History 4391: Independent Study in American Indian History. Dr. Pierce

Student will complete a paper of at least 5 pages (double-spaced) on each of the four readings. The topic for each paper is below. Contact Dr. Pierce if you have any questions at jpierce8@angelo.edu

Assignment one: Due via email by Friday, June 14th by 5:00pm. Erdoes and Ortiz, American Indian Myths and Legends. Question: Read several legends, or perhaps one thematically organized section. Compare American Indian myths to myths and stories from Western Civilization, for example Greek legends, the Biblical book of Genesis, and to the Western scientific worldview. What are some similarities between these stories and those other ways of arriving at knowledge and insight? What are some differences between American Indian legends and those other worldviews?

Assignment two: Due via email by Friday, June 21st by 5:00pm. Linderman, Pretty-shield Medicine Woman of the Crow. Question: Frank Bird Linderman asks Pretty-shield to tell him a woman’s story. What makes this narrative a woman’s story and how does that differ from a man’s story? Think in terms of topics discussed, themes, and perspectives that differ between men and women.

Assignment three: Due via email by Friday, June 28th by 5:00pm. N. Scott Momaday, The Way to Rainy Mountain. Question: Explain this quote with special attention to the format of the book itself: “In one sense, then, the way to Rainy Mountain is preeminently the history of an idea, man’s idea of himself, and it has old and essential being in language. The verbal tradition by which it has been preserved has suffered a deterioration in time. What remains is fragmentary: mythology, legend, lore, and hearsay—and of course the idea itself, as crucial and complete as it ever was. That is the miracle.” What does Momaday mean by this quote, both in terms of general human history, but especially the history of American Indian people?

Assignment four: Due via email by Wednesday, July 3rd by 5:00pm. Elliot West, The Essential West. Question: Read the Essay: “Lewis and Park.” Compare the Lewis and Clark expedition to the contemporaneous Mungo Park expedition in Africa. Why was the Lewis and Clark expedition so successful when that of Park was an unmitigated disaster? What does this say about the conquest of Africa and the Americas by Europeans or the descendants of Europeans?