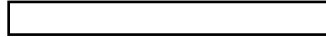


**HIAA 1625 – NATIVE AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE /  
INDIGENOUS ARCHITECTURES OF NORTH AMERICA  
Spring 2023**

Class Time: Tuesdays 4:00-6:30  
Location: Smith-Buonanno Hall G12  
Prerequisites: NA

Instructor: Eric Johnson  
Contact: [email address]  
Office Hours: Thursdays, 10:00-12:00



Jennifer S. Lange for *Coyote & Crow: Stories of the Free Lands Roleplaying Game* by Connor Alexander (Cherokee Nation)

## OVERVIEW

### Course Description

This course exposes the erasure of Native Americans from architectural histories of North America and surveys the diversity and complexity of Indigenous built environments across the continent from the ancient past to the present. This course is interdisciplinary at its heart and will interest students who seek to engage with architectural history, anthropology, and archaeology through the lens of critical Indigenous studies. "Native American Architecture" has been previously examined as either a "vernacular" tradition of a static past or a very recent tradition of cultural centers, schools or health clinics that incorporate Indigenous cosmology into modern forms. In reality, Native American architecture is far more complex. It is a sprawling continental history of constructions, knowledges, materialities, and relations to land—from seasonal camps to monumental earthen mounds, village complexes, roads, and megaliths—that also shape contemporary and future Indigenous architectures.

HIAA 1625 is divided into three Parts. Part 1 examines how different academic disciplines have studied / distorted / erased what is called Native American architecture. Part 2 will emphasize Native American architecture before settler colonialism. We will follow five themes (temporality, knowing, building, dwelling, and ecology) and engage with specific materialities (earth, stone, wood, adobe, hide, etc.). Part 3 will examine architecture as an instrument of colonization, Indigenous continuity and change after 1500 CE, and how contemporary Indigenous architectural traditions have been shaped by Indigenous architectural histories.

### Class Delivery Methods

We will meet in person on Tuesdays from 4:30 to 6:00 in Smith-Buonanno Hall G12. A typical class will be split into two sections. The first 40 minutes will include a short lecture contextualizing the themes of the week. We will then take a 10-minute break, followed by a 40-minute discussion and/or in-class activity.

### Learning Goals

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

- 1) **Identify and compare** various disciplinary approaches to Native American architecture.
- 2) **Analyze** Indigenous architecture across four domains: *material* (what is it made of and how is it made?), *social* (how is it used?), *symbolic* (what does it mean?), and *affective* (what does it do?).
- 3) **Compose** descriptions and narratives about architectural case studies that incorporate insights from critical Indigenous studies.

### Readings

Readings for this course will come from excerpts from books or journal articles and will all be available as PDFs in Canvas. Weekly readings will range from 30-50 pages of scholarly text. Some weeks will also include either a short documentary or podcast featuring Native voices and discussions of architecture. **There are no additional costs for learning resources.**

### Time Expectations

Over the course of the semester, students will spend 1.5 hours in lecture and class discussion (21 hours). Required readings for discussions is expected to take 3 hours per week (33 hours). Students are expected to spend on average 9 hours per week (126 hours for the semester) on assignments – including weekly

discussion posts, historiography reflection paper, architectural tour guide project, and the final research paper.

### **Accessibility**

Brown University is committed to full inclusion of all students. Students who require academic accommodations should contact me. Students may also contact Student and Employee Accessibility Services at 401-863-9588 or SEAS@brown.edu to discuss the process for requesting accommodations. Further information about ensuring accessibility and supporting students with disabilities may be found on the [SEAS website](#).

### **Academic Integrity**

"Academic achievement is evaluated on the basis of work that a student produces independently. A student who obtains credit for work, words, or ideas that are not the produces of his or her own effort is dishonest and in violation of Brown's Academic Code. Such dishonesty undermines the integrity of academic standards of the University. Infringement of the Academic Code entails penalties ranging from reprimand to suspension, dismissal, or expulsion from the University." (The Academic Code 5).

Any violation of the above statement will be understood as an act of academic dishonesty and will be handled according to the policies detailed in Brown University's Academic Code. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty may be result in a grade of N/C for this course as well as other penalties. Questions or concerns about academic integrity should be raised with the instructor prior to submitting an assignment.

### **Inclusivity and Wellness Statement**

My teaching philosophy is to prioritize *care*, not penalty. I also seek to foster *solidarity*, not competitive hierarchy. Our collective goal will be to create a classroom environment that supports a diversity of thoughts, perspectives and experiences, and honors your identities (including race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ability, nationality, etc.) These values are easier said than enacted. Here are a few practical tips:

- If you have a name and/or set of pronouns that differ from those that appear in your official Brown records, please let me know.
- Please contact me, either in person, electronically, or anonymously if you have any suggestions to improve the quality of the course, pedagogy, readings, or other materials.
- Mental health concerns, outside events, or personal history and circumstances may be an obstacle for many people in the classroom. If you feel like your experience in the class is being impacted by concerns related to wellbeing, please don't hesitate to come and talk with me. If you prefer to speak with someone outside of the course, Dean Bhattacharyya, Associate Dean of the College for Diversity Programs, is an excellent resource.

This course deals with topics of Indigeneity and embraces perspectives that are critical of traditional academic disciplines. We will be encountering forms of knowledge about Native Americans that are shaped by racist, sexist, and anti-queer assumptions and disciplinary conventions of settler society. Near the end of the course, we will also be discussing the ongoing history of settler colonialism in North America. Depending on students' backgrounds, these topics might prompt a range of responses—curiosity, anger, ambivalence, etc.—that are different than your own. Please be sensitive to this in class discussion.

It is possible that something said or done in the classroom, by either myself or other students, is troubling or causes offense. Whatever the intention, the impact of what happens throughout the course is not to be ignored. If this occurs, it can be addressed in several ways:

- Discuss the situation privately with me. I am always open to listening to students' experiences, and want to work with students to find ways to process and redress the issue.
- Discuss the situation with the class. Chances are there is at least one other student in the class who had a similar response to the material. Discussion enhances the ability for all class participants to have a fuller understanding of context and impact of course material and class discussions.
- Notify me of the issue through another source such as your academic advisor, a trusted faculty member, or a peer. If for any reason you do not feel comfortable discussing the issue directly with me, I encourage you to seek out another, more comfortable avenue to address the issue.

Finally, resources for Indigenous students at Brown can be found at [Brown University's Native American and Indigenous Studies Initiative](#)

### **Note on Terminology**

There are a lot of terms out there for Indigenous peoples of North America, and it can be confusing at times. In general, if you're referring to people who live/d in territory now claimed by the United States, you can't go wrong with "Native American" (shorted to "Native" as an adjective). "American Indian" is also okay (or "Indian" as an adjective). When talking about Canada, use "First Nations." "Aboriginal" is okay as an adjective and is sometimes useful in discussing issues related to historical events or legacies ("aboriginal land title," for example). "Tribal" also functions as an adjective (ex. "tribal land"). "Indigenous" has become popular in recent years, and it is a good word for generalizing globally (ex "Indigenous peoples around the globe"). That said, it is worth noting that some Native nations do not prefer "Indigenous" when a more specific term is more applicable. Ending each of these terms with "people(s)" or "communities" is a good practice. Finally, since *sovereignty* is one of the main stakes in this field, it's also good to use "nation" when describing Native peoples, particularly in discussions of law, policy, and politics.

**Rule of thumb:** If you mean something specific, use the most specific term available. For example, the *Ramapough Lunaape Nation of New Jersey* (contemporary state-recognized tribal nation) is an ancestral *Munsee* (cultural-linguistic group) *Lenape* (regional cultural-linguistic group) Native American people.

Finally, everyone makes mistakes. Including me! If you're not sure about the correct pronunciation for a place, people, or other concept, chances are you're not alone. Don't hesitate to ask, and we can work collectively to figure it out.

### **GRADING**

#### *15% Participation*

- **Weekly** participation will be based on attendance (50%) and engagement with assigned material (50%). "Engagement" is evaluated in at least 1 of 3 ways: 1) vocalizing thoughts or dialoging with peers in class discussion, 2) attending office hours, or 3) commenting and posting on discussion posts on Canvas.

15% Weekly Discussion Post

- **Before 12:00 pm (noon) each Monday**, students are required to author one discussion post on Canvas. Posts should be **between 250 and 500 words** and should be authored either as an *insight* – your thoughts and connections with previous knowledge – or *question* – something in the readings that was difficult to understand or something you wish to discuss with other students. Discussion posts will be used as jumping off points for class discussion.

15% Historiography Reflection

- Students will complete a **3-to-5-page** Historiography Reflection paper (see p. 4) **by the end of Week 4 (Feb 24)**. Grades will be determined based on appropriateness of journal and article selections (20%), style and grammar (10%), appropriate length (10%), accuracy of summary and comparisons (30%), and appropriate use of sources assigned in class (30%).

25% Architectural Tour Guide Project

- Students will complete and present the Tour Guide Project assignment (see p. 4). **A 1-2 page proposal of this project will be due by March 24 (before Spring Break), and presentations will take place on May 2 (During Reading Period)**. Grades will be determined by the completion of the proposal and appropriateness of selected case study (20%), background research (40%), and effective communication and presentation of tour guide (40%).

30% Final Research Paper

- A **20-to-25-page** research paper is due at the end of the course which will expand and reflect on your Tour Guide Project (see p. 4). **An outline of this paper is due on April 21**. The final paper grade will be determined by style and grammar (15%), use of scholarly sources (15%), argumentation (30%), and your incorporation of feedback from the instructor on the outline and the Tour Guide Project (30%).

**Summary**

Assignment Name	Product	Percent of Final Grade	Due Date
Participation	Attendance & engagement	15%	Weekly (x 13)
Weekly Discussion Post	250-500 words	15%	Weekly (x 13)
Historiography Reflection	3-5 pages	15%	February 24
Architectural Tour Guide Project	1-2 page proposal 15-minute presentation	25%	Proposal: March 24 Presentation: May 2
Final Research Paper	20-25 pages	30%	Outline: April 21 Final: May 14

**ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS**

**Historiography Reflection (3-5 pages)**

Choose an academic journal of your choice in a discipline that includes articles discussing Indigenous architecture in North America. **Select** two articles from this journal: one from before 1990 and one from 1990-2010. **In 3 to 5 pages, summarize, compare, and contrast** the arguments of each article. Please cite course readings to contextualize your summary. Note: This is not an argumentative research paper; no library research is required beyond selecting articles.

## **Architectural Tour Guide Project (1-2 page proposal and 15-minute presentation)**

Your final paper (see below) will be a reflection on this project.

### **1) Choose:**

**By March 24, choose** an example of Native American architecture (broadly defined), and author a 1-2-page proposal outlining why you have chosen this case study. Clearly identify the *who*, *what*, *when*, and *where* of the architectural case study.

- a) *Who* inhabits or uses this built environment (both human and non-human)?
- b) *What* is it? What are its boundaries?
- c) *When* was it built? When was it used? Has it ever been abandoned?
- d) *Where* is it located? What is the wider region like?

### **2) Research:**

Following our approach developed in class, conduct library research to answer the following questions:

- a) **How was it made?** What raw materials were used to make it? What kind of labor, knowledge, and technologies went into it?
- b) **How was it used?** Is it a public or private space? Does it serve a special purpose?
- c) **What does it mean?** What stories are tied to the place? Does it have symbolic significance?

### **3) Tour Guide Presentation:**

**On May 2**, you will assume the role of tour guide as the class "visits" your architectural case study as a 15-minute presentation. Feel free to be as creative as you would like, using visual or digital media, prerecorded sound, handouts, or class activities. Be prepared to answer questions from the class, as they will act as participants in the tour.

## **Final Research Paper (20-25 pages)**

Compose a paper (20-25 pages) answering the questions outlined in the Tour Guide Project above. Please anchor your argument with scholarly sources. Reference the spatial arrangement and experiential dimensions of architectural features in your argument. Finally, address the heritage of this feature today: how were histories of colonialism in North America shaped how the public thinks about your case study?

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### PART 1 ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY AND NATIVE AMERICA

Jan 31: Course Introduction

#### Feb 7: Unsettling Architectural History I

Issues of “canon” - disciplinary histories that shape settler and academic knowledge: to 1990.

- Anthropology, Archaeology, Geography, Vernacular architecture

#### Feb 14: Unsettling Architectural History II

Disciplinary histories that shape settler and academic knowledge: 1990-2010.

- Early Critiques – race, gender, power, space
- “Native American Architecture”
- Emergence of Settler-Colonial Theory and Critical Indigenous Studies

Feb 21: NO CLASS – LONG WEEKEND

Feb 24: Historiography Reflection Paper Due

### PART 2 INDIGENOUS ARCHITECTURES OF NORTH AMERICA

#### Feb 28: Knowing

Understand importance of relations to land as a way of knowing that informs Indigenous architecture. Also understand Native migrations and conceptions of time/history/temporality.

#### March 7: Building I

Materiality and technology: Organics

- Wood & Bark, Hide & Bone, Thatch

#### March 14: Building II

Materiality and technology: Inorganics

- Earth, Adobe, Stone, Ice & Water

#### March 21: Dwelling I

Architecture as kinship and community

March 24: Tour Guide Proposal Due

March 28: NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK

#### April 4: Dwelling II

Architecture as politics and economy

### **PART 3: SETTLER-COLONIAL ARCHITECTURES AND INDIGENOUS MODERNITIES**

#### **April 11: Indigenous Modernities**

Log cabins, concrete. 18<sup>th</sup> through mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

#### **April 18: Settler-Colonial Architecture and Indigenous Sovereignty**

Trading posts, residential schools, housing policies

**April 21: Final Paper Outline Due**

#### **April 25: Contemporary Indigenous Architecture**

Cultural centers, museums, health clinics, protest camps. Mid-20<sup>th</sup> century to today.

### **READING PERIOD**

**May 2: Tour Guide Presentations**

### **EXAM WEEK**

**May 14: Final Papers Due**