

Fall 2020 OLLI Indigenous Cultures

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Plan for October 14 (Session 4)

- **(Language portions of) Berkshire Land Acknowledgment**
- **Quick reminder of what has been covered so far**

Early Origins and Diversity (e.g. CA) of Native Americans
Cultural Sophistication (*1491*)

Race and Racism (cleanse vocabulary)

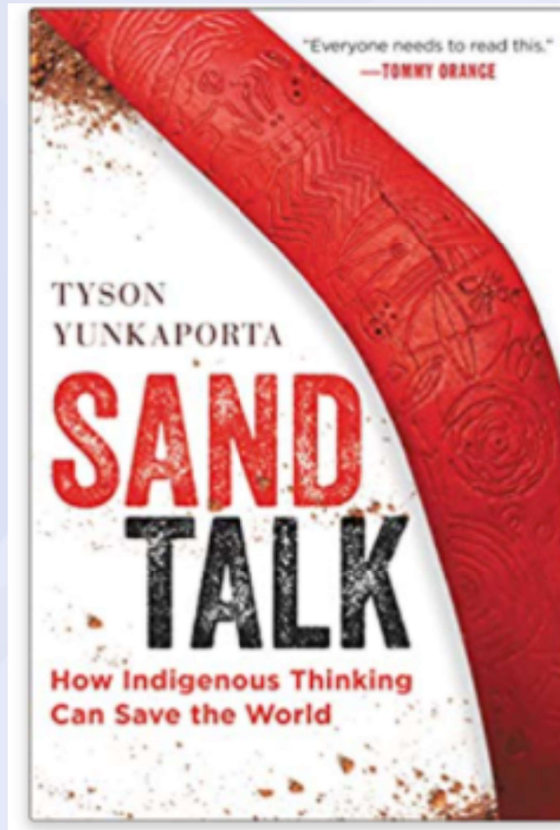
Land management practices – preserve 7th Generation

Repect & Learn from Nature/Animals (we are one)

- **Preview of coming attractions**
- **American values and languages**

Brought to my attention by a friend

<https://www.harpercollins.com/products/sand-talk-tyson-yunkaporta?variant=32122363445282>



Partial list of historical events and people

*Hiawatha (Ayenwatha), the Peacemaker (Deganawida) and Tododaho ~1451 or earlier
Migration of the Algonkian people into North America*

Eratosthenes (276-194 BC)

The arrival of 3 sisters [maize, beans, squash] in the Northeast ~1000 AD

Nicole **Oresme** (1320-1382) precursor of **Cartesian Coordinates?**

Little Ice Age (*Nature's Mutiny*) peaked 1570 to 1680s

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) & John Locke (1632-1704)

Baruch (Bento) de **Spinoza** 1632-1677 [*killed God before Darwin*]

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) *The Social Contract*

Hendrick **Aupaumut** (1757-1830)

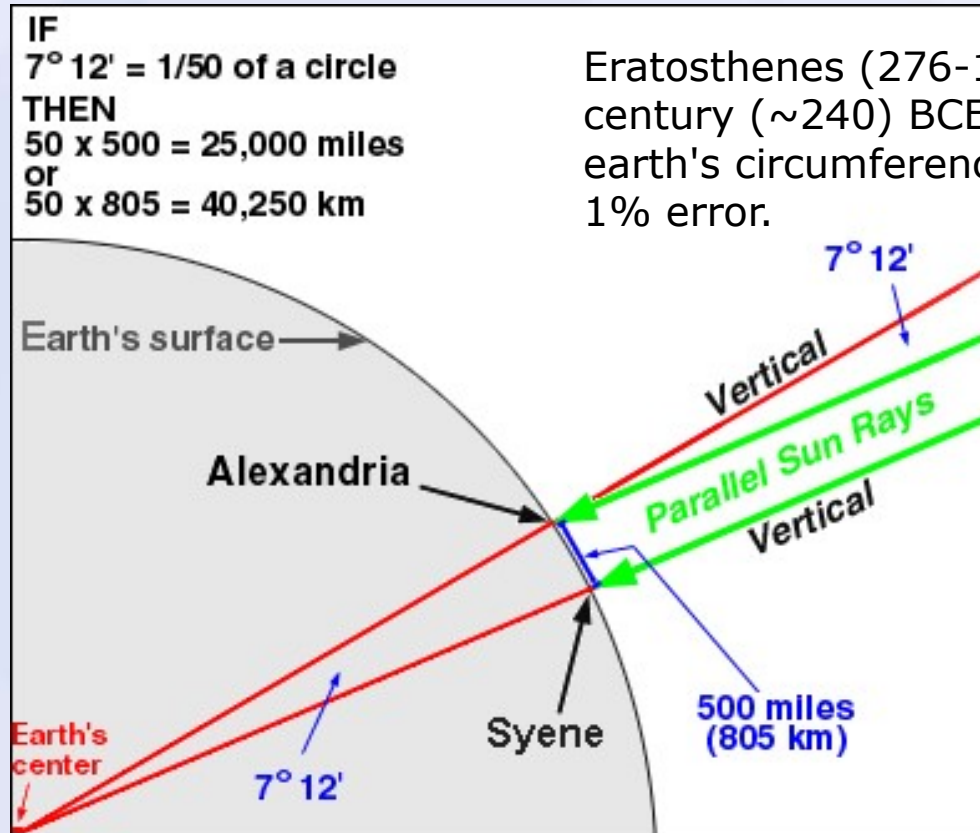
Daniel **Ninham**, Jacob Cheeksaunkun, Solomon

Uhhaunauwaunmut, and John Naunauphtaunk (*to London in 1765*)

Lewis Henry **Morgan** (1818-1881)

Greek Philosophers and Mathematicians

{**Aristotle** (385-323 BC)}



Eratosthenes (276-194 BC), in the third century (~240) BCE estimated the earth's circumference with only about 1% error.

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- **The role of language (it reveals and shapes our values) e.g. *ultracrepidarianism runs in the family***
- **Social values embedded in mythology and other teachings**
- *Land (mis)management: contrasting American & Colonial practices*
- *Colonial values, including racism and slavery*
- The influence of Colonial observations on European thinking
- The highly developed system of private property and markets in Europe; unknown in the Americas

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Session 5: European Origins of Colonial Values

- 13th Century: expansion of commerce, use of coinage
- 14th Century Shift away from Aristotle into proto-scientific thinking (Oresme)
- 15th Century The Age of Discovery and the invention of race
- 16th Century
 - Henry VIII (1509-1547) land measurement and ownership
 - The Little Ice Age – peaked in 1570 (Spinoza)
 - Population collapse in the Americas, ending cultural progress
- 17th Century: King James Bible & Shakespeare, John Locke 1632-1704; Thomas Hobbes 1588-1679
- The Age of Enlightenment 1715-1789; Jean-Jacques Rousseau 1712-1778
- Might makes Right: to the Victor go the Spoils (cultural relativism)

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Session 6: Colonial Values in Practice & Remedies

- Land Management (already covered)
 - Monoculture (niacin [B3] deficiency)
 - Plowing (erosion) *Do stones have souls?*
 - Soil & water table depletion, Water pollution (phosphates)
- Private Land Ownership
 - Fencing, Animal Slavery
- Technology
 - Who are the beneficiaries
 - Intellectual Property
- Wealth Inequality – Affine Wealth Model
- Overpopulation / Hunger / Homelessness

From “The Great Law of Peace”
THE GREAT BINDING LAW, GAYANASHAGOWA

Look and listen for the welfare of the whole people and have always in view not only the present but also the coming generations, even those whose faces are yet beneath the surface of the ground—the unborn of the future Nation.

http://web.pdx.edu/~caskeym/iroquois_web/html/greatlaw.html

Portland State University

Jared Diamond (1992) page 337

The Third Chimpanzee: The Evolution and Future of the Human Animal, HarperCollins

"...it's always been hard for humans to know the rate at which they can safely harvest biological resources indefinitely, without depleting them.

... preindustrial peoples who couldn't sustain their resources were guilty not of moral sins, but of failures to solve a really difficult ecological problem. Those failures were tragic, because they caused a collapse in life-style for the people themselves.

Tragic failures become moral sins only if one should have known better from the outset. In that regard there are two big differences between us and [earlier people]: scientific understanding, and literacy. We know, and they didn't know..."

Ecology and Balance

A study that has received quite a bit of notice talks about the success of indigenous peoples at managing land for the benefit of biodiversity, especially for threatened species. A more detailed write-up about the same topic (and conclusion) can be found on the “preprint” service of Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory.

<https://yaleclimateconnections.org/2020/06/by-paying-attention-tribes-in-the-northwoods-are-leading>

University of British Columbia. (2019, July 31). “Biodiversity highest on Indigenous-managed lands.” ScienceDaily. Retrieved January 20, 2020 from www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/07/190731102157.htm

“The importance of Indigenous Peoples’ lands for the conservation of terrestrial vertebrates”

Christopher J. O’Bryan, Stephen T. Garnett, John E. Fa, Ian Leiper, Jose Rehbein, Álvaro Fernández-Llamazares, Micha V. Jackson, Harry D. Jonas, Eduardo S. Brondizio, Neil D. Burgess, Catherine J. Robinson, Kerstin K. Zander, Oscar Venter, James E.M. Watson

bioRxiv 2019.12.11.873695; doi: <https://doi.org/10.1101/2019.12.11.873695>

Lisa Brooks on Balance

(from an online talk sponsored by the Bidwell House on June 13, 2020)

Speaking of King Philip's War, she described conflict (war) as striking native sensibilities **as** things being out of balance. "Peace is the restoration of balance."

She talked about how the concept of balance is built into the language. Moving versus stillness. The endings of words (locatives) differentiate: "bagw" is a lake, or stillness at the end of a flow. A river is "tegw" which means flowing.

-bagw (lake, stillness, the end of flow)

-tegw (river, flowing)

e.g. Pitawbagok (or Pitabagok or Pitabagw) means (probably) Double Lake(s)

and Kwenitegw or Kwnitekw means Long River, with Kwenitogok being the locative.

Pokw8mtegw = Pocumtuck (small/low/short/narrow river) = Deerfield River

pokwiwi = a short way (partly)

Pokwisaaazena (it makes a short cry) – Akwesasne = Abenaki name for Mohawks



Stewart

[picture of Stewart]

Awani na?

Stewart na, na assess. [ases]

Awani nihi wd'asesoma, Stewart?

Stewart nihi nd'asesoma.

Stewart nidômba.

[picture of Spot]

Awani na?

Spot na, na assess. [ases]

Awani nihi wd'asesoma, Spot?

Alice nihi wd'asesoma, Spot.

Stewart ta Spot wli widôba.

Stewart idam, "Spot, nolidahôzi aian."

Spot idam, "Wliwni, nolidahôzi aian, achi."

[picture of Asesak ta Nahamak]

Nô-ne-weji nahamak miji ma-lo-me-nal.

[picture of turkey feather]

Awani na namihok?

Nahama nihi w'migwenoma.

Nahama idam wliwni, ta adio.

Stewart

Who is that one?

That one is Stewart, that horse.

Whose horse is Stewart?

Stewart is my horse.

Stewart is my friend.

Who is that one?

That one is Spot, that horse.

Whose horse is Spot?

That horse, Spot, belongs to Alice.

Stewart and Spot are good friends.

Stewart says, "Spot, I'm happy that you are here."

Spot says, "Thank you, I am happy you are here, too."

Sometimes the turkeys eat some grain.

What is that one?

That is a Turkey's feather.

The turkey says thank you, and good-bye.

Language

Since Indian languages were oral, and (for the most part) had no written records, and some dialects died out, we rely on colonial documents that attempted to record what they heard. The European orthography, naturally enough, reflects the way they write their own language sounds. In New England, as the English pushed north and confiscated Abenaki lands, the Native people fled north and west, many of them ending up in what is now Canada. The French were more welcoming of the Indians, often living among them and even inter-marrying, and attempted to understand their culture, even as they tried to save their souls by converting them to Christianity. So early Abenaki dictionaries and grammars were written in the French style.

In contrast, many of the documents that record other Algonkian dialects, those along the Eastern seaboard, use English-style orthography. In trying to find cognates between Abenaki and Mohican, for example, I find that I have to say the words out loud in order to comprehend whether they might be the same word, even if altered slightly, because the spellings are so different that at first glance they seem to have no similarity. I'll give some examples later.

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The role of language (it reveals and shapes our values)

Exonyms versus Endonyms (e.g. Iroquois versus Haudenosaunee)

Orthography: seg8gw | segōgw = Skunk Skog = Snake Sibs = Bird

Masajosek = Massachusetts {at the big hill}
(in reference to the Great Blue Hill, south of Boston)

mas = big, much, to a large degree, in a large amount

wajo {pl wajoak} = a mountain, a hill

wajoik = that which is a mountain, it is a mountain

wajoika = many mountains, a group or range of mountains

There was no word for time or clock in the Abenaki Language and so our ancestors came up with a word for clock. **Papulkweezultozik** which means "that thing which makes much noise but does nothing at all of any real use." email from Judy Dow [pizwiwi = useless]

papizwkwazik a clock, what sounds uselessly or automatically
papiz- automatic; useless

The concept of time was related to the accumulation of change.

No Pronouns, No Gender

Exclusive versus Inclusive **WE**

“8da kagwi” [Ôda kagwi] – literally “Not something”

Pita io wligen nid8ba! [Very that is good my friend!]
Wliwni for sharing with me and for your kolaloka!

Wliwni [oo-lee-oo-nee] = thank you (it's all good)
nid8ba [knee dome bah] = my friend; the “ni” prefix
means “my” and “your friend” would be kid8ba
kolaloka = good work

Exonym versus Endonym

It wasn't just the English

The Europeans had great difficulty comprehending Indian naming schemes. They did not understand, for example, that individuals did not necessarily keep their birth name throughout their lives, but were often given new names to reflect their accomplishments or roles. Also, the Europeans did not fathom that groups of Indians that lived great distances apart and seemed (to them) to be unconnected could actually be part of the same nation.

When, for example, Samuel de Champlain explored the gaspeguyuk (gaspé in French) peninsula, he encountered several large groups of Indians living along the river. He always asked what they called themselves, and his scribe recorded the answers. There was probably a lot of sign language and gesturing involved, because the two cultures had not had much contact, so spoken words were probably not well understood.

gaspeguyuk = end of water (where fresh and salt waters mix)

One of the first groups he encountered told him they were Wabenaki (pronounced ah-ben-AH-key in English, but ah-BEN-ah-key in Algonkian). A hundred miles away, he encountered another group who told him the same thing. "Impossible!" he said, "I just met some people down the river who told me that!"

"Ôhoh" (Yes), they said, "nimicamog!" (those are our people) And so Champlain called them the Micmac.

10/14/20 There are many other examples. Autumn 2020 OLLI Indigenous Cultures

Where are the Wabenaki homelands?

What does the name mean?

Much of my information here comes from a talk by Ron Paul (Penobscot)
at UMass on February 26, 2020

In Abenaki (and, by extension, Algonkian) culture,
the creation of all life was done by the sun and the earth,
with the sun as the father and the earth as the mother.

The dawn of a new day is an important event,
because every day is a “do-over” – you get to correct the mistakes of the past and to
launch new and exciting ventures.

ckuwi = come this way
ckuwap = look this way

[Eastern] ckuwapon = the sun is looking our way (dawn)
[Western] wôban = dawn

ckuwi = come this way
ckuwap = look this way
ckuwapon(ah) = the sun is looking our way (dawn)
wôban = dawn

kizos = sun / kizososo = the sun shines a little, here and there
ki = earth, soil, land
kik = on the ground, on the land

kiyig = the people who live on the land

the suffixes **ik ak uk ok** are all locatives or indicative of people
the suffix **abe** (ah-bay) = people
ak is also a suffix indicating plural

the “g” and “k” sounds are somewhat interchangeable, and speaker-dependent

ckuwaponahkik = the land where the sun first looks our way

ckuwaponahkiyig = the people who live on the land where the sun first looks our way
(people of the dawnland)

~~ckuwaponahkiyig~~ = wabenaki (singular) wabenakiak (plural)

More on Language and Place Names

Pita = very or double or between or layer
Bagw or Bagok = Lake

Pitabagok or Pitawbagw {pl.
Pitawbagwak}

Double Lake(s) or Lake(s) Between

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Social values taught to Mohican children

Love to all men, and be kind to all people
Any that are in distress, you must try to help
Listen to the instruction of old folks: thereby you
will be wise

You must be very kind to strangers

Be honest in all your ways

Never steal anything

Always avoid bad company

Never commit murder

You must be very industrious

At all times you must obey your Sachem and Chiefs

London 1766 (Frazier Chapter 13 p. 160 ff.)

"happiness consisted merely in the gratification of a man's wants, that these were readily gratified in their own country, their wants being few"

"the laws themselves," said he, "would become evils which we never experience: restraints upon conduct which free men are unaccustomed to"

"Avarice is thy bane and thou art no less tormented in preserving what thou hast, than in acquiring more."

"We can lie down and rise up, go out and come in, are lords of the creation, above ceremony, above control and are strangers to restless nights. Health and liberty is everything with us."

"War," returned he, "is with us matter of choice, not of necessity. **We had much fewer wars before we became acquainted with the English.**"

*There is a much longer **account on my blog**, edited by me.*

Conclusion

In drawing the line, however, between a savage and a civilized state, we must say there are advantages in both unknown to the other, that in order to be happy, what we approve in a savage state we should endeavor to imitate, and what we disapprove in a state of civilization we should endeavor to avoid.