ANTY 323X.01: Native Peoples of Montana

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Course: Anthropology 323X: Native Peoples of Montana

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Course Description: The purpose of this course is to provide students with an in-depth introduction to the diversity and complexity of Native American societies that came to inhabit the state of Montana as part of the Northwestern Great Plains. Using an ethnohistorical and ethnological approach, the course examines the culture history of various Native American nations within the region, highlighting the social processes that shaped their lives prior to the advent of the reservation era. The course also examines each society’s social and cultural institutions to form a cross-cultural comparative perspective.

Course Objectives:

1. Students will evaluate data within a diachronic and cultural framework about indigenous peoples of Montana to understand socio-cultural diversity;
2. Students will synthesize ideas and information with regard to historical causes, course of events, and their consequences for Montana’s indigenous societies to interpret human activities;
3. Students will analyze human behavior, ideas, and institutions comparatively to derive an historical and cultural perspective of intercultural complexities and perspectives.

Required text:

Denig, E., Five Tribes of the Upper Missouri, University of Oklahoma Press.

Recommended texts: The following works are highly recommended supplemental readings for the course. They are books that offer either a new perspective, insight, or provide a basis for cross-cultural comparison. These texts will enrich your knowledge and breadth of the region, the peoples, their cultural, and historical experiences.

Bohr, R., Gifts from the Thunder Beings, University of Nebraska Press. (Possible 35 points).

Howe, N., Retelling Trickster in Naapi’s Language, University Press of Colorado. (Possible 15 points).

Bigart, R. and J. McDonald, “Sometimes People get Mad when the Blackfeet Kill Us.” University of Nebraska Press. (Possible 35 points).


Extra credit: A student wishing to do extra credit can write a book review using one or all of the recommended readings. Each review is due the final day of lecture. No late papers will be accepted. Submit the extra credit papers in hard copy format (No electronic papers will be accepted). The assignment will be worth the possible assigned points for each book review.
Course Requirements: Each student will be responsible for all reading and lecture material for in-class discussion and exams. There will be two exams. Each exam will be worth 100 points each. The test’s format will be discussed in class prior to the exam. Grading is on a straight point system. **There is no negotiation for points to raise your grade.** If you did not receive the grade you want on the midterm, consider doing the extra credit.