COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will give students a general introduction to the field of American Indian Studies. The course is divided into three general areas: 1) "History, Law, and Government," 2) "Cultural and Creative Expressions," and 3) "Policy Studies." The primary goal of this course is that students understand, analyze and articulate in a scholarly way (not mere opinions) fundamental issues in each of these areas in American Indian Studies. A secondary goal is that students further develop their skills in research and critical thinking when examining issues pertaining to American Indians.

The primary method for analyzing texts in this class will be the representation of ideas in the course material.

We examine how texts and videos represent specific topics or issues because this kind of analysis often results in important insights into literature or film.

Consider how your favorite book or movie represents “race” or gender. If you list every occurrence of these issues and then consider them carefully, you might find some interesting or even surprising patterns about how the book or movie represents these issues. You might find that the book or movie is consistent in its approach to the issue, or the book or movie is ambivalent or conflicted about the issue. You might even find that the book or movie has something important to teach us about the issue.

In other words, by examining how texts represent specific issues, we are not imposing an argument onto the texts, making judgments about the texts, or attempting to determine the meaning of a text. Instead we are “hearing” and reporting what the texts tell us about these issues.

A second reason why I use this method is to emphasize that, in this short class, you are receiving just a small part of the larger discussion about every issue here. I select the readings for this course carefully so that you receive excellent information about tribal culture, history, issues, and so on. But we cannot read three or four pieces of information in a unit and make statements such as “The Oneida believe X” or “Indians believe Y” because indigenous people have varying perspectives on every issue. We can say with certainty that the “course information represents” a particular issue. But we can’t say that we know what an entire tribe or what all Indians believe.

PREREQUISITES
• Students must be self-motivated.
• Students must be reasonably proficient with the use of a computer for this class.

To do well in this class, students must do the following:

• Take the time to read the course material
• Write clearly and correctly
• Recall specific information from the readings
• Understand theoretically challenging concepts
• Be willing to look up words that they do not understand in the dictionary from the readings

Students who are not skilled in these areas are advised to take a different class this term.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

There are no texts to buy for this course.

Course Readings are available on UWM’s D2L server: http://d2l.uwm.edu

ONLINE COURSE

This course is based on the UWM’s U-Pace approach, but it is not a U-Pace course. There are significant differences between this course and the standard UWM U-Pace course.

This course will take place completely online. There are no special meeting times or office hours. This online course requires that you be self-motivated and a good time manager. If you are not a good time manager, I would strongly urge you to consider taking a class that occurs in a classroom. The units in this course require a fair amount of time to read, listen, and understand. Try not to put work off your work until the end of the term or you may not achieve the grade you desire.

COURSE DATES

The course begins on January 2, 2018 at 9:00 am and ends on January 19, 2018 at 11:59 pm. (The D2L site will be turned off at that time.)

GRADES

This is a U-Pace type course with 20 units. You must complete each unit before you can go to the next unit. Your grade will be determined by how many units you complete. To pass the course with a D minus, you must complete 10 units. To make an A in the course, you must complete 20 units.