

ANTHROPOLOGY 222
FIRST ENCOUNTERS

Spring 2007
T-Th 11:00

Bruce J. Bourque
155 Pettengill: 786-6080

Text:

Fitzhugh, W.W.
1985 Cultures in Contact. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, D.C.

Reserve Readings:

Bourque, B.J. and R.H. Whitehead
1985 Tarrentines and the Introduction of European Trade Goods in the Gulf of Maine. Ethnohistory, 32(4):327-341.

Cronon, William
2003 Changes in the Land. Hill and Wang, New York.

Denevan, W. M.
1992 The Pristine Myth: the Landscape of the Americas in 1492. Annals of the Association of American Geographers 82(3): 369-385

Diamond, J.
1997 Guns, Germs, and Steel. W.W. Norton & Co, New York.

Doolittle, W. E.
1992 Agriculture in North America on the Eve of Contact: a Reassessment. Annals of the Association of American Geographers 82(3):386-401.

Krech, S.
1999 The Ecological Indian : Myth and History. New York : W.W. Norton & Co.

McGhee, R.
1984 Contact Between Native North Americans and the Medieval Norse. American Antiquity, 49(1):4-26.

Netting, R.M.
1986 An Unfair Trade. Natural History, December 1986:74-77.

Pastore, R.T.
1987 Fishermen, Furriers, and the Beothuks: The Economy of Extinction. Man in the Northeast, No.33:47-62.

Wolf, E.R.
1982 Europe and the People Without History. University of California Press, Berkeley.

Class Schedule:

- 9 Jan. Introduction to the course. Introduction to biogeography.
- 11 Human dispersion and outcomes. Reading: Diamond pp. 13-66.
- 16 Farm Power, History's Haves and Have Nots. Reading: Diamond pp. 85-103
- 18 To Farm or Not To Farm. Reading: Diamond pp. 104-130.
- 23 Field trip to Shaw's Supermarket. Reading: Diamond pp. 131-175.
- 25 Why the fertile crescent? Reading: Diamond pp. 176-214.
- 30 Writing and Complex Society. Reading: Diamond pp. 215-264.

- 1 Feb. Why Europe? Reading: Wolf preface, ch. 1.
- 6 Reading: Wolf ch. 2-4.
- 8 Who were the "People Without History"? Europe and the World in 1400.
- 13 Film: **The Return of Martin Guerre**. Reading: Wolf ch. 5
- 15 The impact of the New World upon the Old. Iberia in America.
Reading: Wolf ch.6. Film: **First Contact**.

Winter Recess: 17-25 February

- 27 European emergence. Gold, Fish and Furs. Film: **Sea of Slaughter**.
- 1 March Exam. Reading: Cronon ch. 1, 2.
- 6 Reading: McGhee; Cronon ch. 3; Fitzhugh:1-43.
- 13 The Norse in North America. Reading: Cronon ch. 4; Denevan, Diamond 1992, Netting, Krech.
- 15 The Great Dying - European Disease Comes to America.
Reading: Cronon ch. 5; Denevan; Dolittle; Fitzhugh:45-96; Pastore.
Visit Perry-McMillan Museum at Bowdoin.
- 20 Cultural geographies of the New World. Cultures in Contact - The Arctic. Film:
Homage to the Yahgans: The Last Hunters of Tierra del Fuego and Cape Horn. Reading: Bourque and Whitehead; Cronon ch. 6.

- 22 Cultures in Contact - The Maritime Peninsula.
Reading: Cronon ch. 7; Fitzhugh:131-183.
- 27 Cultures in Contact - New England and New York. Film: **Kings of the Jungle**.
Reading: Cronon ch. 8; Fitzhugh:187-268.
- 29 Cultures in Contact - tidewater chiefdoms; Russians in Alaska.
- 3 April Warfare in the Tribal Zone and the Middle Ground; Fitzhugh:271-318.
- 5 Cultures in Contact - Florida and Hispaniola. The rise of “white supremacy.”
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Goals of the Course

This is a course in **ethnohistory**, a fairly new discipline which can be defined as the anthropological study of ethnic groups through historic documents. Before ethnohistory became popular, anthropologists often relied upon modern behavior to reconstruct cultures as they were presumed to have lived before contact with Europeans. Their reconstructions failed because anthropologists lost sight of the fact that these cultures had changed dramatically as the result of European contact. Historians, on the other hand, constructed histories of ethnic groups from historical documents. Their histories also failed because historians used a western frame of reference which does not apply well to nonwestern cultures, and also because they lacked a coherent theoretical framework such as that provided by anthropology. The happy union of their endeavors is elegantly described in Wolf, Chapter 1. I advise you to read this again and again until you understand it. We'll discuss it in class, too.

The course is **not** just about North American Indians. Rather, it is about the tumultuous events that resulted from the meeting of two branches of humanity that had gone separate ways for as much as 20,000 years. The events that transpired soon after Columbus "discovered" the New World reflect the extent to which these long separate branches of humanity had diverged.

To understand these events, we must begin by examining those who initiated the contact - the Europeans. Although European-derived cultures prevail in most parts of the Americas today, do not assume that these cultures much resemble those of the "discoverers." Instead, as you will come to understand, these early European cultures are nearly as exotic and far removed from our times as were the those of the native Americans of that time.

Gaining a clear picture of native American cultures at the time of contact is considerably more difficult than for Europeans for two reasons. First, their history was preserved mainly in oral traditions which were subject to cultural manipulation - inconvenient facts were often altered to fit current social needs - and which often were lost. Second, the impacts of European contact often were so swift and calamitous that no literate European arrived in time to describe traditional life. Nevertheless, we will endeavor to construct sketches of America cultures at contact as a baseline against which to measure their change after it. We will then examine a

series of case histories, following the course of events from contact through to the point where some new approximation of equilibrium was established.

The New World is a big place, and it is unwise to assume, as our popular culture does, that American cultures were any less variable than those of the Old World. So, if we are to get beyond stereotypes and learn anything about the affects of first contact, we must be selective. Even first contact situations in North America leave us with a very broad scope of inquiry. Therefore, we will focus primarily upon the Atlantic shores of North and Middle America.

Format

The course will include lectures, seminar discussions, and film showings followed by discussion. I am also looking forward to working one-on-one with you outside class.

We will take field trips to Shaw's Supermarket on 27 January and to the Perry-Macmillan Museum at Bowdoin on 11 March. We will leave at 1:10 PM and return by 5:00 PM. For these day **only** please make arrangements to cover any work you missed in other courses at some other time. I'll be happy to write your professor a note explaining your absence/tardiness.

Requirements

Requirements of this course include:

Class attendance, reading the assigned work by the date indicated (i.e. before class that day).

Active participation in class discussions.

Writing two exams.

Writing two 5 page papers.

You will also keep a journal recording your reactions to the assigned readings. Your grade will be based on performance in these activities.

The Journal

The course content is bound to generate both intellectual and emotional reactions. The purpose of the journal is to record those reactions. It should contain entries reflecting the assigned readings, classroom discussions, and other events in the course. I'm not looking here for notes on content, but rather brief reflections on how you feel about that content — how informative a reading was, how clever some historic figure was, how brutal, violent, wise; how sudden or swift a change, etc. Hand in one "volume" with each exam. I am not going to grade these, but I'd like to see how you are reacting to the course material. We'll use pink exam books.