# NAS 301 Syllabus

## I. ASCRC General Education Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Group 10: Indigenous and Global and Ethics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dept/Program</td>
<td>Native American Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course #</td>
<td>301</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course Title</td>
<td>Native American Religion and Philosophy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prerequisite</td>
<td>RELS 301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credits</td>
<td>3</td>
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## II. Endorsement/Approvals

Complete the form and obtain signatures before submitting to Faculty Senate Office.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please type / print name</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructor</td>
<td>Kathryn Shanley</td>
<td>9/16/08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone / Email</td>
<td>5832</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program Chair</td>
<td>Wade Davies</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dean</td>
<td>Gerald Fetz</td>
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## III. Description and purpose of the course:

General Education courses must be introductory and foundational. They must emphasize breadth, context, and connectedness; and relate course content to students’ future lives: See Preamble: [http://www.umt.edu/facultysenate/gened/GEPreamble_final.htm](http://www.umt.edu/facultysenate/gened/GEPreamble_final.htm)

A general overview of selected Indigenous American ethical systems: origins, world views, religious ceremonies and practices, as well as the effects of encounters and interactions with persons and nations from Western civilizations. This course is intended to provide the student with a foundation of knowledge to understand ways in which world view and spirituality shape (and have shaped) the Native American world, and to extend that knowledge to the study of American culture. The student will be empowered to understand and evaluate ethical questions related to Indigenous cultures and to compare and contrast cultures and nations in a basic way, ideally affecting greater engagement in their role as global citizens.

## IV. Criteria:

Briefly explain how this course meets the criteria for the group. See: [http://www.umt.edu/facultysenate/ASCRCx/Adocuments/GE_Criteria5-1-08.htm](http://www.umt.edu/facultysenate/ASCRCx/Adocuments/GE_Criteria5-1-08.htm)

Students will be introduced to knowledge regarding Indigenous American life, past and present, with a somewhat focused view on several cultures of different regions and across time;  
Focuses on ethical thought in Native America, past and present;

Students will explore the ethical dimensions of Indigenous religious practice and the impact of Western cultures on Native American religions, philosophies, and traditions;  
Enables a deeper understanding of Indigenous world views, religions, and ethics;

Students will develop skills for comparative study in regard to social justice issues and cross-cultural understandings between Indigenous peoples and the dominant American culture.  
Increases understanding of the impact of religious oppression of Native Americans since early contact, and fosters an understanding of social justice issues related to the American philosophy of Manifest Destiny.
V. Student Learning Goals: Briefly explain how this course will meet the applicable learning goals.  
See: [http://www.umt.edu/facultysenate/ASCRCx/Adocuments/GE_Criteria5-1-08.htm](http://www.umt.edu/facultysenate/ASCRCx/Adocuments/GE_Criteria5-1-08.htm)

Students will develop:

- An ability to discuss analytically philosophy and world view from an intercultural context;
- An understanding of roles and manifestations of spirituality, philosophy, ethics, and religion in Native American life, past and present, from the perspective of at least four cultural groups; an understanding of Western impacts on Native American life;
- An understanding of contemporary issues related to spirituality and world view;
- An understanding of ethical issues of agency, autonomy, community, duty, justice, liberty, objectivity, obligation, responsibility, rights, and subjectivism.

Students will develop:

- An ability to discuss analytically philosophy and world view from an intercultural context;
- An understanding of roles and manifestations of spirituality, philosophy, ethics, and religion in Native American life, past and present, from the perspective of at least four cultural groups; an understanding of Western impacts on Native American life;
- An understanding of contemporary issues related to spirituality and world view;
- An understanding of ethical issues of agency, autonomy, community, duty, justice, liberty, objectivity, obligation, responsibility, rights, and subjectivism.

VII. Syllabus: Paste syllabus below or attach and send digital copy with form.  
The syllabus should clearly describe how the above criteria are satisfied. For assistance on syllabus preparation see: [http://teaching.berkeley.edu/bgd/syllabus.html](http://teaching.berkeley.edu/bgd/syllabus.html)

(See digital syllabus: NAS 301 Gen Ed)

*Please note: As an instructor of a general education course, you will be expected to provide sample assessment items and corresponding responses to the Assessment Advisory Committee.*

UG NAS 301: Native American Religion and Philosophy
Prof. Kathryn Shanley. 243-5832. shanleykw@mso.umt.edu

Course description: (Same as RELS 301). “A study of selected Indigenous American ethical systems; origins, world views, religious ceremonies and practices, as well as the effects of encounters and interactions with persons and nations from western civilizations.” Native American religious philosophy and world view differ markedly from Euro-American (or Western) philosophy and world view, in contrast to the secular basis of contemporary American culture. The difference in philosophical grounding forms the basis of many of the key differences in core cultural values between Native American societies and European American societies. This course is intended to provide the student with a foundation of knowledge to understand ways in which world view and spirituality shape (and have shaped) the Native

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American world, and to extend that knowledge to the study of American culture. The student will be empowered to understand and evaluate ethical questions related to Indigenous cultures and to compare and contrast cultures and nations in a basic way, ideally affecting greater engagement in their role as global citizens.

**Course Objectives:** The course will provide the student with an understanding of the historical and contemporary basis of Native philosophy and worldview, how that is expressed in various societal contexts, including everyday life, social institutions and rituals, and how that has both changed and remained consistent from ancient through modern times. Both continuity and change, and the forces guiding each, will be the focus of study, inasmuch as such things can be discerned in an academic term.

Ethical practices and questions related to both Native American religions and efforts to suppress those religions will provide a focus for discussion throughout the term. Contemporary religious and philosophical issues of greatest concern to North American tribes today will take up the latter weeks of the term.

**Special Needs:** If you require accommodations due to special needs, please let me know that early on in the term. I will be happy to work with you in alternative testing sites and other ways designated by DSS.

**Learning Outcomes:**
- Ability to discuss analytically philosophy and world view from an intercultural context;
- Understanding of roles and manifestations of spirituality, philosophy, ethics, and religion in Native American life, past and present, from the perspective of at least four cultural groups;
- Understanding of Western impacts on Native American life;
- Understanding of contemporary issues related to spirituality and world view;
- Understanding of ethical issues of agency, autonomy, community, duty, justice, liberty, objectivity, obligation, responsibility, rights, and subjectivism.

**Required Readings:**


Required articles are available on Eres (the Mansfield Library electronic reserve). Password: NAS30101. Go to the Mansfield Library website, and follow the prompts from electronic reserve. Check with a librarian if you need help.
Required Assignments:

**Short Autobiographical Essay:** 1-2 page (750 words maximum) describing your religious philosophy and/or background, and what you Although your essay will be entirely confidential, for the instructor’s eyes only, nonetheless, you need not reveal things about your background that make you uncomfortable. (5 points) Part of the purpose of this assignment involves getting to know you better, while also getting a sense of your writing skills.

**Book Reports:** 1-2 page (500 words maximum) analysis of the reading assignment for Deloria, Evers, Farrer, and Bastien books. Must be typed or computer generated, double spaced. You must complete all four. 1 point deduction for every late paper. (5 points each, 20 points total) These short essays are meant to reflect your keeping up with the readings; if it does not appear students are coming to class prepared, we will start having pop quizzes worth an equivalent number of points. As we go along, I will give you questions to address in your essays. With some texts, such as *The World We Used to Live In* and *Blackfoot Ways of Knowing*, students will be divided into blocks for answering questions about the text.

**Term Paper Assignment:** Select your own topic related to geographic environment and religious practice for one particular tribe, other than the tribes covered in class; conduct library research, and write a 6-8 page paper on the topic. Develop a thesis and support it. Use a minimum of five source; electronic scholarly journal articles located through the library are acceptable, but no other internet sources are acceptable without professor’s permission. The topics may use one of the texts assigned in class. Paper topics must be approved by instructor in advance. (25 points) Late papers will be docked points up to one letter grade.

**Midterm and Final Exams** consist of both essay questions and short answer questions. Study questions and lists of terms will be distributed before examinations. (25 points each)

**Graduate Students:** Graduate credit requires a final research paper (min. 20 pp.) providing an in-depth treatment of a topic covered generally in the course; leading 3 class discussions on assigned material.

Grading by points:

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<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>93-100</td>
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<td>73-76</td>
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<td>87-89</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
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<tr>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>↓ 60</td>
<td>F</td>
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**NOTE:** CR/NCR is not an option in Native American Studies Courses.

Please be familiar with the Student Conduct Code, part IV, and follow it. Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this class. The UM Writing Center defines plagiarism as: “submitting someone else’s text as one’s own” with the intent to avoid doing original work—and misuse of sources—‘carelessly or inadequately citing of ideas and words borrowed from another source.’”

Syllabus:
Week 1: How does religious practice figure into the fabric of Native American life? How important is language retention in the preservation of culture?

1/23 Introduction to the course and each other. Guest speaker: Kathryn Ramsey. Film: A Weave of Time, by John Adair.

Week 2: What are sources for studying Native American history and culture?

1/30 Library Tour with Julie Edwards. Students with last names beginning with letters from A to H will meet Ms. Edwards from 3:10-4:00. Students with names beginning with letters from J to Z will meet Ms. Edwards from 4:10-5:00—each class will have about 20 students in it.

Week 3: What is a soul, who is a person? What are cross-cultural challenges in studying and or participating in the religious and cultural practices of people unlike us?


Week 4: What is the sacred and how do cultures approach It/Him/Her?


Week 5: How do religious rituals involve interspecies relations and geographical place (land)?


Week 6: What are ethical considerations in Native American spiritual practice, for insiders and outsiders?


Week 7: How do indigenous peoples map their worlds? Why does place (geography) matter in indigenous thought? What are the implications of place-centered traditions interfacing with time-centered traditions?


Week 8: What ethical dilemmas do Native Americans currently face regarding the environment?
3/12  **Midterm Exam** (first half of class).
Film: *Yaqui Deer Ceremony*

Week 9: What are academic concerns in creating religious history, and what role do communities have in the oversight of academic research on their societies?

3/19  Molina & Evers, *Yaqui Deer Songs*. **Essay 3 DUE.**

Week 10: **SPRING BREAK (3/24 through 3/28)**

Week 11: What are Rites of Passage, and social balance in gendered terms?

4/2  Claire Farrer, *Thunder Rides a Black Horse*. **Essay 4 DUE.**

Week 12: Why is the American Indian Religious Freedom Act important?

Film: *Ghost Dance Religion*


Week 14: How does language provide cultural / spiritual continuity? How does intergenerational trauma figure into contemporary language retention, use, and revitalization?

Betty Bastien, *Blackfoot Ways of Knowing*. Section II & III.

Week 15:
Last Day of Class. Review for final.

**Finals Week:** Students will take their final exam at the assigned time on the schedule.