

ANTH 20: NATIVE PEOPLES OF CALIFORNIA

Foothill College Course Outline of Record

Heading	Value
Effective Term:	Summer 2025
Units:	4
Hours:	4 lecture per week (48 total per quarter)
Degree & Credit Status:	Degree-Applicable Credit Course
Foothill GE:	Area 4: Social & Behavioral Sciences
Transferable:	CSU/UC
Grade Type:	Letter Grade (Request for Pass/No Pass)
Repeatability:	Not Repeatable

Student Learning Outcomes

- Students will practice and apply understandings of native people of California.
- Students will learn how to critically analyze and interpret anthropological data pertaining to the native peoples of California.
- Students will apply anthropological principles for solving human problems on the local, regional and world scales.

Description

Study of the many cultures of the different native inhabitants of California from the prehistoric period to the present time. Covers an introduction to the diversity and complexity of aboriginal California. Includes the environmental adaptation, material culture, social structure, ideology, and response to change. Examines the impact of the other Native, European, Asian and African groups on those cultures as well as the contributions of Native Californians to the cultures of the Americas.

Course Objectives

The student will be able to:

- evaluate the unique, major culture areas of Native California, the environment of each, the ecological adaptations and the major cultural features which distinguish those areas.
- compare and contrast Native California social and cultural systems with at least one other major Native North American cultural area.
- analyze the linguistic diversity and complexity of Native California.
- demonstrate an awareness of the archaeological record of Native peoples of California.
- compare and contrast Native Californian and Western European systems of categorization.
- demonstrate an understanding of the history and methods of anthropological study of California Native peoples.
- evaluate the positive and negative values, such as ethnocentrism and cultural integrity, of the relationship of Native Californians to Spanish, Mexican and American immigrants based on archaeological, folklorical (first person accounts from original culture) and historical evidence.

- critically assess from an anthropological perspective, the continuities and current issues among Native Californians within tribal groups and cross-tribally. Examples include: racial politics; bias; cultural assumptions; cultural tolerance regarding class, gender and age.
- using applied anthropological techniques, examine and analyze a source of present day culture conflicts between native peoples and the dominant Euro-American culture and explore alternative solutions.

Course Content

- Introduction to the field of anthropology with emphasis on sociocultural anthropology and archaeology
 - The concept of cultural relativism as opposed to ethnocentrism
 - History of anthropology in California
- Introduction to the California culture areas as they existed before European contact, including original migration patterns, cultural isolation and diffusion, and recent indigenous immigration. Students will be exposed to recent evidence from linguistic, genetic and archaeological sources as well as cultural hypotheses
- The history of research of California Natives including oral histories and folklore recorded from primary sources, written history, literature and myth
- The archaeology of pre-contact California including methodology, interpretation of material culture, effects of bias and modern hypotheses
- Examination of language diversity in Native California with hypotheses regarding origins, tribal relationships, reflections of each tribal nation's world view as expressed within their language and linguistic linkages
- Technology and culture with particular emphasis on the environmental adaptations of material culture
- Native California social and political organization from pre-contact to present day including the different impacts of trade, colonialism and conquest
- Religious beliefs of Native Californians from pre-contact to present day with particular emphasis on mythology and cosmology
- Introduction and overview of the history of Euro-American relations with Native Californians including early Euro-American policies of trade, domination, conversion, genocide and assimilation
- Examination of the Spanish/Mexican mission system and its effect on Native peoples
- Mexican and American impact on Native peoples with an emphasis on institutionalized racism and ethnocentrism resulting in Native adaptation and culture change
- Native people cultural survival and political realities in modern times
- The present cultural situation within contemporary California Native peoples

Lab Content

Not applicable.

Special Facilities and/or Equipment

When taught as an online distance learning section, students and faculty need ongoing and continuous internet and email access.

Method(s) of Evaluation

Methods of Evaluation may include but are not limited to the following:

Written assignments

1. Weekly reflections on readings
2. Term paper on field research and/or secondary source research based on ethnographic sources

3. In-class writing

Oral presentations

1. In-class discussion
2. Group presentations

In-class quizzes and exams

1. Quizzes
2. Mid-term exams
3. Final exam

Method(s) of Instruction

Methods of Instruction may include but are not limited to the following:

Lecture

Discussion

Cooperative learning exercises

Field work

Oral presentations

Representative Text(s) and Other Materials

Akins, Damon B., and William J. Bauer, Jr.. We Are the Land: A History of Native California. 2021.

Fagan, Brian. Before California: An Archaeologist Looks at Our Earliest Inhabitants. 2004.

Hildebrandt, William R., and Michael Darcangelo. Life On the River: The Archaeology of an Early Native American Culture. 2008.

Margolin, Malcolm. The Ohlone Way: Indian Life in the San Francisco-Monterey Bay Area, 2nd ed.. 2001.

Although some of these texts are older than the suggested "5 years or newer" standard, they remain seminal texts in this area of study.

Types and/or Examples of Required Reading, Writing, and Outside of Class Assignments

Students select, with the assistance of the instructor, an appropriate topic related to Native Californian culture, research it and present it to the instructor in writing as a term paper and summarized as a class presentation.

Discipline(s)

Anthropology