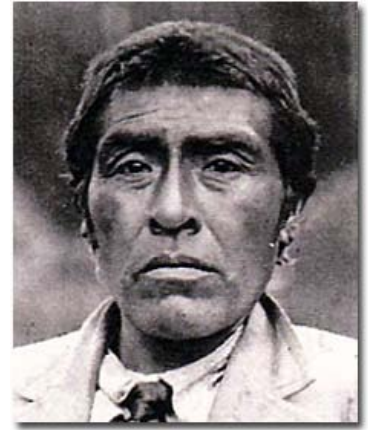


Thinking About Ishi, the Last Yahi

ANTH 407 July 22-23, 2011
A weekend college for 2 credits



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BOOKS/READINGS: The following book has been assigned for this course and is required *pre-reading* for all students. It is available for purchase through the University Bookstore.

- *Ishi's Brain: In Search of America's Last "Wild" Indian*, by Orin Starn, 2005.

Please note the written preassignment, described below under Assignments and Grades.

Prerequisites: There are no specific prerequisites for this course, but students are strongly encouraged to have had previous experience with anthropology, sociology, history, or other social sciences. It's also imperative to have strong writing skills.

COURSE DESCRIPTION, OUTCOMES, AND OBJECTIVES: *Thinking About Ishi* examines several dimensions of the extraordinary story of Ishi, the last living member of the Yahi tribe in northern California. Ishi's people, along with many other hunting and gathering societies in California suffered severe deprivation and death in the years during and after the California gold rush in the mid-to-late 1800s. Ishi, starving and disoriented, came out of the mountains in 1911. His story sheds light on not only the plight of the native peoples, but on the new discipline of anthropology in the person of A.L. Kroeber and his colleagues at the University of California at Berkeley. Our text, *Ishi's Brain*, looks back on those events from almost a century later and gives us much to think about pertaining to the ethics, processes, and principles of anthropological research, as well as reminding us to be aware of the humanity of the subjects of social scientific study.

Please carefully read the text *Ishi's Brain* before the first evening of class. All students are to keep a journal or margin notes in which they record their reactions to the readings; these reactions will be shared in class. See the **Preassignment** description below.

Learning Outcomes: By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Discuss the basic outlines of the story of Ishi and its importance in understanding the darker side of American culture and history.

- Demonstrate an understanding of the social context that shaped the early years of American anthropology.
- Debate/discuss with others some of the general ethical issues pertaining to anthropological research.
- Discuss and demonstrate an understanding of the sociohistorical context for the practices, values, beliefs, and world views of the non-native people in Ishi's day and in ours.

Please feel free to express yourself in class. Ask questions if you don't understand or need more explanation. Argue (intelligently) with the instructor and each other—human knowledge is not set in concrete, it is changing and evolving all the time. We should be able to get some good class discussions going, and to share our many perspectives and experiences. So, if you have a different view or interpretation of events, speak up, but do so in a scholarly way.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADES: Preassignments: Complete the following preassignments prior to the first meeting of class: A) Read *Ishi's Brain: In Search of America's Last "Wild" Indian* in its entirety. B) Keep a reading journal or margin notes in which you record your reactions. By "reactions" I mean not only emotional and personal reactions, but also thoughtful and scholarly observations as well. You may use whatever materials you are comfortable with. In class, all students will share some of their journal entries made while reading the materials for this class.

Your journal may be entirely hand-written--you do not have to type it up. It will not be turned in, but I expect all students to have written down their reactions to the readings. Among other things, the purpose of this assignment is to provide some immediate material for discussion the first evening of class.

In-class activities may include lectures, videos, and discussions. There will be a take-home essay exam due about three weeks after the course.

Grades will be based partly on participation and general preparedness (about 25%), including attendance, the preassignment, any short in-class assignments (such as group presentations), and the final assignment (about 75%). More detail about the assignment will be given in class. You will be competing only with yourself in this course, not fighting over a scarce resource (i.e. a limited supply of A's and B's) with other students. It is theoretically possible for every person in the class to earn an A or a B. Please note that the key word here is earn.

Student Obligations

a) *Students are required to attend all sessions of the course.* You should make arrangements to stay until 4:30 p.m. Saturday. Absences will result in a drastically lowered grade, as will leaving early, barring an emergency. Students are expected to be conscientious and attentive throughout the course, and to treat the professor and their fellow students with courtesy and respect. Differing interpretations of and reactions to the materials and ideas emerging from this course are not only to be expected, they are welcome. Reading, writing, discussion, and debate about our often controversial world are the means by which we learn about others and ourselves.

b) *Students will be responsible for the information contained in all materials* presented in this course: readings and handouts, lectures, questions asked by others, discussions, group presentations, and videos or other audiovisual items. These materials are not only important for our in-class sessions, but also for your take-home paper. Take lots of notes on everything!

Language Policy: While in the classroom, we will think, discuss and debate as anthropologists. This means that both the professor and the students will use language that is scholarly and professional, reflecting the fact that we are trying to achieve a greater understanding of some aspect of the human condition. Learn to express yourself clearly and accurately, and *in an intellectual rather than personal fashion*. Develop awareness of your own ethnocentrism and make conscious efforts to ameliorate it. Be conscious of the language you use to talk about race, ethnicity, and gender.

Food Policy: You are welcome to bring something to drink into the classroom, but please, no food or snacks. Also, *no chewing gum*, which can be distracting while engaged in discussions.

Wandering-in-and-out Policy: Take care of business during breaks and between sessions! It is distracting and inappropriate for students to get up, leave the classroom, and return.

Miscellaneous: PLEASE TURN OFF TELEPHONES! I've not only had students keep their phones on, but actually take the call right in the classroom! Not good.....

Statement on Academic Misconduct: EOU places a high value upon the integrity of its student scholars. Any student found guilty of an act of academic misconduct (including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, or theft of an examination or supplies) may be subject to having his or her grade reduced in the course in question, being placed on probation or suspended from the university, or being expelled from the university—or a combination of these. (Please see relevant sections of the *Student Handbook*).

Documented or Suspected Disabilities: If you have a documented disability or suspect that you have a learning problem and need reasonable accommodations, please contact the Disability Services Program in Loso Hall 234. Telephone: (541) 962-3081. Since this class does not have an exam as such, this will probably not apply.

GENERAL COURSE SCHEDULE

Friday, July 22, 2011

Class meets 7:00 - 10:00 p.m.

Topics: Introduction to class, explanation of assignments
Overview of pre-contact North America
California gold rush and northern CA tribes
Anthropology in America
Ishi's Story

Activities: Self-introductions
Lecture, videos, discussion
Sharing of ideas written in preassignment

Saturday, July 23, 2011

Class meets 9:00 – 4:30 (with lunch break)

Topics: Museums and Native American remains
The role of anthropologists, good and bad
The search for Ishi's brain

Issues: ethical, political, academic, etc.
Ishi's funeral and repatriation

Activities: Lecture, videos, group-led discussions throughout the day
Explanation of take-home assignment
Summary, wrap-up, and reflections

THE TAKE-HOME ESSAY EXAM IS DUE ON OR BEFORE WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 17, BY 11:30 P.M.

It must be submitted through Blackboard.