

ANS/ED 461 – F01: Native Ways of Knowing

Summer Session 2009

July 6 – Aug 7, 2009

12 – 1:50 p.m., MTWRF, U-Park 102

Course Prospectus

by

Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley, Ph.D., Instructor

Course Description

The course will focus on how environment, culture and worldview shape who we are and influence the way we come to know the world around us, with a particular emphasis on Alaska Native knowledge systems and ways of knowing.

Course Purposes

Students enrolling in this course can expect the following;

1. to gain an understanding and appreciation of how culture and worldview shape who we are and influence the way we come to know the world around us.
2. to explore other peoples' ways of knowing about the world and environment around them.
3. to critically think about how the Western worldview(s) interacts with the Native worldview(s).
4. to understand that Native peoples' rituals and ceremonies are vehicles of cultural transmission and self-discipline.
5. to understand how the Native person interacts with the surrounding environment and integrates actions in ways that demonstrate respect for the human, spiritual and natural realms.
6. to learn about 'the tradition-bearers' responsibilities with regard to traditional values, governance and leadership.
7. to recognize the Native person as an inquisitive explorer of seen and unseen phenomena, as a perspicacious inventor of technological tools and techniques, and as a careful creator of dances, songs, games, stories, arts and crafts.
8. to recognize that Native people adapt and change in response to the changing environment and world around them as a means of survival.
9. to be faithful to our own religion or spirituality, and to be citizens of the world but tolerate the fact that others are different.
10. to recognize that it is not only the indigenous people who confuse or lose identity, that others do also.

Course Credit

Completion of the course will lead to three semester hours of undergraduate credit at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. The ANS/ED 461 course has been approved by the state of Alaska Department of Education and Early Development to fulfill the State of Alaska certification requirement for "Multicultural/Cross Cultural Communication."

Course Design

The primary focus of the course is centered in Alaska, so much of the discussion will use examples drawn from Alaska Native situations, though the issues addressed are relevant and readily generalizable to other

cultural contexts as well. The course consists of readings, videotapes, class discussions, and invited guests.

Instructor contact information:

Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley
U-Park 104
PO Box 756730
University of Alaska Fairbanks, AK 99775-6730
• Ph: (907) 474-1902
• Fax: (907) 474-1957
• E-mail: rfok@uaf.edu

Course Materials

The following book is required for this course:

- A. O. Kawagley, *A Yupiaq Worldview: A pathway to ecology and spirit*, 2nd Ed.
- B. Rupert Sheldrake, *The Rebirth of Nature: The greening of science and God*

A selection of articles will also be required for the course, associated with each of the issues listed in the outline that follows.

Course Outline

The course is organized around the following topics/readings (read one article per day in the order listed and be prepared to participate in class discussion of the material, if it comes up):

Oquilluk, "People of Kauwerak" (through chapter four)

Kawagley, "Alaska Native Holotropic Mind and Science"

Griffin, "The Kwig Dig"

Kawagley, "Why Should Yupiaq Literacy Slow Student Progress"

Clayton, "A productive, but taxed, Earth"

Teicher, "A school built on Navajo values"

Kizzia, "Identity search"

Price, "Of Science & Spirit"

Johnson, "Dene Traditional Knowledge"

Klein, "Wilderness: A Western Concept Alien to Arctic Cultures"

Nelson, "Understanding Eskimo Science"

"Chapter VIII. Epilogue: Synchronicities and Incremental Advance"

Kay, "Polar Warning"

Whitty, "The Fate of the Ocean"

Miller, "The Midas Touch"

Mercurieff, "Western Society's Linear Systems and Aboriginal Cultures"

Stark, "Shepherd man's floating structures remove excess nutrients"

Walle, "The Full Implications of Native Ways of Knowing: A Broadened Perspective of Oscar Kawagley"

Course Expectations and Grading

Write a two and a half page response paper each week in which you address your understanding as it relates to one of the readings included in the course packet. Each of the papers are to be submitted at the last class session each week. Submission of the four two and half-page papers, along with regular participation in class discussion, share your feelings and findings each week, will give you a final grade of C.

For a grade **B**, you will have to select a quiet place outdoors — a place where there will be a minimum of interruption whereby you can reflect on the days' activities and sharpen your ability to absorb deeply of Nature. Drawing on the ideas outlined in the text and readings, focus on honing your consciousness or awareness skills to a higher degree. Make it a point to visit your quiet place at least daily or as often as you can. It takes at least 20 minutes to quiet the mind, so plan to be there a bit longer. "Attempt to heighten your senses - touching, tasting, hearing, smelling, seeing and feeling; learn to focus - concentrating on gathering many clear images; framing - enclosing scenes which you want to examine, grouping - looking for arrangements in forms and lines; perceiving wholes or expanding- observing the overall aspects of a scene; surveying - examining things from varying viewpoints; observing - letting the natural world engulf you; orchestrating - using all of your senses to fuse the facets of awareness; scrutinizing - looking for the small things; empathizing – role-playing natural qualities; silencing - working at turning off that voice in the back of your head; waiting - becoming an empty vessel waiting to be filled." Reflect upon and maintain a journal of your experiences. During the fourth week of class, look through your journal and prepare a three to five page summary and submit both the journal and summary to me by . What were some positive things that you became aware of? How can you use your experiences in your work?

The class will be formed into four groups, each of which will be responsible for selecting and critiquing two chapters from each of the two texts. And, in addition, each group will prepare a presentation for the third/fourth week of the course in which you may choose a CHAPTER or portion of a chapter, or a phrase from texts or readings to incorporate into singing-dancing-drumming, performing a skit, having a mini-potlatch, inviting guests to speak, devise a mind-map, erect a diorama of a pre-contact village, or use any other means to convey the main ideas within the chapter and/or readings. Use your imagination. Part of grade B.

GRADE A -- ANS/ED F461 students:

From the information learned in your readings, discussions, dialogues, talking circles, you should have begun to have an understanding of the Native socializing process. The changes in our Native places/environments have made many of us incompatible to place. Our Alaska Native people are on the losing end as far as Native languages and cultures are concerned. Based on two or three alarming on-going events, rapidity of life events, rapid changes, and climate change, which seem to debilitate the efforts of Native people to revitalize their Native languages and cultures, write your thoughts how these act as barriers to creating a unique and special people. What are some dynamics and physical infrastructures that are needed to make an ECO-VILLAGE? News media, TV, rap, designs, fast travel, fast foods, fast passage of time, spiritual bankruptcy, and many more possible deviations extant in our lives make this difficult. Five to seven pages. Due at the end of the class.

OR

"He (the American Indian) believes profoundly in science – the sign of a perfect equilibrium. Science is the absolute poise or balance of body, mind and spirit. The man who preserves his selfhood ever calm and unshaken by the storms of existence – not a leaf, as it were, astir on the tree; not a ripple upon the surface of shining pool – his, in the mind of the unlettered sage, is the ideal attitude and conduct of life. If you ask him: "What is silence?" he will answer, "It is the Great Mystery!" "The holy silence is His voice." OHIYESA Draw knowledge from your experiences and readings to write this.

You can write your understanding(s) and perception(s) of the above quote from OHIYESA 5 – 7 pages due at end of course.

Check the following for more information:

www.ankn.uaf.edu

www.nativescience.org

www.alaskool.org

www.nativeknowledge.org

We will have a talking circle each Friday including the last day. Each person may talk about anything that has sparked her/his interest from the readings, discussions, quiet time, observation of Native people in activities, or anything of importance to you. A feather or some natural object will be passed around. The person who has the object has the floor and is not to be interrupted nor asked questions. If a person is uneasy, the feather may be passed on to the next person with or without comment. What is said by the participants, is not to leave the room or outdoor setting (weather permitting).

We may drive to Pioneers Park; UAF museum; a lake to observe insects, wildlife, plants; to a camp site to practice treading lightly on the environment; or if something is taking place in community house or M. Thompson Cultural Center, for an all day visit.
