



PHIL225 Ways of Being In the World Spring 2026

- Instructors: Professor Sterrett and Professor Berry
- Department: Philosophy
- Office Location: Fiske Hall 307
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- Preferred Method of Contact: email
- Student Office Hours: TBD
- Classroom Day/Time: Mondays and Wednesdays 2 - 3:15pm
- McKinley Hall Room 106
- Prerequisites/Corequisite: ENGL100 or 101

How to use this syllabus

This syllabus provides you with information specific to this course, and it also provides information about important university policies. This document should be viewed as a course overview; it is not a contract and is subject to change as the semester evolves. Any changes will be announced in class and/or by email. WSU students are expected to read their WSU email daily. This syllabus is current as of 1/18/2026.

Student Office Hours

Student office hours are by appointment so as to meet you at a time and in a way that is convenient for you. Please feel free to email if you wish to meet in person, have a conversation by phone, or have a one-on-one video discussion.

It's part of a professor's job to be available to meet with students for course related discussions: to talk to students who wish extra help, further clarification of material presented in class, or who just want to follow up on aspects of the class they find interesting. It's not a course requirement that a student take advantage of office hours, though. They are available to you if and when you wish to do so.

Course Description

Catalog course description: Introduction to worldviews and philosophical thought of Indigenous people of North America (also known as Turtle Island). Emphasis is on understanding "a different way of viewing and being in the world" by reading, listening to, viewing, and discussing selected works of Native American/First Nations/American Indian, Métis, and Inuit speakers and authors. Works are related to areas of philosophy such as Nature of Philosophy, Philosophy of Religion, Metaphysics, Epistemology, and Ethics.

Definition of a Credit Hour

Success in this 3 credit hour course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally 3 hours per unit per week with 1 of the hours used for lecture) for instruction and preparation/studying or course related activities for a total of 135 hours.

Measurable Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Compare the Western view of science (creation of generalities, laws) with Indigenous Science (experience of the particular), and describe different conceptions of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK).
2. Contrast the Western conception of a liberal free will with the Indigenous conception of a spirit born into a network of relations.
3. Cite and describe concepts important in many indigenous philosophies, such as balance, harmony, the sacred, relations, relationships, and interconnectedness.
4. Cite ways in which some indigenous philosophies differ from each other.
5. Explain the importance of fully understanding the historical context of speeches and documents in interpreting what a speaker thought, and illustrate with an example.
6. Describe the importance that dreams and visions have had in some Native American cultures.
7. Explain the importance of oral traditions and storytelling in Indigenous cultures.

Required Texts/Readings Textbook

Two books are required for this course: Both are available as affordable paperbacks and in eBook form.

1. *Ways of Being in the World: An Introduction to Indigenous Philosophies of Turtle Island.* by Andrea Sullivan-Clarke, editor. Broadview Press, 2023.
2. *On Indigenuity: Learning the Lessons of Mother Earth.* by Daniel R. Wildcat. Fulcrum Publishing, 2023.

A third book, *Indigenizing Philosophy Through the Land*, by Brian Burkhart, was also listed as a required book, but since then the library obtained the chapters of the book we'll read in pdf, so purchasing your own copy is not absolutely required.

Other Readings

There will be many additional videos, essays, and websites to explore. Information on how to access these will be provided to you by the Professor, either in class or via WSU Email. There may be a small fee for some streaming videos, but they will be few. In addition, we may view relevant art exhibitions nearby, as available.

Other Equipment/Materials/Proctored Exams

Even though this is not an online course, students in this course will need to have access to a functioning device with internet capabilities, because you will need to access your email and (possibly) online materials. You may also occasionally need access to a word processor and printer. In case you do not have one, there are computers and printers for your use at Ablah Library.

Also, I note that Wichita State provides free access to Microsoft Office 365 for students. Follow the instructions below if you wish to get Microsoft Office for your computer or laptop:

1. Log in to **MyWSU**
 2. Click on Office 365 located on the "Home" tab
 3. Follow the Office 365 wizard instructions
- Before the course begins, check that your device allows you to access your WSU e-mail.

Class Protocol and Conduct

In this class, attendance is expected unless there is some compelling reason to be exempted. I very much appreciate knowing ahead of time if you need to be absent from class.

In order that all can give their full attention, I ask that you put electronic devices away, out of sight. This is an in-person, hard copy style of class.

You are expected to be respectful of others, even when you do not agree with what they are saying. Similarly, others are expected to be respectful of you, even when they do not agree with what you are saying.

I do not expect any problems in this class, but the university policy regarding in-class meetings is that in the event that a student demonstrates confrontational, disruptive, or threatening behavior, they may be asked to leave the classroom immediately and will not be allowed to return to the classroom for the remainder of the class period. Consequences of this behavior may also include (and are not limited to): Suspension from class for a minimum of one additional class period and report or referral to the WSU police department, Student Conduct and the WSU Care Team.

Contact Policy

Email communication is always preferred. Feel free to email any questions or concerns following these guidelines:

- Use the course name in the subject line of the email
- Remember to sign your name.
- Email from your WSU email address.
- However, don't direct your questions about tech support to course instructors: at WSU, there are much more helpful sources of support available to you!

Response Time

To Email Questions:

I (Professor Sterrett) usually respond to emails as soon as I can, which will almost always be in less than 24 hours.

Feedback on Assignments:

I aim to provide feedback on short assignments within a week or ten days at most. For longer assignments, two weeks. Usually it will be sooner.

Sexual Harassment, Discrimination and Retaliation

Wichita State University is committed to creating a safe and healthy environment for all of our community members. This includes the elimination of sexual misconduct, relationship violence, and stalking within the University community. These incidents may interfere with or limit an individual's ability to benefit from or fully participate in the University's educational programs.

Students are asked to immediately report incidents to the University Police Department, (316) 978-3450 or students may contact the Title IX Coordinator at (316) 978-5177 or submit a report to the Office of Civil Rights, Title IX & ADA Compliance at [Office of Civil Rights, Title IX & ADA Compliance \(CTAC\) Report Form \(maxient.com\)](https://www.wichita.edu/administration/ctac/report-form).

Students may also report incidents to an instructor, faculty or staff member, who are required by law to notify the Title IX Coordinator. If a student wishes to keep the information confidential, the student may speak with staff members of the Counseling and Psychological Services (316) 978-3440 or Student Health Services (316) 978-3620.

Sexual assault prevention training is required of all students, faculty and staff. These trainings, in addition to being highly interactive and engaging, are based in research around the best practices for healthy communities. Students will need to complete this training in the fall semester before being able to enroll for the spring. For more information regarding the training, visit the CTAC website at: <https://www.wichita.edu/administration/ctac/training.php>.

Students with Disabilities

A disability is something that affects a major life activity. These life activities include but are not limited to, learning, walking, breathing, hearing, and seeing, in addition to many other physical, sensory functions, and psychological disabilities.

If you are a student with a disability or believe you might have a disability, which requires accommodations, please contact the Office of Student Accommodations and Testing (OSAT) at <https://www.wichita.edu/services/accommodations/index.php> to discuss reasonable and appropriate accommodations and eligibility requirements. It is the University's goal that learning experiences be as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability OSAT will review your concerns and determine, with you, what academic accommodations are necessary and appropriate for you. For example, adaptations of teaching methods, class materials or testing may be made on a case-by-case basis if warranted, as required by

the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). All information and documentation of your disability is confidential and will not be released by OSAT without your written permission.

The Office of Student Accommodations and Testing (OSAT) is located in the Shocker Success Center, room 118, (316) 978-3309 (voice/tty) (316-854-3032 videophone). Students seeking an accommodation must complete the online application at: <https://hunter.accessiblelearning.com/Wichita/ApplicationStudent.aspx>.

Prohibition on Discrimination

Wichita State University is committed to being a welcoming campus for all students, staff and faculty. [Wichita State University Policy 3.06 / Sexual Harassment, Discrimination and Retaliation for Employees, Students and Visitors](#) prohibits discrimination on the basis of federal and state protected categories. Retaliation against an individual filing or cooperating in a complaint process is also prohibited.

Students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives are welcome in this course and the diversity that students bring to this course should be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. All materials and activities are presented with the intent to be respectful of all students regardless of gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, or culture. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups. In addition, if any of our class meetings conflict with your religious events, please let me know so that we can make arrangements for you.

Complaints or concerns related to alleged discrimination may be directed to the Office of Civil Rights, Title IX & ADA Compliance (CTAC), Wichita State University, 316-978-3187, ctac@wichita.edu.

Syllabus Policies and Student Resources

All students should familiarize themselves with the course-related policies and student resources that can be found at: www.wichita.edu/syllabuspolicies

These include:

- Important Academic Dates
- Inclement Weather Event and Emergency Event
- Academic Integrity
- Unauthorized Use of Generative AI
- Personal Identity Updates
- Concealed Carry Policy
- Video and Audio recording
- Shocker Alert System
- Intellectual Property
- CARE Team
- Counseling and Prevention Services

- The Office of the Student Advocate
- Academic Appeals
- Student Health Services
- Heskett Center and Campus Recreation
- First Generation Students
- Tobacco Free Campus

Grading Scale

WSU uses a +/- grading scale for final grades and to calculate grade point averages. In this class, grades are assigned according to the following chart.

Points/Percentage	Letter Grade	Grade Points	Interpretation
93% - 100%	A	4.00	A range denotes excellent performance
90% - 92%	A-	3.70	
87% - 89%	B+	3.30	
83% - 86%	B	3.00	B range denotes good performance
80% - 82%	B-	2.70	
77% - 79%	C+	2.30	
73% - 76%	C	2.00	C range denotes satisfactory performance
70% - 72%	C-	1.70	
67% - 69%	D+	1.30	
63% - 66%	D	1.00	D range denotes unsatisfactory performance
60% - 62%	D-	0.70	
Less than 60%	F	0.00	

Assignments

There will be in-class exams, in-class work, and take home assignments.

Attendance is mandatory.

Attendance/Participation*		30%
Module Exams (5)	10% each x 5	50%
Service-Learning Assignments** (PreReflection, Journal, Reflection Presentation, Thank You Letter)		20%
Total		100%

* Attendance/Participation grades include in-class assignments.

**This class has a service-learning component. Each student will choose a volunteer assignment that can be done independently of others in the class, though some may wish to coordinate their volunteer participation with others. There are written assignments associated with the service-learning component of the course, and your grade will be based on those.

Late Assignments

I aim to state the due date for assignments when the assignment is made. If lateness will be penalized on a particular assignment, I will say so when it is assigned.

However, when handing in assignments late even when there is no penalty, feedback on the assignment is not guaranteed within the same time frame as it is on assignments that are handed in on time.

Missed Exams

If you need to miss or arrive late to a scheduled exam, please inform me beforehand.

Extra Credit

No extra credit opportunities are planned or expected.

Tentative Schedule (subject to change, with notice)

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1		<u>Introduction to Course.</u> -- An assigned in-class reading TBD: Introduction, <i>Ways of Being in the World</i> (WBW) (p.1-5) -- In class film & discussion: <i>Inhabitants</i> -- Exhibit at the Ulrich Museum: In Place - Taiomah Rutledge "Origins/Evolutions" -- Pre-Reflection assignment
2 & 3		<u>MODULE 1</u> Indigenous philosophy of Turtle Island: What Is It? "Introduction," <i>WBW</i> (p.8-10) 1.1 "Power and Place Equal Personality" by Vine Deloria Jr and Daniel R. Wildcat in <i>WBW</i> . (p. 11-18) -- "The Legend of the Three Sisters Submitted to the Friends of Ganondagan by a Mohawk Elder." June 28, 2020. Brighton Memorial Library. 04:30 (Search on title on youtube dot com)

	<p>--"Three Sisters: Companion Planting of North American Indigenous Peoples." November 16, 2021. GRIN-U Education. YouTube video, 10:53. (Search on title on youtube dot com)</p> <p>-- Online magazine story with embedded video: Taylor, Christine. "Relearning the Star Stories of Indigenous Peoples." Science Friday, September 6, 2019.</p> <p>1.2 "American Indian Circular Philosophy" by Donald L. Fixico in <i>WBW</i></p>
4 & 5	<p><u>MODULE 2 Philosophy of Religion: Creation, the Sacred, and the People</u> <i>WBW</i> Introduction (p.50-51)</p> <p>2.1 Assorted Responses to Christianity: Speeches and Letters</p> <p>2.1b SHAKÓYE:WA:THA? (Red Jacket) "1805 Speech on Religion (Seneca)" in <i>WBW</i> -- "American Indians and Christianity." <i>The Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture</i> by Clyde Ellis -- other Supplemental material (documentaries, reports)</p> <p>2.1c Ma-chú-nu-zhe (Standing Bear) "1896 Landmark Civil Rights Case Testimony (Ponca)" in <i>WBW</i> -- "Standing Bear's Speech" from <i>The Indian Journal</i> -- (Fillm) "Standing Bear's Footsteps" by Christine Lesiak and Princella Parker. Vision Maker Media, 2011.</p> <p>2.2 "The Problem of Creation" by Vine Deloria, Jr. (Standing Rock Sioux) in <i>WBW</i> -- Film/resources about "The Doctrine of Discovery" TBD</p> <p>"INTERLUDE" and "Everything is Sacred: Iktomi Lessons in Ethics without Value and Value without Anthropocentrism" Chapters by Brian Burkhart. From <i>Indigenizing Philosophy Through the Land</i> (provided to you on course website.)</p> <p>2.3 "In the Time of the Sacred Places." Winona LaDuke (Ojibwe) in <i>WBW</i> -- Videos on LaDuke and her work (to be assigned) -- <u>"Indigenous Studies and 'the Sacred.'" by Mary L. Keller, in <i>American Indian Quarterly</i>, vol. 38, no. 1, 2014, pp. 82–109. JSTOR.</u></p>

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MODULE 3 Metaphysics: The Nature of Reality: What is Real? *WBW* Introduction (p.50-51)

3.1 "Coda: Living in a Sacred Universe" by Viola Cordova (Jicarilla Apache) *WBW*

-- "Native American Culture – Language: The Key to Everything." January 24, 2019. YouTube video, 11:56. by Ron Corn Jr. (Muqsahkwat).

-- "Indigenous Knowledge and Western Science: Dr. Leroy Little Bear Talk." January 14, 2015. YouTube video, 21:32. (Kainai First Nation)

-- "The Metaphysics of Morality in Locality: The Always Already Being in Motion of Kinship" by Brian Burkhart, Chapter 5 of *From Indigenizing Philosophy Through the Land* (provided to you on course website.)

-- "Bounded Space: The Four Directions." by V. F. Cordova (Jicarilla Apache). *APA American Indians in Philosophy* 2, no. 1 (Fall 2002): 3-6.

-- (poem) "After Sacred Water." November 30, 2021. YouTube video, 3:46. by Kinsale Hueston (Dine)

-- (Recommended) "Our Home in the Sky: Indigenous Interconnectedness with the Stars." May 15, 2021. YouTube video, 2:02:57. TELLUS Spark.

3.2 "Skywoman Falling" by Robin Wall Kimmerer (Citizen Potawatomi Nation) *WBW*

3.3 "Indigenous Identity: What Is It and Who Really Has It?" by Hilary N. Weaver (Lakota) *WBW*

3.4 "Endlessly Creating Our Indigenous Selves" by Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg) *WBW*

-- "Indigenous Feminism is Our Culture" by J. Gearon (Dine (Navajo Nation)) *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, February 11, 2021. [Artist Profile and Artwork of Author is at <https://www.firstnations.org/artist/jihan-gearon/>]

3.5 "Where Does Agency Come From? Exploring Indigenous Models of Mind" by Kurtis Boyer (Métis) *WBW*

8 & 9		<p><u>MODULE 4 Epistemology: The Nature of Knowledge: Relations, Land and the Right Path</u> <i>WBW</i> Introduction (p.134-135)</p> <p>4.1 “On the Role of Traditional Ecological Knowledge as a Collaborative Concept: a Philosophical Study” by Kyle Powys Whyte (Citizen Potawatami Nation) <i>WBW</i></p> <p>(Optional) Nadasdy, P. “The Politics of TEK: Power and the ‘Integration’ of Knowledge.” <i>Arctic Anthropology</i> 36, no. 1/2 (1999): 1–18.</p> <p>4.2 "Native American Epistemology Through Dreams" Joel Alvarez (Puerto Rico, Ecuadorian) <i>WBW</i></p> <p>-- "Stories, Dreams, and Ceremonies: Anishinaabe Ways of Learning" <i>Tribal College Journal of American Indian Higher Education</i> 11, no. 4 (2000): 26-29. by Leanne Simpson (Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg)</p> <p>4.3 "The Epistemology of Deep Disagreement and Indigenous Oral Histories" by Paul Simard Smith (Métis) <i>WBW</i></p>
10 & 11		<p><u>MODULE 5 Ethics: The Good Path: How Should We Live Our Lives?</u> <i>WBW</i> Introduction (p.182 -183)</p> <p>5.1 “What Do We Need to Know to Live in Harmony with Our Surroundings?” by Joseph Len Miller (Muscogee) <i>WBW</i></p> <p>5.2 "Indigenous Storytelling" by Jo-Ann Archibald, Q’um Q’um Xiiem (Stó:lo ǝ/ Soowahlie First Nation) <i>WBW</i></p> <p>-- Videos on Native American Storytelling (to be assigned)</p> <p>5.3 "Healthy Community" by Piita Taqtu Irniq, Peter Irniq (Inuit) <i>WBW</i></p> <p>-- Inuit Circumpolar Council. “Inuuluta Qanuigata / Being Healthy as Inuit.” October 14, 2012. YouTube video, 12:53.</p>
12		<p><i>ON INDIGENUITY: Learning the Lessons of Mother Earth</i> by Daniel R. Wildcat. (Yuchi member of Muscogee Nation of Oklahoma) Pages 1 - 65 (begin with "Introduction" for first day); Pages 66 - 118 (begin with "To See In a Different Light" for second day)</p>

		"The Naturalness of Morality in Locality: Relationships, Reciprocity, and Respect," by Brian Burkhart. Chapter 6 of From <i>Indigenizing Philosophy Through the Land</i> (provided to you on course website.)
13		Student presentations and Class discussion on Service Learning Experiences and Assignments.
Final		No Final Exam