I. TEXTS:

II. COURSE DESCRIPTION and OBJECTIVES:
Philosophers in the Western tradition are people who ask "fundamental" questions about the nature of reality, knowledge, and value. They uncover and evaluate the assumptions grounding the scientific, religious, political—and "everyday"—views of the world. (It's good work, if you can get it.) Unlike other disciplines in the academy, then, philosophy is a kind of activity—a careful, methodical, and if well done, joyous wondering. The purpose of this course is to turn the philosopher's curiosity to a wondering about American Indian worldviews.

While there are scores of American Indian nations and tribes with unique philosophical and religious beliefs, commonly shared ontological and epistemological themes will emerge and will become the focus of our study. Among these are relatedness and circularity as world-ordering principles, an expansive conception of persons, and the semantic potency of performance.

And there's one more thing. Philosophers are wedded to critical thinking, but it's not a god or anything. Indeed, I sometimes think that we've given kindly thinking short shrift in order to promote critical thinking. But you don't have to be a mean person to think critically, so we'll do our best to promote kindness and generosity, tolerance and respect. In that spirit of kindness and respect for others, please turn off your cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices during class.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS:
First of all, you are required to wonder, be puzzled, and learn a bunch. Then you should complete the daily reading assignments on time, giving each careful consideration. This will help you come to class prepared to contribute to class discussions. As a rule, no extra credit assignments and you are responsible for all material missed due to absence.

1. We will have two term examinations (each worth 15% of the final grade) and a comprehensive final examination (30% of the final grade). You are required to take the examinations on the scheduled dates, and you must complete all examinations to pass the course. I will happily administer a make-up examination if you miss a test, but only if you can document that your absence is unavoidable and excusable in accordance with University policy, and only if you notify me before the examination is administered. (Such absences include illness, family death, religious observance, etc.)

2. 20% of your grade will be determined by a fairly substantial writing assignment due on November 16. Details will be forthcoming, but there is no single set topic for consideration.
Norton-Smith
American Indian Philosophy

Be thinking about some question or topic you wish to pursue, for it must be approved by
September 21.

3. There will be six quizzes and in-class assignments—some unannounced. Your lowest quiz
will be dropped, so your best five quizzes will count 15% of the final grade. I will not
administer "make-up" quizzes (happily, cheerfully, or otherwise).

4. A class participation grade, heftily influenced by attendance, timeliness, and the
inappropriate use of electronic devices during class counts the final 10% of your grade. The
students who earn high marks in participation are the ones who are obviously engaging the
readings, who make regular, positive contributions to class discussions—and who turn off
the phones. Of course, you can't impress us with your participation if your attendance is
poor, so you'll want to make a special effort to attend regularly! As an incentive, after your first
three absences, you will lose 10 points for each unexcused absence (up to 50 points). Why? Because
experience has taught that there is a correlation—probably a causal connection—between
attendance and performance.

5. In summary, our semester of coursework will be weighed as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examination #1</th>
<th>15%</th>
<th>75 points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Examination #2</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>75 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Examination</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>125 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Assignment</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>100 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Quizzes @ 15 points each</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>75 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>50 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>500 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A: 500 - 465 points (100% - 93%)
A-: 464 - 450 points (<93% - 90%)
B+: 449 - 440 points (<90% - 88%)
B: 439 - 415 points (<88% - 83%)
B-: 414 - 400 points (<83% - 80%)

C+: 399 - 390 points (<80% - 78%)
C: 389 - 365 points (<78% -73%)
C-: 364 - 350 points (<73% - 70%)
D+: 349 - 340 points (<70% -68%)
D: 339 - 300 points (<68% - 60%)
F: Below 300 points (<60%)

IV. PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS:

A. Cheating and plagiarism are wrong. For most people, no more needs to be said.
However, there are people who believe that they have a right to take the intellectual
property produced by other people, probably because this kind of property is accessible
and easy to take without the owner's permission. But the same is true of your
vacationing neighbor's lawn mower in her unlocked garage, and not many people
believe that they have a right to take the lawn mower without asking permission.
Anyway, we will treat everyone with a kindness and respect that extends to the products
of their intellectual labors. If you choose not to be a part of this community bound by
trust, but choose instead to "intentionally . . . misrepresent the source, nature, or other
conditions of academic work so as to accrue undeserved credit," then you will be subject
to the sanctions outlined in the section "Cheating and Plagiarism" in Kent State
University's Digest of Rules and Regulations. Specifically: Cheating or plagiarism will
result in receiving a failing grade for the work or course.
Norton-Smith  
American Indian Philosophy  

B. The Philosophy Department grievance procedure for handling student grievances is in conformity with the "Student Academic Complaint Policy & Procedures" set down as University Policy 3342-4-16 in the University Policy Register. For information concerning details of the grievance procedure, please see the Department Chair.  

C. Kent State University recognizes its responsibility for creating an institutional atmosphere in which students with disabilities can succeed. In accordance with university policy, if you have a documented disability, you may request accommodations to obtain equal access in this class. Please contact the disability coordinator. After your eligibility for accommodations is determined, you will be given a letter, which, when presented to instructors, will help us know best how to assist you.  

D. The semester schedule is tentative and subject to amendment. Should circumstances warrant, changes in the schedule will be announced and are a part of this syllabus. As well, I reserve the right to implement certain procedures not explicitly described herein in response to unanticipated events. Any changes will be announced and are a part of this syllabus.  

V. SEMESTER READING and EXAMINATION SCHEDULE:  

Week I: August 30-September 2  
8/31: Introductory material  
9/2: Norton-Smith, The Dance of Person and Place, chp. 1  

*What is American Indian Philosophy*  

Week II: September 6-10  
9/7: Deloria, “Philosophy and the Tribal Peoples,” (in Waters), pp. 3-11  

*True Versions and Cultural Bias*  

Week III: September 13 - 17  
9/14: Norton-Smith, The Dance of Person and Place, chp. 2  
9/16: Norton-Smith, The Dance of Person and Place, chp. 3  

*Relatedness, Native Knowledge, and Ultimate Acceptability*  

Week IV: September 20-24  
9/21: Norton-Smith, The Dance of Person and Place, chp. 4  
Paper topic due  
Deloria, “If You Think About It, You Will See That It Is True,” pp. 40-60.  

Week V: September 27-October 1  
Deloria, “Kinship with the World,” pp. 223-229
Norton-Smith
American Indian Philosophy

9/30: Cajete, "Philosophy of Native Science," pp. 45-57
     Whitt, "Biocolonialism and the Comodification of Knowledge," pp. 188-213

Week VI: October 4-8
10/4: Open for catch-up or review
10/7: Examination #1

*An Expansive Conception of Persons*

Week VII: October 11 -15
10/12: Norton-Smith, *The Dance of Person and Place*, chp. 5

*The Semantic Potency of Performance*

Week VIII: October 18 - 22
10/19: Norton-Smith, *The Dance of Person and Place*, chp. 6

Week IX: October 25 - 29
10/26: Deloria, "The Religious Challenge," 275-289
10/28: Deloria, "Tribal Religions and Contemporary American Culture," pp. 305-322

Week X: November 1-5
11/2: Open for catch-up or review
11/4: Examination #2

*Circularity as a World-ordering Principle*

Week XI: November 8-12
11/9: Norton-Smith, *The Dance of Person and Place*, chp. 7
     Fixico, *The American Indian Mind*, chp. 1
11/11: Fixico, *The American Indian Mind*, chps. 2 and 3

Week XII: November 15-19
11/16: Fixico, *The American Indian Mind*, chps. 4 and 9

Week XIII: November 22-26
11/25: Thanksgiving Break

Week XIV: November 29-December 3
12/2: Norton-Smith, *The Dance of Person and Place*, chp. 8

Week XV: December 6-10
12/7: Open for catch-up or review
12/9: Open for catch-up or review

Our final examination is scheduled for Thursday, December 16th from 12:45-3:00 pm.