

GPHY 874* SEMINAR IN CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY (FALL TERM 2011)

REPRESENTING NATIVE PEOPLES IN THE AMERICAS: ISSUES AND DEBATES

Geography 874* serves as a forum for examining how issues and debates that charge the discipline of anthropology connect with, and resonate in, geography. The seminar is organized thematically around the representation of native peoples in the Americas, with weekly classes identifying and discussing ongoing controversies related to indigenous history, culture, and experiences of colonialism. Two countries, Canada and Guatemala, are focused on for their myriad empirical merits, but the vicissitudes of “being native” in other national contexts, including the United States, are also explored. Students are encouraged to develop their research papers on topics that afford a critical look either at one native group in particular or that allow in-depth analysis of key events and circumstances in an aspect of indigenous life that interests them.

Course Texts and Assignments

Thomas King, *The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative* (2003).

Rigoberta Menchú, *I, Rigoberta Menchú: An Indian Woman in Guatemala* ([1983] 1984).

Translated by Ann Wright. Edited and Introduced by Elisabeth Burgos-Debray.

These two books may be considered “required texts.” A critique of either of them (or both of them if you feel so inclined) forms the basis of Assignment 1. Copies are available from the Campus Bookstore. In addition to these two titles, especially given the attention paid to the nature and validity of oral tradition in several of our classes, a perusal of Arturo Arias, editor, *The Rigoberta Menchú Controversy* (2001) and Greg Grandin, *Who Is Rigoberta Menchú* (2011) is also recommended. These books, too, are available at the Campus Bookstore.

Assignment 2 is a personal reflection following our field trip to the Royal Ontario Museum (scheduled for November 1) and Assignment 3 is a research paper conducted on any matter deemed pertinent to native cultural survival, or its compromise, erosion, and demise.

Assignment 1 (review essay of 1,000-1,250 words worth 25%) is due October 18.

Assignment 2 (personal essay of 1,000-1,250 words worth 25%) is due November 9.

Assignment 3 (research paper of 3,000-4,000 words worth 50%) is due mid- December.

An organizational meeting will take place during the first week of classes on **September 13 at 9am in MC E310**. This meeting will likely last no more than an hour or so. Thereafter class will meet each Tuesday from 8.30am to 11.30am in the same location.

September 13: Organizational Meeting

September 20: Setting the Scene/Anthropology, Authority, and Authorship

Readings: Ehrenreich, Jeffrey. Critique of *Anthropology on Trial* (1983), in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 87 (1985), pp. 218-221.

Geertz, Clifford. "Being Here: Whose Life Is It Anyway?: Anthropology and the Scene of Writing," from *Works and Lives: The Anthropologist as Author* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), pp. 129-149.

Nicholson, H.B. "Bernadino de Sahagún," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Mesoamerican Cultures*, Vol. 3 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 105-113

Film Screening: *Anthropology on Trial* (1983).

September 27: Rigoberta Menchú/Testimonio on Trial

Readings: Selections from Rigoberta Menchú I, *Rigoberta Menchú: An Indian Woman in Guatemala* ([1983] 1984).

Selections from David Stoll, *Rigoberta Menchú and the Story of All Poor Guatemalans* (1999).

Selections from Arturo Arias, ed., *The Rigoberta Menchú Controversy* (2001).

Selections from Greg Grandin, *Who is Rigoberta Menchú* (2011)

Film Screening: *When the Mountains Tremble* (1983).

October 4: Telling Native Tales

Readings: W. George Lovell, "Nobel K'iche," from *A Beauty That Hurts: Life and Death in Guatemala* (2010) and "Mayans, Missionaries, Evidence, and Truth," *Journal of Historical Geography* 16(3): 1990, pp. 277-294.

Power Point Presentation: "At Peace in the Corn."

October 11: Lost in Narration

Readings: Selections from Thomas King, *The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative* (2003)

Massey Lecture/Radio Broadcast: "I'm Not the Indian You Think I Am."

October 18: Tribes and Tribulations/Indians and the Law

Guest Presentation by Professor William A. Starna (SUNY, Oneonta) on "The US Federal Acknowledgment Process."

Readings: "Code of Federal Regulations."

October 25: Origins, Chronologies, Numbers, and Controversies

Readings: Selections from, and commentary about, Charles C. Mann, *1491: New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus* (2005).

November 1: Fieldwork in a Museum/Visit to the Royal Ontario Museum (Toronto)

Readings: Selections from Shannon Bagg and Lynda Jessup, eds., *On Aboriginal Representation in the Gallery* (2002).

November 8: Subjects, Savages, or Citizens? First Nationhood in Canada

Readings: Selections from, and commentary about, Frances Widdowson and Albert Howard, *Disrobing the Aboriginal Industry: The Deception Behind Indigenous Cultural Preservation* (2008).

Film Screening: Duncan Campbell Scott – *The Poet and the Indians* (1995).

November 15, 22, and 29: Student Presentations/Research Paper Discussions