: Theytus Books, 1997, p. 68-76 .

22) Celia Haig-Brown. *Resistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian Residential School*. Vancouver: Tillacum Library, 1988, Chapter 4, “The Resistance,” p. 98-114.

23) Randy Fred’s “Forward” to Celia Haig Brown’s *Resistance and Renewal*, p. 15-24.

November 1-6

Holy Fire: Religion and Resistance

Religion, be it aboriginal traditional religion, Christianity, or syncretic combinations of the two belief systems, played a major role in aboriginal resistance to EuroCanadian presence and aspirations throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries. This section will explore the intriguing relationship between religion and rebellion by considering how Christianity and traditional religions could be both conservative and radical forces in aboriginal people’s lives, often at the same time. **We are honored this week to host Prof. Jean-Guy Goulet of St. Paul University.**

Readings:

24) Gregory Evans Dowd. “Thinking and Believing: Nativism and Unity in the Ages of Pontiac and Tecumseh,” in Peter Mancall and James Merrell, eds. *American Encounters: Natives and Newcomers from European Contact to Indian Removal, 1500-1850*. New York: Routledge, 2000, p. 380-391.

25) Louis Riel. “The Diaries of Louis Riel,” excerpted in Christopher Kauffman, *The Crossing of Two Roads: Being Catholic and Native in the United States*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003.

26) Winona Wheeler, “The Journals and Voices of a Church of England Native Catechist: Askenootow (Charles Pratt), 1851-1884” in Jennifer Brown and Elizabeth Vibert, *Reading Beyond Words*, p. 237-261.

27) Jean-Guy Goulet, “Religious Dualism Among Athapaskan Catholics,” in Olive Dickason, ed., *Native Imprint: The Contributions of First Peoples to Canada’s Character*. Edmonton: Athabasca University, 1995, p. 241-262.

November 8-13

Aboriginal Identity and its Appropriation by Non-Natives

In the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, aboriginal people faced systemic management from outside the community which transformed the way in which they viewed their collective identity. Moreover, aboriginal attempts to resist assimilation into the dominant culture led to a reappraisal of traditional cultural divisions and the dawn of a pan-aboriginal consciousness. At the same time, members of the majority EuroCanadian culture sought to interpret aboriginal culture and identify themselves with aspects of aboriginal heritage, with some, such as Grey Owl, even going so far as to create wholly fictitious aboriginal alter egos.

Readings:

28) Ken Coates, “Being Aboriginal: The Cultural Politics of Identity, Membership and Belonging Among First Nations in Canada,” in *Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: Futures and Identities*. Montreal: Association for Canadian Studies, 1999, p. 23-38.

29) Daniel Francis. *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture*. Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1992, Chapter Six: "Celebrity Indians and Plastic Shamans," p. 109-123, 131-143.

30) J. R. Miller. *Lethal Legacy: Current Native Controversies in Canada*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2004, Chapter 1 "Designer Labels: Shaping Aboriginal Identity," p. 1-6.

November 20-29

Contemporary Challenges in Aboriginal-EuroCanadian Relations

EuroCanadian-aboriginal religious encounter is not a dusty chapter in Canada's history, but an ongoing, critically important dialogue in our own times. Religious belief systems continue to inform the worldviews of both aboriginal and EuroCanadians as they attempt to negotiate with one another on issues of self-determination, land rights and usage, the environment and health, compensation for residential schools, and cultural and religious revitalization. This section will address these current debates and others, as illuminated by lectures and student research presentations.

Readings:

31) J. R. Miller, "Making Our Way Forward" in *Lethal Legacy, Current Native Controversies in Canada*. McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 2004, p. 267- 284.

32) Duane Champagne, "Rethinking Native Relations with Contemporary Nation-States," in *Indigenous Peoples and the Modern State*. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 2005, p. 3-20.

33) Naomi Adelson, "*Being Alive Well: Health and the Politics of Cree Wellbeing*," Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000, p. 58-85, 99-111.

34) Melissa Pflung, "Pimadaziwin: Contemporary Rituals in the Odawa Community," in Lee Irwin, ed. *Native American Spirituality, A Reader*. Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska, 2000, p. 121-143.

35) Suzanne Fournier and Ernie Crey, "Infinite Comfort and Time: Healing Survivors of Sexual Abuse," in *Stolen From Our Embrace: The Abduction of First Nations Children and the Restoration of Aboriginal Communities*. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1997, p. 115-142.

December 4

Conclusion of the Course and Preparation for the Final Examination

Class summary and in-class review session. Bring your questions.