

American Indians & Their Lands: Universities in South Dakota Pilot Project

The content of a college course entitled American Indians and Their Lands designed by Dr. John Glover at Black Hills State University, based upon curriculum developed by the Indian Land Tenure Foundation was offered at five institutions of higher learning located in South Dakota. Each institution offered the course as a three credit undergraduate experience under the most acceptable discipline designation, which in most cases was cross-listed under Political Science or History.

This course examined native world view regarding “territoriality”, indigenous land use, European concept of “discovery” and title ownership, the historic changes in US Federal policies that have impacted native “ownership” with emphasis upon the delineation of Indian Reservations. Removal Policies, Trust Obligation, Plenary Power, the role of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the General Allotment Act, Indian Reorganization Act, Termination Era, and the present agendas of Self-Determination. Throughout, a special emphasis will be focusing on the present day impact of “fractionation” of Indian parcels. The premise was to recognize past and present native “property” concepts and needs to the current realities of Indian land status so as to provide an informed individual capable of best handling contemporary Indian land issues.

The course was offered at the following institutions: Sinte Gleska University taught by Professor Victor Douville, Oglala Lakota College taught by Judge and Professor Patrick Lee, South Dakota State University taught by Professor Delmer Lonowski, University of South Dakota taught by Professor Michael Card and Dr. John Husmann at Dakota Wesleyan University. Most courses included the following guest speakers: USD Law Professor and Tribal Judge Frank Pommersheim, BHSU Humanities Chair Ronnie Theisz, BHSU Professor John Glover, ILTF Intern Janet Routzen.

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