

Initial Proposal ISEM 101 Fall Semester 2013 – Sacred Journey into Indigenous Communities

1. Title: Sacred Journey. Instructor: Rodney Frey, Ph.D., full-time. See web for complete learning outcomes, learning activities, schedule: <http://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/~rfrey/101a.htm>
2. Description: Using a humanities and social sciences integrated methodology, we will explore the meaning and significance of the oral traditions and stories, and of the sacred pilgrimages, rites of passage and world renewal ceremonies, that help create and sustain Indigenous communities throughout the world (such as the American Indian and Australian Aborigine). As the course methodology is self reflexive, students will “travel” (through the learning activities) into these Indigenous communities, while at the same time explore and perhaps unveil special and revered territories within themselves. What distinguishes the Indigenous from you and what do we all share in common? How is identity formed in these communities, and how are these communities held together? What is the meaning of their rites of passage and world renewal ceremonies?
3. Five Learning Outcomes (linked with University Learning Outcomes): 1) Understanding and an Appreciation of Human Diversity as well as our Shared Humanity in various Communities (University Learning Outcomes: Learn and Integrate, and Clarify Purpose and Perspective). 2) Foster a Respect and Ability to Collaborate with Diverse Others (University Learning Outcome: Practice Citizenship). 3) Understanding and an Appreciation of Your Own Cultural, Spiritual, Philosophical Background in Relationship to Global Communities (University Learning Outcome: Clarify Purpose and Perspective). 4) Distinguish Differing Disciplinary Approaches, and Applying a Multidisciplinary Interpretative Method, i.e., humanities and social sciences methods - “Eye Juggling” (University Learning Outcomes: Learn and integrate, and Think and create). 5) Improve Oral and Written Communication Skills. (University Learning Outcome: Communicate)
4. Textbooks: *Stories That Make the World: Oral Traditions of the Indian Peoples of the Inland Northwest*, Frey, Aripa, and Yellowtail, 1995. *Landscape Traveled by Coyote and Crane*, Frey and the Schitsu’umsh, 2001. *The Mardu Aborigines*. 2nd Ed., Tonkinson, 1991.
5. Learning Activities: This seminar is modeled as a “rite of passage” and “pilgrimage.” It is a seminar that requires participation as an engaged learner, making “discoveries” for him or herself. Each of these four learning activities will be integrated with and seek competency in the five seminar learning outcomes. A) *Growth of the Neophytes* (3 exams of differing styles: individual and group-oriented, written and spoken, in-class written essay and take-home reflective essay - 45% of total grade); B) *Pilgrimages* (in-class discussions and reflective writes; each student will have an opportunity during the seminar to orally and in writing articulate and discuss the varied topics and subjects of the seminar - 10% of total grade); C) *Re-Telling One’s Own* (re-telling an authentic oral narrative - 15% of total grade); D) *Quests* (group participatory project - 30% of total grade; “assessment artifact”). The students in small collaborative family groups will select a rite of passage or pilgrimage from one of the Indigenous communities, and 1) Conduct extensive library research on its background, ritual meanings and significances, ceremonial structures, all from an adherent’s point of view; 2) Write a creative-nonfictional story of the rite of passage or pilgrimage, inventing probable characters and a storyline, all based upon authentic and accurate ceremonial and philosophical information from the selected ritual; 3) Apply the “Eye Juggling” method to interpretative the meaning of the ritual, as well as differentiating a social science and a humanities analysis and interpretations of the ritual (psychologically asking how it influences personal identity; sociologically asking how it influences group solidarity; ethnographically asking what is the meaning of the religious means and goal of this ritual); 4) Reflect on the significance and meaning of the ritual for you, identifying qualities of your own belief or value system.