Course Description:

This course focuses on the United States’ project of eliminating (removing) Native Americans from the eastern half of the United States. This project is primarily associated with the Indian Removal Act of 1830, signed into law by Andrew Jackson, and subsequent “trails of tears” (the most famous of which is the Cherokee Trail of Tears, 1838-1839). We will give significant attention to the Indian Removal Act and the removals of the 1830s and 1840s, but the course will treat what the late anthropologist Patrick Wolfe termed settler colonialism’s “logic of elimination” as a broader project, one that is foundational to the creation of the U.S. in 1776-1789 and that involved not only forcible relocation but war and other forms of dispossession. In addition to providing an analysis of the U.S. removal project and assessing its destructive impact on Native Americans, the course will also consider the perspectives and strategies of American Indian nations at the time.

About six weeks of the term will be devoted to familiar pedagogical techniques (lectures, class discussions based on assigned readings, and conventional writing assignments). During the other four weeks, the course will use the innovative Reacting to the Past pedagogy, in which each student will be assigned a role to play in an elaborate “game,” called “Red Clay, 1835: Cherokee Removal and the Meaning of Sovereignty,” which simulates debates about the removal of the Cherokees.

Note about class sessions: I have scheduled the course from 12:00-1:50, a 110-minute block of time, rather than the usual 80-minute block. We will need the full block of time during sessions devoted to the Red Clay Game. For most other class sessions, we will use the standard 80-minute block and adjourn by 1:20.

Assignments:

1. A mid-term essay of three pages, due Friday Feb. 8 at 5:00 p.m. The paper will ask students to analyze readings from the first five weeks of the course. 15 percent.
2. A final paper of six to eight pages on removal and a Native nation or community from a list to be provided. Due Thurs., March 21, at 5:00 p.m. 25 percent.

3. Two constituency reports for the Red Clay Game (due date dependent on role). 10 percent each.

4. Participation in regular discussions and in the Red Clay Game (includes quiz to be given on Feb. 12). 20 percent.

5. Final exam, Wed., March 20, 8:00-10:00. 20 percent.

[Note: Graduate students enrolled in HIST 569 have separate requirements.]

Readings:


Jace Weaver and Laura Adams Weaver, *Red Clay 1835: Cherokee Removal and the Meaning of Sovereignty*, referred to as the Gamebook. Abbreviated as GB on the syllabus.

Articles, chapters, and primary documents available on Canvas. A full list of these readings can be found at the end of the syllabus.

Learning Objectives:

1. Understand the concept of settler colonialism and its relationship to U.S. policy (including removal) toward Native Americans

2. Understand the scope and impact of the U.S. policy of Indian removal.

3. Understand ideas about state sovereignty, federal sovereignty, and the sovereignty of American Indian nations.

4. Understand arguments for and against removal as made by U.S. officials and leaders of Native American nations.

5. Develop an appreciation for the relationship between constraint and agency in history.

6. Develop skills of interpreting and using primary historical texts by using these texts to prepare speeches and in oral debate.

7. Develop skills of oral presentation and argumentation through speaking and debating.
8. Develop skills of analysis through writing.

**Grading Criteria:**

The following criteria, formulated by the History Department, will be employed for all written work:

A: Work that distinguishes itself by the excellence of its grasp of the material and the precision and insight of its argument, in addition to being well executed and reasonably free of errors.

B: Work that satisfies main criteria of the assignment, and demonstrates command of the material, but does not achieve the level of excellence that characterizes work of A quality.

C: Work that demonstrates a rudimentary grasp of the material and satisfies at least some of the assigned criteria reasonably well.

D: Work that demonstrates a poor grasp of the material and/or is executed with little regard for college standards, but which exhibits some engagement with the material.

F: Work that is weak in every aspect, demonstrating a basic misunderstanding of the material and/or disregard for the assigned question.

**Schedule:**

**Week 1:**

1/8: Introduction: U.S. independence and settler colonialism

1/10: Logic of elimination and early republic dispossession

Reading: Wolfe (Canvas); Calloway (Canvas)

**Week 2:**

1/15: Resistance to dispossession and the option of genocidal war

Reading: Dowd (Canvas); Ostler (Canvas); Tecumseh’s speech (Canvas)

1/17: Guest lecture: Jean O’Brien, Distinguished McKnight University Professor, University of Minnesota

Reading: O’Brien (Canvas)
Week 3:

1/22: Cherokee history, 1700s-1830
Reading: Perdue and Green, pp. 1-41; GB, pp. 13-33

1/24: The threat of removal
Reading: Perdue and Green, pp. 42-67; Ridge to Gallatin (GB, pp. 51-59); Boudinot, “An Address” (GB, pp. 59-69); Georgia Indian Laws (GB, pp. 69-74); Indian Removal Act (GB, pp. 74-76); Cass, “Removal of the Indians” (GB, 138-148)

Week 4:

1/29: SCOTUS and Cherokee sovereignty
Reading: Perdue and Green, pp. 69-89; Cherokee Nation v. Georgia (GB, pp. 76-82); Worcester v. Georgia (GB, pp. 83-99); Kent, “Of the Foundation” (GB, pp. 103-106)

1/31: Debates about removal
Reading: Cherokee National Council, “Memorial” (GB, pp. 106-113); Cherokee Women, “Three Petitions” (GB, pp. 126-129); Ross, Letter to Calhoun (GB, pp. 129-132); Boudinot, editorials in Cherokee Phoenix (GB, pp. 132-138); Evarts, “Brief View” (GB, pp. 148-156)

Week 5:

2/5: Debates about removal (continued):
Jackson, “First Annual Message” (GB, pp. 157-159); Lumpkin, “Speech” (GB, pp. 170-177); Jackson, “Second Annual Message” (GB, pp. 178-181); American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, “Resolutions” (GB, pp. 181-189); Troup, “Sovereignty of the States” (GB, pp. 189-190); Lumpkin, “Message” (GB, pp. 191-193); Cherokee Indians (Treaty Party), “Memorial” (GB, pp. 194-202); Boudinot to Watie (GB, pp. 202-203); Ridge to Chiefs (GB, pp. 204-205); Ridge to Ridge (GB, pp. 204-205); Underwood and Ridge to Cass (GB, pp. 205-206)

2/7: Preparation for Red Clay Game
Reading: GB, pp. 34-48 (note: ignore the Hermitage debate—we will not stage this part of the game)

MIDTERM ESSAY DUE, 5:00 p.m., 2/8

Week 6:

2/12: Red Clay game session 1: quiz and faction meetings

2/14: Red Clay game session 2: Cherokee National Council meeting
First constituency reports due
Week 7:
  2/19: Red Clay game session 3: Cherokee National Council meeting
  2/21: Red Clay game session 4: Cherokee National Council Meeting
         *Cherokee Phoenix* published; Second constituency reports due

Week 8:
  2/25: Red Clay game: debrief
  2/27: Film: We Shall Remain (PBS): Episode Three: Trail of Tears

Week 9:
  3/5: Removal and genocide in the American east and midwest, 1830-1850s
       Reading: re-read Ostler 1, pp. 12-16 (Canvas); Ostler 2 (Canvas);
               Child (Canvas)
  3/7: Removal and genocide (continued)
       Reading: Ostler 3 (Canvas)

Week 10:
  3/12: Removal in the Willamette Valley
       Reading: Lewis (Canvas)
  3/14: Surviving removal

FINAL EXAM: 8:00-10:00, Wed., March 20

FINAL PAPER DUE: Thursday, March 21, 5:00 p.m.


9. same as # 7, pp. 359-368

10. David G. Lewis, “Four Deaths: The Near Destruction of Western Oregon Tribes and Native Lifeways, Removal to the Reservation, and Erasure from History,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 115 (Fall 2014): 414-437