

Title:

Attacking Stereotypes: Lakotas Depicted in Hollywood Films.

Grade Level:

Undergraduate introductory or upper level courses in American Indian Studies.

Theme:

Lakota culture has been inaccurately depicted throughout the history of the film industry. The use of Plains Indian people, specifically the Lakota, have played an important role in the creation and perpetuation of stereotypes.

Duration:

Two fifty minute course periods.

Goal:

To develop an enhanced understanding of Lakota culture as depicted in film in comparison to the context of the historical and contemporary perspective of the Oceti Sakowin. Students will build a more informed understanding of Lakota culture by first understanding what it is not.

Objectives:

Students will be able to identify representations of ‘the noble savage’,

South Dakota Standards:

South Dakota State University Institutional General Requirements (IGR) and student Learning Outcomes (SLO):

IGR Goal #3: Social and Cultural Stewardship

Students will demonstrate both social and cultural stewardship to foster individual creativity and to promote preservation and growth of culture and community.

Student Learning Outcomes: As a result of taking courses meeting this goal, students will:

- Recognize relationships that exist among ideas.
 - Demonstrate an appreciation of the different ways in which people express their understanding of the human condition.
 - Understand their responsibilities and choices as related to spatial, temporal, behavioral, and cultural and/or institutional contexts.
 - Demonstrate their knowledge of the structure and possibilities of the human community.
 - Understand preservation of culture and foster individual creativity by use of service learning, leadership or experiential learning activities.

Cultural Concept:

Lakota culture is ordered in a complex structure based on a rich historical tradition based in the values of kinship, place and time. Contemporary Lakota culture is a living history very much alive today. Common portrayals depicted in film include, child-like wards, mystic soothsayers, comic sidekicks, and the noble savage.

Cultural Background:

In reality, the Lakota culture is intricately ordered around values of kinship, place, time. The *Oceti Sakowin* (Och-aht-ee Shak-oh-ween) is the correct name for the people commonly known as the Sioux. *Oceti Sakowin* means Seven Council Fires with each Council Fire made up of separate groups known as oyates. These oyates are organized along the dimensions of time and place. They are: *Mdewakantonwan* (Dwellers by the Sacred Lake), *Wahpekute* (Shooters Among the Leaves), *Wahpetonwan* (Dwellers Among the Leaves), *Sisitonwan* (People of the Marsh), in eastern and north eastern South Dakota, and the *Ihanktonwan* (People of the End of Horn), *Ihanktonwanna* (People of the Little End of Horn) and *Tetonwan* (People on the Plains), occupying South Dakota west of the Missouri River. These seven oyates are divided into three linguistic groups: the Dakota (*Mdewakantonwan*, *Wahpekute*, *Wahpetonwan* and *Sisitonwan*), the Nakota (*Ihanktonwan* and *Ihanktonwanna*) and the Lakota (*Titonwan*). The Lakota (*Titonwan*) are further organized along dimensions of time and place within the camp circle. The bands of the Lakota are: Oglala, Mniconjou, Sicangu, Oohenunpa, Itazipco, Sihasapa, and Hunkpapa. While the temporal order of these bands is unclear, there is an established spatial order within the camp circle. The place of honor is reserved for the Oglalas.

Student Activities:

1) Class viewing of “Reel Injun”.

2) Writing assignment:

- From your viewing of ‘Reel Injun’, identify stereotypes depicted in Hollywood films.
 - How do these stereotypes compare to the reality, both historical and contemporary of Lakota culture?

3) Lecture

Lakota are not:
Child like
Simple minded
Random rovers

Lakota are:
Contemporary, but with a rich history of traditional culture
Living history

Resilient
Creative
Artistic
Friends-meaning of the name Dakota

Lakota culture is:
Complex
Ordered
Based on a foundation focused in place, time, kinship,
Thought
Humor

We cannot:
Generalize
Categorize
Make assumptions

We must:
Remain open
Be honest
Become engaged

Assessment:

Assessment will be a subjective measurement of the students' initial level of understanding as indicated by a written reflection.

Resources:

Howe, Craig. (2011). Approaches to Teaching Lakota Culture. 2011 Summer Workshop: Winter Counts and Star Knowledge. Course Packet.

Cunnion, Ahn-Thu. (2005) Cultural considerations. Lakota Winter Counts: An Online Exhibit. Smithsonian Museum of Natural History national anthropological archives. Retrieved June 15, 2009, from <http://wintercounts.si.edu/index.html>

Lanouette, JoAnne. "Erasing Native Stereotypes," *Anthronotes*, Museum of Natural History Publications for Educators 2(3), Fall 1990.

Niles Diamond. 2010 "Reel Injun". Dvd Documentary film.

Walker, James R. (1982). Divisions of the Lakotas. In *Lakota Society*, Raymond J. DeMallie, Ed., pp. 18-19. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

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