

Title:

Negotiating Conflicting Understandings of the Land from Luther Standing Bear to Contemporary Oceti Sakowin Writers

Grade Level:

200-Level, General Education, College Course

Theme:

Conflicting Values of the Land

Duration:

3 to 4 weeks

Goal:

Students will learn how Oceti Sakowin cultures' understanding of the land conflicts with Western values.

Objectives:

1. Students will understand the nature and history of the conflicting land philosophies.
2. Students will understand how such conflicts affect(ed) the lives of individual tribal writers, both past and present.
3. Students will learn some of the legal battles related to the land, both past and present.

South Dakota State University Standards:

This course fulfills South Dakota State University's Institutional Graduation Requirement #2: Cultural Awareness and Social and Environmental Responsibility. Consistent with the standards of this requirement, students will "acquire knowledge about the world's peoples - their cultures, arts, and environments - that prepares them for further study, deepens their understanding of the human condition, and strengthens their commitment to social and environmental responsibility."

Cultural Concept:

For Oceti Sakowin people, all the universe is alive. We will focus specifically on the land as a living entity.

Cultural Background:

Vine Deloria, Jr., explains that for the Plains Indians, and this includes the Oceti Sakowin, "the universe is alive," that "nothing is incidental," and the land is at once historically, culturally, and spiritually important. Thus, the ideology behind private property, the division of land into allotments, and the exploitation of land exclusively for profit not only differs from but runs directly against traditional beliefs of the Oceti Sakowin. The readings and our discussion of them will illustrate how this conflict has persisted from the nineteenth century to the present.

Student Activities:

1. Readings, beginning with "The Moral Universe" (Deloria, Jr.) and "How the Lakota Came Into the World" (Walker), continuing with Standing Bear's *Land of the Spotted Eagle*, and ending

with writings by contemporary Indian writers about the importance of He Sapa (the Black Hills).

2. Small and Large Group Discussion of Assigned Readings
3. Quizzes at the beginning of each class based on assigned readings
4. Possible Guest Speaker sponsored by the South Dakota Humanities Council: Dr. Craig Howe will speak about his family allotment on the Pine Ridge Reservation and about the cultural importance of He Sapa to him and to the Oceti Sakowin people.
5. 4-6 page essay assignment

Resources:

I. Readings from DeLoria, Walker, Standing Bear, and Howe, et al.

II. Images of Luther Standing Bear, of Land Allotment Stakes, and of He Sapa (the Black Hills, especially sites of spiritual significance).

III. Visiting Speaker: Dr. Craig Howe

Assessment:

In addition to their participation in class discussion and their performance of the quizzes, students will be assessed on their execution of the paper assignment. They should develop their papers around a well-articulated thesis and rigorously support that thesis by integrating, explaining and analyzing material from our readings and class discussion.

References:

Selections from Vine Deloria, Jr.'s *Spirit and Reason: The Vine Deloria, Jr., Reader*. (1999). Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing.

Howe, Craig, Lydia Whirlwind Soldier and Lanniko L. Lee, eds. *He Sapa Woihanble: Black Hills Dream*. St. Paul, MN: Living Justice Press, 2011.

Standing Bear, Luther. *Land of the Spotted Eagle*. (2006). Lincoln: U of Nebraska.

Walker, James R. (1917) iHow the Lakota Came Upon the Worldi in *The Sun Dance and Other Ceremonies of the Oglala Division of the Teton Dakota (Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History, Vol. 16, pt. 2, pp. 172-173)*. New York: Museum of Natural History.

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