

INDIGENOUS SOLIDARITY WORK

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN URBAN NATIVE COMMUNITIES

RESIDENTIAL COLLEGE IN THE ARTS & HUMANITIES | MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
SPRING 2011 | RCAH 292B SECTION 003

PROFESSOR INFORMATION |

Dylan A.T. Miner, PhD
C230J Snyder Hall
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884-1323

DAY + TIME |

TTh 12:40-2:30 | C203 Snyder Hall

OFFICE HOURS |

T 11:00-12:40 + by appointment

'Survival is a response; survivance is a standpoint, a worldview and a presence.'

– Gerald Vizenor, *Postindian Conversations*

'To rethink collaboration between indigene and colonizer is both to desire it and to ask troubling questions about it.'

– Alison Jones, with Kuni Jenkins, *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies*

'The current institutions and systems are designed to maintain the privilege of the colonizer and the subjugation of the colonized, and to produce generations of people who will never question their position within this relationship.'

– Waziyatawin and Michael Yellow Bird, *For Indigenous Eyes Only*

COURSE DESCRIPTION |

This course is founded on notions of restorative justice, Indigenous autonomy, and Indigenous-settler collaboration. Throughout the semester, students will collaborate with existing Indigenous organizations, initiatives, institutions, communities, and individuals throughout Anishinaabewaki. Before, during, and after this type of engagement may take place, students must be prepared to critically re-think the historic and contemporary processes of colonization and their daily effects on Indigenous society. In this way, students should be prepared 'to ask troubling questions about' Native-non-Native collaborations, as well as their own place position within current institutions and systems.

Working with local Indigenous organizations, including Indigenous Youth Empowerment Program, Lansing Eastern Native American Club (with funding from the National Museum of the American Indian), Michigan Indian Education Council, Michigan Native American Arts Initiative, Nokomis Learning Center, and Woodlands Indian Community Center, students will engage with issues relevant to the urban Native community in Mid-Michigan. Depending on which organization students choose to work with, civic engagement projects may include working with youth, interviewing artists, conducting oral histories with elders, as well as numerous other forms of cultural and community-based engagements. Although this course will focus primarily on the urban Native community in Lansing, it will provide students the basic tools necessary to work collaboratively and reflectively with other Indigenous organizations.

POSSIBLE COLLABORATIONS |

1. Indigenous Youth Empowerment Program
2. Lansing Eastern Native American Club, NMAI-funded
3. Michigan Indian Education Council
4. Michigan Native American Arts Initiative

- 5. Nokomis Learning Center
- 6. Woodlands Indian Community Center

OBJECTIVES |

1. Due to the interdisciplinarity of this course, the goals and objectives are likewise multiple. By reading, discussing, and analyzing classroom material, as well as engaging in community projects, students will accomplish the following:

- Begin to see the particularities of Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies;
- Understand the living and open-ended nature of Indigenous knowledge;
- View the construction and maintenance of Native society as a viable and workable alternatives to the ongoing legacy of capitalism and colonialism;
- Develop an awareness of contemporary Indigenous issues in Mid-Michigan, the Great Lakes, Indian Country, Turtle Island, and the Fourth World, more generally.

2. The course will also help students meet general liberal learning outcomes, as outlined by the American Association of Colleges and Universities.

These include, but are not limited to:

- Develop a robust *knowledge of human cultures and the natural world*;
- Improve *intellectual and practical skills*, such as inquiry and analysis, critical and creative thinking, communication, literacies, and problem solving;
- Enhance *personal and social responsibility* through direct civic participation, ongoing intercultural competency, and continued ethical reasoning and action;
- Demonstrate *integrative learning* by synthesizing Indigenous and Western knowledge across disciplinary fields.

3. Finally, the course meets RCAH civic engagement goals, as discussed in the RCAH grading rubric. These include, but are not limited to, the student’s ability to:

- Apply the generative model of civic engagement in an urban Native context;
- Recognize the interdependency of multiple elements from the RCAH engagement model;
- Understand one’s own work within broader contexts;
- Demonstrate an ability to be a reflective learner and community partner;
- Engage in authentic collaboration with an Indigenous community partner;
- Ability to synthesize knowledge from various sources and knowledge-bases;
- Develop the capacity to bridge one’s individual commitment with that of the Native community.

READING LIST |

- 01. Winona LaDuke (2005). *Recovering the Sacred: The Power of Naming and Claiming*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.
- 02. Wanda McCaslin, ed. (2005). *Justice as Healing: Indigenous Ways*. St. Paul, MN: Living Justice Press.
- 03. Waziwatayin Angel Wilson and Michael Yellow Bird (2005). *For Indigenous Eyes Only: A Decolonization Handbook*. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press.
- 04. PDFs available on angel.msu.edu

GRADING |

expectations statement	10%
audio/video documentation project	30%
<i>For Indigenous Eyes Only</i> workbook	20%
community work	20%

GRADING SCALE |

4.0	100-93
3.5	92-86
3.0	85-81
2.5	80-76
2.0	75-71

weekly reflections	10%	1.5	70-66
classroom participation	10%	1.0	65-61
		0.5	60-55
		0.0	54-0

ATTENDANCE |

As part of the Residential College in Arts and Humanities, attendance is expected!! Although I will not be actively ‘taking roll,’ you will be obliged to reflect upon classroom and community-based activities and discussion. Continued absences will alter your ability to comprehend the overall themes of the course and engage with community partners. Your presence in the classroom is needed for full participation credit. As such, your attendance may positively or negatively impact your final grade through multiple avenues.

PARTICIPATION |

Active discussion is paramount to intellectual development. As such, 10% of your final grade is based on participation with another 20% earned from your engagement work. You are expected to arrive to class sessions and your engagements fully prepared and on time. For the classroom this includes having thoroughly read all assigned readings and prepared to critically/creatively discuss the material. For your weekly engagements, this includes whatever the partner requires of you. You are expected to speak during each and every class, however quantity of participation is not a surrogate for quality. Your participation grade will take into consideration the frequency, as well as excellence, of your participation in classroom discussions.

PROGRAMMATIC EVALUATION |

This course will be participating in a programmatic evaluation of civic engagement offerings in RCAH. Assessing the success RCAH is doing in facilitating student learning, evaluators will be asking students to take part in focus groups, talk back sessions, and individual interviews at various points during the course. Periodically, evaluators will also observe our classroom and community work. This is an evaluation of RCAH, not of individual student ability, nor that of our partners. Your input, which is entirely voluntary, is critical to improving RCAH as a center for learning, scholarship, and engagement for years to come.

POLICY ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM + INTEGRITY |

In agreement with Article 2.3.3 of the *Academic Freedom Report* which states that ‘the student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards,’ it is expected that students neither plagiarize nor copy from a peer’s intellectual or creative work. In addition, the RCAH adheres to the policies on academic honesty as specified in *General Student Regulations* 1.0, Protection of Scholarship and Grades, and in the All-University Policy on Integrity of Scholarship and Grades, which are included in *Spartan Life: Student Handbook + Resource Guide* (<http://www.vps.msu.edu/SpLife/index.htm>). Students who engage in academically dishonest activities may receive a 0.0 on that given assignment or for the overall course.

POLICY ON ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES |

Students with disabilities that may interfere with completing your assigned course work may speak with me, as well as contact the *Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities* to establish reasonable accommodations. For an appointment with a counselor, call 353-9642 [voice] or 355-1293 [TTY].

DESCRIPTION OF INDIGENOUS PARTNERS |**1. INDIGENOUS YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM**

contact Ashley Harding (Diné) and/or Prof. Torrez (Xicana), Wednesday 3:00-5:00

The Native community in metropolitan Lansing is in need of support for their youth and families. The Indigenous Youth Empwerment Program (IYEP) specifically addresses the following topics: building community, empowering Indigenous youth, and providing academic services. Therefore, IYEP offers an after-school program in conjunction with a four-week summer camp for Native K-12 students in the Lansing School District. During the after-school program, students meet weekly to promote effective academic habits through creating a safe space for tutoring, friendships, and cultural exploration. The summer camp will continue with the after-school program's goals, in addition to further engaging in various activities to promote learning in the areas of culture, health, academics, and community.

2. LANSING EASTERN NATIVE AMERICAN CLUB, NMAI-FUNDED ARTIST LEADERSHIP

contact Dylan Miner (Métis), Wednesday and/or Thursday 3:00-5:00

Working with five to ten youth collaborators, we will collectively produce eight unique lowrider bicycles based on Anishinaabeg history and culture. Collaborators will begin to think critically about sustainable transportation, build important skills in bicycle maintenance, develop a lifelong interest in healthy activities, learn Indigenous history and the Anishinaabemowin language, in addition to building a bridge with elders. By tapping into youth interests, this project integrates existing practices with the enhancement of traditional knowledge. Each bike will focus on the life of a particular figure important to the urban Indian community in Lansing. Once complete, Michigan State University's LookOut! Gallery will host an exhibition of the bicycles and supporting documentation, with the potential for additional exhibitions at tribal institutions to follow.

3. MICHIGAN INDIAN EDUCATION COUNCIL

contact Sharon Kota (Anishinaabe) and/or Dylan Miner (Métis), arranged

Our mission is to ensure the Anishinabe culture and traditions through educational collaboration, coordination, networking, and strategic planning. Many organizations talk about combining the best of tradition and innovation. The MIEC has been making a habit of it for more than a 39 years. Our goal is to provide leadership, which will foster continued improvement of academic achievement and to address school-related variables that adversely affect the educational outcomes for Native youth in Michigan. We continue building the foundation for a brighter future while celebrating our rich traditions. We believe that to remain a leader means you never rest on your laurels and never stop learning and growing. Our rich history as an organization supports our belief that we can contribute practical solutions, and have a larger, more visible role in developing leaders for the future.

4. MICHIGAN NATIVE AMERICAN ARTS INITIATIVE

contact Dylan Miner (Métis) and/or Ahz Teeple (Anishinaabe/Diné), arranged

Michigan Native American Arts Initiative (MNAAI) is a project established to strengthen Indigenous arts in Michigan. Its goal is to find ways to creatively increase the sharing of information between and about artists, as well as strengthen opportunities for the support and recognition of artists. The initiative recognizes that Indigenous culture celebrates the arts through the creation of objects, painting, dance, theater, writing, oratory, music, and an array of interdisciplinary ways. MNAAI seeks input from all Indigenous artists and those associated with them: artists, singers, musicians, dancers, gallery owners, museum staff, pow wow committees, collectors, and those who appreciate and promote their work.

5. NOKOMIS LEARNING CENTER

contact Anne Hodge, arranged

Nokomis Learning Center was founded in 1988. Nokomis Learning Center is dedicated to the preservation and presentation of the history, arts, and culture of the Anishinaabe people—the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi nations. The Center fulfills this mission through programs, exhibitions, and special events. The building contains an art gallery, an exhibit classroom and a gift shop. Over 20,000 visitors have participated in programs since its doors first opened. The center provides tours for over 200 groups each year.

6. WOODLANDS INDIAN COMMUNITY CENTER

contact Becky Roy (Anishinaabe), arranged

WEEK ONE**11 January 2010**

Readings: None

13 January 2010

Readings:

1. Alison Jones, with Kuni Jenkins. "Rethinking Collaboration: Working the Indigene-Colonizer Hyphen." In Norman K. Denzin, Yvonna S. Lincoln and Linda Tuhiwai Smith, eds. *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2008); PDF.
2. Lannesse O. Baker. "A Guide to Working with American Indians: Handbook of Information, Forming Partnerships for Policy Development." St. Paul, MN: American Indian Policy Center, nd, PDF.

WEEK TWO**18 January 2010**

Readings:

1. Eve Tuck. "Re-visioning Action: Participatory Action Research and Indigenous Theories of Change." *Urban Review* (2009) 41: 47-65.
2. Michael D. McNally. "Indigenous Pedagogy in the Classroom: A Service Learning Model for Discussion." *American Indian Quarterly* 28: 3 and 4 (Summer and Fall 2004), PDF.

20 January 2010

Readings:

1. Wilson and Yellow Bird, 1-7.
2. LaDuke, 11-15.
3. McCaslin, 3-9.

Watch:

4. *Reel Injun* (Neil Diamond, 2009)

WEEK THREE**25 January 2010**

Readings: LaDuke, Part 1: Sacred Lands and Sacred Places

27 January 2010

Readings:

1. William W. Warren. *History of the Ojibway People* (Minneapolis: Minnesota Historical Society, 2009 [1885]), PDF.
2. Anton Treuer. *Living our Language*, PDF.

Due: Expectations Statement

WEEK FOUR**01 February 2010**

Readings:

1. Susan Applegate Krouse and Heather A. Howard, eds. *Keeping the Campfires Going: Native Women's Activism in Urban Communities* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), PDF.

03 February 2010

Readings:

1. LaDuke, Part 2: Ancestors, Images, and Our Lives
Begin Solidarity Work

WEEK FIVE**08 February 2010**

Readings: 1. LaDuke, Part 3: Seeds and Medicine

10 February 2010

Readings: None
Continue Solidarity Work

WEEK SIX**15 February 2010**

Readings: 1. LaDuke, Part 4: Relatives

17 February 2010

Readings: 1. Wilson and Yellowbird, Chs. 2 and 3
Continue Solidarity Work

WEEK SEVEN**22 February 2010**

Readings: McCaslin, 13-52

24 February 2010

Readings: 1. Wilson and Yellowbird, Chs. 4 and 5
Continue Solidarity Work

WEEK EIGHT**01 March 2010**

Readings: 1. McCaslin, 54-83

03 March 2010

Readings: 1. Wilson and Yellowbird, Chs. 6 and 7
Continue Solidarity Work

WEEK NINE**15 March 2010**

Readings: 1. McCaslin, 87-120

17 March 2010

Readings: 1. Wilson and Yellowbird, Chs. 8 and 9
Continue Solidarity Work

WEEK TEN**22 March 2010**

Readings: 1. McCaslin, 121-175.

24 March 2010

Readings: 1. Wilson and Yellowbird, Chs. 10 and 11
Continue Solidarity Work

WEEK ELEVEN**29 March 2010**

Readings: 1. McCaslin, 177-211

31 March 2010

Readings: 1. Wilson and Yellowbird, Ch. 12
Continue Solidarity Work

WEEK TWELVE**05 April 2010**

Readings: 1. McCaslin, 213-274

07 April 2010

Readings: None
Continue Solidarity Work
Due: *For Indigenous Eyes Only* Workbook

WEEK THIRTEEN**12 April 2010**

Readings: 1. McCaslin, 275-307

14 April 2010

Readings: 1. McCaslin, 308-344
Continue Solidarity Work

WEEK FOURTEEN**19 April 2010**

Readings: 1. McCaslin, 345-368

21 April 2010

Readings: 1. McCaslin, 369-407
Continue Solidarity Work

WEEK FIFTEEN**26 April 2010**

Readings: 1. McCaslin, 409-434

28 April 2010

Readings: None
Continue Solidarity Work
Due: Audio/Video Documentation Project

WEEK SIXTEEN

05 May, 12:45-2:45

FINAL REFLECTIONS

Final Examination Period

NOTE

This is a working document. Additional readings and/or assignments may be inserted or altered as this seminar organically develops. These changes, if transpiring at all, will depend on the interests and needs of the class, as well as the time constraints of the academic semester.