

University of Central Florida  
Department of Philosophy

# Native American Philosophy (or Indigenous Philosophies)

PHH 3701 – 0001

Credit Hours: 3.0

Class Time: 3:00 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.

Class Location: CB1 0307

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## Instructor Information

Name: Dr. Nick Shrubsole

Office Location: Psychology 234

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 1:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m., or by appointment

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### Brief Biography

Dr. Shrubsole received his PhD in Religious Studies from the University of Waterloo in southwestern Ontario (just outside of Toronto). His doctoral dissertation is titled Religion, Land, and Democracy in Canadian Indigenous-State Relations. The dissertation explored the various ways in which Indigenous Religions are treated in the courts, at negotiating tables, and at blockades.

While Dr. Shrubsole is not a trained Philosopher, his research is rooted in postcolonialism, political philosophy and ethics. In particular, the works of Iris Marion Young and Will Kymlicka have been important Western resources, while scholars such as Dale Turner, John Borrows, and Taiaiake Alfred have been important Indigenous scholars in his work.

## Course Description

This course explores contemporary Indigenous (Native American) philosophies. First and foremost, we must remember that “Native American” and the broader term “indigenous” are umbrella terms used to categorize diverse nations. While each indigenous thinker explored in this course may

express similar ideas, it is important to highlight the unique traditions and contexts from within which each writer teaches. We should not mistake common ground for a homogenized singular philosophical approach.

Until Indigenous Peoples secured access to the academy as part of their ongoing pursuit of self-determination and self-development, settler societies viewed indigenous peoples as a historically-locatable singularity in need of transitional support into superior Euro-American epistemological frameworks. Indigenous peoples have always possessed their own ways of knowing, but the rest of the world largely turned a deaf ear. This course provides an opportunity to listen. The struggle for recognition and acceptance within the academy remains a pressing issue for Indigenous Peoples.

Following a broader introduction to the subject of Native American philosophy in McPherson and Rabb's *Indian from the Inside*, we will explore some of the most critical thinkers in Native American philosophy. Apache scholar Viola Cordova was the first indigenous woman to receive a doctoral degree in Philosophy. Sioux scholar Vine Deloria Jr. is largely renowned as one of the most influential writers in Native American thought. Mohawk scholar Taiaiake Alfred, living in a country he does not recognize, may be one of the most impactful and influential indigenous philosophers today. Finally, Anishinaabe scholar Winona LaDuke is a well-known indigenous activist on the environment and recovery of tribal lands, among other causes.

Catalogue Description: Prerequisite PHI 2010 or C.I. Academic Native American philosophy in epistemology, political philosophy and environmental studies.

## Course Objectives

By the end of the course, students should:

1. Understand the key topics and questions in Native American philosophy
2. Develop a more critical stance towards your own culture(s) and the ability to evaluate ideas within a cultural and historical context
3. Think, speak, and write analytically about the ontological, ethical, political, and epistemological issues raised within the context of Native American philosophies
4. Think in terms of the interrelatedness of diverse bodies of knowledge; the development of a critical epistemological stance
5. Argue effectively both in oral and written form
6. Identify and critically evaluate philosophical arguments

## Required Texts

1. Alfred, Taiaiake. *Peace, Power, Righteousness: an Indigenous Manifesto*. Oxford University Press, 2008.
2. Cordova, V.F. *How It Is: The Native American Philosophy of V. F. Cordova*. Edited by Kathleen Dean Moore, Kurt Peters, and Ted Jojola. University of Arizona Press, 2007.
3. Deloria, Jr., Vine. *The Metaphysics of Existence*. Fulcrum Publishing, 2012.
4. LaDuke, Winona. *Recovering the Sacred: the Power of Naming and Claiming*. South End Press, 2005.
5. McPherson, Dennis H. and Douglas Rabb. *Indian from the Inside: Native American Philosophy and Cultural Renewal* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. McFarland and Co., 2011.

## Recommended Reading

Waters, Ann, ed. *American Indian Thought*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2004.

## Assignments and Grading

A	90% – 100%	Reserved for excellence, far exceeds average understanding as evidenced in course work and goes significantly beyond basic understanding.
B	80% – < 90%	Very good. Above average, fully meets average understanding as evidenced in course work, fully understands the basics and can engage material somewhat beyond that level.
C	70% - < 80%	Average, meets minimum expectations and satisfies course requirements.
D	60% - < 70%	Lacking in quality. Below average, meets many minimum expectations and satisfies all or most course requirements.
F	0% - < 60%	Fails to meet minimum expectations in understanding and course work as evidenced by performance and submission of graded elements.

## Assignments and Descriptions

Assignment	Weight	Due	Description
<a href="#">Syllabus Quiz</a>	Ungraded	As soon as possible	As of Fall 2014, faculty members are required to document students' academic activity at the beginning of each course. In order to document that you began this course, please complete the following academic activity by the end of the first week of classes, or as soon as possible after adding the course, but by no later than the end of January. Failure to do so may result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid. In order to complete the requirement, complete the short syllabus quiz located in the "Quizzes" section of Webcourses or click on the link to the left.

<p>Take Home Mid-Term Exams <a href="#">(Midterm and Final)</a></p>	<p>50% (2 x 25%)</p>	<p>Monday, February 27 - Friday, March 3 by 5:00 p.m. Thursday, April 20 - Thursday, April 27 by 5:00 p.m.</p>	<p>At the midterm point of the semester and toward the final week of the semester, students will be provided questions based on course material. They will be responsible for answering those questions within a designated time frame (5 days).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The first midterm will cover all readings from Modules 1 and 2 and the Reading Response book.</li> <li>• The second exam will cover the remaining two modules</li> </ul> <p>You are expected to adhere to the guidelines provided in the assignment regarding formatting and length. You should be prepared to cite your course material as if you were writing a short essay.</p>
<p><a href="#">Book Response Paper</a></p>	<p>10%</p>	<p>Sunday, February 26 by 5:00 p.m.</p>	<p>Students are required to read <i>How It Is: The Native American Philosophy of V.F. Cordova</i> and respond to the following three questions, which make up the major section headings of the book.</p> <p>What are V.F. Cordova's answers to the following questions?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the world?</li> <li>• What is it to be human?</li> <li>• What is a role of a human in the world?</li> </ul> <p>The task here is comprehension and concision. You'll notice that themes of the book correlate nicely with the scheduled readings for discussion. If you have problems dividing the reading up on your own, here is a suggested guideline for the book:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read "Bridges" and "Windows" by February 2</li> <li>• Read "What is the World" by February 9</li> <li>• Read "What does it mean to be human" by February 14</li> <li>• Read "What is a role of a human in the world?" by February 21</li> </ul> <p>The paper will be approximately 900 words, double-spaced in Times New Roman 12-point font with 1-inch margins. Page numbers should</p>

			appear on each page. A title page is unnecessary. Your name, course information, instructor name, and date should appear at the top of the first page of the paper.
<a href="#">Research Paper</a>	25%	Friday, April 14 by 5:00 p.m.	<p>Each student will be responsible for writing a research paper in the field of Native American philosophies. Students are encouraged to engage a thinker discussed within the course, investigating a theme addressed by that scholar. Students must provide the instructor with an outline by the midway point of the semester. Students are encouraged to engage with Indigenous philosophies creatively. Some ideas are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critical application of Indigenous Philosophies to better understand issues facing Indigenous Peoples (i.e., Standing Rock)</li> <li>• Critical application of Indigenous Philosophies on matters that affect all peoples (e.g., environmental crisis)</li> <li>• A more intensive look at an Indigenous Philosopher and their work (e.g., Vine Deloria Jr.)</li> </ul> <p>You are encouraged to speak with the professor early and often about your project. The paper will be approximately 2500-3000 words, double-spaced in Times New Roman 12-point font with 1-inch margins. Page numbers should appear on each page. A title page is unnecessary. Your name, course information, instructor name, and date should appear at the top of the first page of the paper.</p> <p>You are required to speak with your professor or submit a formal statement regarding your research paper. <b>This is due no later than March 9.</b> Failure to contact your professor prior to this point will result in a deduction to your research paper grade. You can see a complete/incomplete for this task in your gradebook.</p>
Reading Introduction	5%		In order to facilitate classroom discussion and preparedness, each student will be asked to briefly introduce one reading over the course of the semester. The schedule for this assignment will be determined in the second week.

			Students will be responsible for a brief one-to-two minute summary of the reading, some critical thoughts on the content of the reading (no more than two minutes), and a critical question for the class. The question posed should not be to test the knowledge of your classmates whom you should assume have read the material. The question should inspire a deeper, critical engagement with the text.
Participation	10%		You are expected to be in class, on-time and prepared to discuss the scheduled readings. Students will be assessed on their preparedness.

## University Policies and Information

1. Students with Disabilities
2. Plagiarism and Academic Integrity
3. E-mail Access
4. Diversity Statement
5. UCF Cares

### *Students with Disabilities*

It is my goal that this class be an accessible and welcoming experience for all students, including those with disabilities that may impact learning in this class. If anyone believes the design of this course poses barriers to effectively participating and/or demonstrating learning in this course, please meet with me (with or without a Student Disability Services (SDS) accommodation letter) to discuss reasonable options or adjustments. During our discussion, I may suggest the possibility/necessity of your contacting SDS (Ferrell Commons 185; 407-823-2371; [sds@ucf.edu](mailto:sds@ucf.edu)) to talk about academic accommodations. You are welcome to talk to me at any point in the semester about course design concerns, but it is always best if we can talk at least one week prior to the need for any modifications.

I sincerely encourage any students with disabilities to speak with me during office hours to ensure that they are able to engage in the course and complete assignments on an equal footing with their fellow classmates. My door is always open to discuss this important matter.

### *Plagiarism and Academic Integrity*

As reflected in the UCF creed, integrity and scholarship are core values that should guide our conduct and decisions as members of the UCF community. Plagiarism and cheating contradict these values, and so are very serious academic offenses. Penalties can include a failing grade in an assignment or in the course, or suspension or expulsion from the university. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with and follow the University's Rules of Conduct (see <http://www.osc.sdes.ucf.edu/>). Plagiarism and Cheating of any kind on an examination, quiz, or assignment will result at least in an "F" for that assignment (and may, depending on the severity of the case, lead to an "F" for the entire course) and may be subject to appropriate referral to the Office of Student Conduct for further action. See the UCF Golden Rule for further information. Many incidents of plagiarism result from students' lack of understanding about what constitutes plagiarism. However, you are expected to familiarize yourself with UCF's policy on plagiarism. All work you

submit must be your own scholarly and creative efforts. UCF's Golden Rule defines plagiarism as follows: "whereby another's work is used or appropriated without any indication of the source, thereby attempting to convey the impression that such work is the student's own.

#### Email Access

You will be expected to have daily access to the internet and email, since I will be emailing you regularly about assignment updates, additions and changes. All students at UCF are required to obtain a Knight's Email account and check it regularly for official university communications. If you do not own a computer, there are computers accessible to you in all UCF's computer labs, and most computer labs have computers connected to the internet. For further information on computer labs, please see the following website: [http://registrar.sdes.ucf.edu/webguide/index\\_quickfind.aspx](http://registrar.sdes.ucf.edu/webguide/index_quickfind.aspx).

#### *Diversity Statement*

The University of Central Florida recognizes that our individual differences can deepen our understanding of one another and the world around us, rather than divide us. In this class, people of all ethnicities, genders and gender identities, religions, ages, sexual orientations, disabilities, socioeconomic backgrounds, regions, and nationalities are strongly encouraged to share their rich array of perspectives and experiences. If you feel your differences may in some way isolate you from UCF's community or if you have a need of any specific accommodations, please speak with the instructor early in the semester about your concerns and what we can do together to help you become an active and engaged member of our class and community.

#### *UCF Cares*

During your UCF career, you may experience challenges including struggles with academics, finances, or your personal well-being. UCF has a multitude of resources available to all students. Please visit [UCFCares.com](http://UCFCares.com) ([Links to an external site.](#)) if you are seeking resources and support, or if you are worried about a friend or classmate. Free services and information are included for a variety of student concerns, including but not limited to alcohol use, bias incidents, mental health concerns, and financial challenges. You can also e-mail [ucfcares@ucf.edu](mailto:ucfcares@ucf.edu) with questions or for additional assistance. You can reach a UCF Cares staff member between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. by calling 407-823-5607. If you are in immediate distress, please call Counseling and Psychological Services to speak directly with a counselor 24/7 at 407-823-2811, or please call 911.

## Instructor Policies

#### *E-mail correspondence*

Please use your Knights e-mail account whenever corresponding with your instructor. Ensure that the Course Code and Section Number appear in the subject line of any e-mail sent to the instructor. Think of an e-mail as a formal letter when corresponding with instructors (as opposed to a text message). Begin with a salutation (a greeting) and conclude with your name. Be respectful and considerate in your language and re-read your e-mail before sending.

#### *Late Assignment Policy*

All late assignments will be penalized one full letter grade a day for up to 4 calendar days after the close of the assignment. Ensure that you submit early whenever possible.

NOTE: The exception to this policy is for the final take home exam. There will be no late assignments accepted for the final take home exam since its due date is already at the end of the exam period.

#### *Open Door Policy*

I am always available to talk about this class or your educational experience in general. Feel free to stop by or make an appointment at any point over the semester. If you ever require clarification on your grades or concepts discussed within the course, make an appointment to come and chat.

*No Extra Credit Policy*

There will be no extra credit offered in this course.

## Course Schedule

Below you will find the reading schedule for this course. Note that this schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor for guest lecturers, closures, and missed classes. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have completed the assigned readings before the class on the day they are scheduled.

Date	Scheduled Reading	Assignments
<b>Module 1: Introduction and Early Investigations</b>		
January 10	<i>No readings</i>	<a href="#">Syllabus Quiz</a>
January 12	Theme Defining the Field <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dale Turner, "What is American Indian Philosophy? Toward a Critical Indigenous Philosophy." In <i>Philosophy in Multiple Voices</i>, edited by George Yancy (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007), 197-218. (Available on the course website: <a href="#">Turner American Indian Philosophy.pdf</a>)</li> <li>• McPherson and Rabb, "Philosophical Foundations: Is Native American Philosophy, Philosophy?" in <i>Indian from the Inside</i></li> </ul>	
January 17	Theme: The "Outside View Predicate" and the Pervasiveness of Colonialism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• McPherson and Rabb, "Outside View Predicate: Do Indians Really Know Who They Are?" in <i>Indian from the Inside</i></li> </ul>	
January 19	Theme: Inside View Predicates	



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• McPherson and Rabb, "Dancing with Chaos: The Phenomenology of the Vision Quest" in <i>Indian from the Inside</i></li> <li>• McPherson and Rabb, "Values, Land and the Integrity of Person" (to page 94 "Learning Respect") in <i>Indian from the Inside</i></li> </ul>	
January 24	<p>Theme: Inside View Predicates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• McPherson and Rabb, "Values, Land and the Integrity of Person" (from page 94 "Learning Respect") in <i>Indian from the Inside</i></li> </ul>	
<h2>Module 2: Indigenous Metaphysics and Vine Deloria Jr.</h2>		
January 26	<p>Theme: Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• McPherson and Rabb, "Language and Metaphysics: Native American Ontology and Transformative Philosophy" in <i>Indian from the Inside</i></li> </ul>	
January 31	<p>Theme: Metaphysics of Modern Existence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deloria Jr., "Introduction," "A Planet in Transition," and "Transitioning Reality" in <i>Metaphysics of Modern Existence</i></li> </ul>	
February 2	<p>Theme: Metaphysics of Modern Existence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deloria Jr., "A Divided Vision" and "Space-Time" in <i>Metaphysics</i></li> </ul>	
February 7	<p>Theme: Metaphysics of Modern Existence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deloria, Jr., "The Process of Life," "Wither Evolutionists?" and "The Structure of Life" in <i>Metaphysics</i></li> </ul>	

February 9	<p>Theme: Metaphysics of Modern Existence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deloria, Jr., "Transforming Instincts," "The Human Mind" and "The Quickening Pace" in <i>Metaphysics</i></li> </ul>	
February 14	<p>Theme: Metaphysics of Modern Existence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deloria, Jr., "Our Social Grouping," "Our Transforming Institutions" and "Expanding the Legal Universe" in <i>Metaphysics</i></li> </ul>	
February 16	<p>Theme: Metaphysics of Modern Existence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deloria, Jr., "The Charismatic Model," "Tribal Religious Realities" and "The Traumatic Planetary Past" in <i>Metaphysics</i></li> </ul>	
February 21	<p>Theme: Metaphysics of Modern Existence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deloria, Jr., "Theologians and Scientists" and "The Future of Theology" in <i>Metaphysics</i></li> </ul>	
February 23	<p>Theme: Metaphysics of Modern Existence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deloria, Jr., "The Transformation of Science" and "The Metaphysics of Modern Existence" in <i>Metaphysics</i></li> </ul>	<a href="#">Book Response Paper</a> Due by 4:00 p.m.
<b>Midterm and Discussion Week</b>		
February 28	<p>Theme: How It Is: A Comparative Assessment of V.F. Cordova and Vine Deloria Jr.</p> <p><i>No Readings</i></p>	<a href="#">Midterm Exam</a> Issued on Monday, February 27
March 2	<p>Theme: How It Is: A Comparative Assessment of V.F. Cordova and Vine Deloria Jr.</p> <p><i>No Readings</i></p>	Midterm Exam Closes on Friday, March 3
<b>Module 3: The Environment and Winona LaDuke</b>		

March 7	<p>Theme: Sacred Land and Sacred Places</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LaDuke, "What is Sacred" and "God, Squirrels, and the Universe" in <i>Recovering the Sacred</i></li> </ul>	
March 9	<p>Theme: Sacred Land and Sacred Places</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LaDuke, "Salt, Water, Blood, and Coal" and "Klamath, Land and Life" in <i>Recovering</i></li> </ul>	By today you should have submitted or spoken with the professor about your research paper.
Spring Break (March 12 - March 17)		
March 21	<p>Theme: Ancestors, Images, and Our Lives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LaDuke, "Imperial Anthropology" and "Quilled Cradleboard Covers, Cultural Patrimony, and "Wounded Knee" in <i>Recovering</i></li> </ul>	
March 23	<p>Theme: Ancestors, Images, and Our Lives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LaDuke, "Vampires in the New World" and "Masks in the New Millennium" in <i>Recovering</i></li> </ul>	
March 28	<p>Theme: Seeds and Medicine</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LaDuke, "Three Sisters" and "Wild Rice" (to Academic Freedom and Ethics) in <i>Recovering</i></li> </ul>	
March 30	<p>Theme: Seeds and Medicine</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LaDuke, "Wild Rice" (from Academic Freedom and Ethics) and "Food as Medicine" in <i>Recovering</i></li> </ul>	
April 4	<p>Theme: Relatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LaDuke, "Return of the Horse Nation" and "Namewag" in <i>Recovering</i></li> </ul>	

April 6	<p>Theme: Relatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LaDuke, "Recovering Power to Slow Climate Change" in <i>Recovering</i></li> </ul>	
<h2>Module 4: The Political Philosophy of Taiaiake Alfred</h2>		
April 11	<p>Theme: Peace</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alfred, Pages 1-23, in <i>Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto</i></li> <li>• Alfred, "Peace" in <i>Peace, Power</i></li> </ul>	
April 13	<p>Theme: Power</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alfred, "Power" (to Co-Optation) in <i>Peace, Power</i></li> </ul>	<a href="#">Research Paper</a> Due on Friday, April 14 by 5:00 p.m.
April 18	<p>Theme: Power</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alfred, "Power" (from Co-Option" in <i>Peace, Power</i></li> </ul>	
April 20	<p>Theme: Righteousness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alfred, "Righteousness" in <i>Peace, Power</i></li> </ul>	<a href="#">Final Exam</a> Issued after class
<h2>Conclusion and Final Exam</h2>		
Thursday, April 27 from 1:00 - 350 p.m.	Conclusion	Take Home Exam Due by 5:00 p.m. on this day