

TITLE

The Interconnectivity of Lakota Language, Culture, History, and Place in Joseph Marshall III's The Day the World Ended at Little Bighorn: A Lakota History

GRADE LEVEL

University Level (1st-4th year)

SUBJECT AREA

Literature, History, Culture, Language

DURATION

Three – Four Weeks (9-12 classes for MWF courses or 6-8 classes for TTH courses)
Two Weeks Reading and Course Work and One to Two Weeks Essay Work

GOALS

To examine how the literature of Lakota author Joseph M. Marshall III's defines the Lakota relationship to language, culture, history, and place. To discuss the relationship of Lakota art and literature and scrutinize how contemporary Lakota authors have an imperative task in defining culture. The goal is to explicate how Lakota language can be used as an entrance point into culture and art and examine how contemporary literature demonstrates the interconnectivity of Lakota language, culture, and history.

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to objectively evaluate Joseph Marshall III's text through a Lakota cultural perspective and express these evaluations with a succinct argument within a research essay.

SOUTH DAKOTA STANDARDS

This assignment partially fulfills the following Goals of the South Dakota System General Education Requirements:

GOAL 1: Students will write effectively and responsibly and will understand and interpret the written expression of others.

Student Learning Outcomes:

As a result of taking courses meeting this goal, students will:

Learning Outcomes:	Assessment
1. Write using standard American English, including correct punctuation, grammar, and sentence structure	Research paper, 10-12 pp. Preliminary assignments and response papers
2. Write logically	Research paper, 10-12 pp. Preliminary assignments and response papers
3. Write persuasively, with a variety of rhetorical strategies (e.g., expository, argumentative, descriptive)	Research paper, 10-12 pp. Preliminary assignments and response papers

4. Incorporate formal research and documentation into their writing, including research obtained through modern, technology-based research tools	Research paper, 10-12 pp.
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GOAL 7: *Students will recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, organize, critically evaluate, and effectively use information from a variety of sources with intellectual integrity.*

Student Learning Outcomes:

As a result of taking courses meeting this goal, students will:

Learning Outcomes:	Assessment
1. Determine the extent of information needed	Research paper, 10-12 pp.
2. Access the needed information effectively and efficiently	Research paper, 10-12 pp.
3. Evaluate information and its sources critically	Research paper, 10-12 pp.
4. Use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose	Research paper, 10-12 pp.
5. Use information in an ethical and legal manner	Research paper, 10-12 pp.

CULTURAL CONCEPT

American Indian people, specifically the Lakota, are interconnected through language, culture, history, and place. As the original inhabitants of this land, their removal and attempted assimilation by Ameroepan colonizing forces mandate their emphasis of the interconnectivity between culture and indigenous populations. The correlation can be seen through the Lakota history and language. The structure of a culture’s language directly influences the manner in which that culture understands reality and behaves with respect to that reality. Therefore, with the direct study of the Lakota language, an entry point into the understanding of the culture, art, and literature is also achievable. An examination of contemporary Lakota texts through a non-Ameroepan ideological lens is possible, but only by first studying the language and culture of the Lakota. Louise Erdrich points out in “Where I Ought to Be: A Writer’s Sense of Place” the enormous task contemporary Native texts have: they must reveal the holocaustic losses of indigenous peoples and yet celebrate the histories, and cultures, and languages of the survivors. Further, the undertaking must be done through a study of Lakota language and culture and not through an Ameroepan literary space. Therefore, Lakota language can be used as an entrance point into culture and examine how contemporary literature demonstrates the interconnectivity of Lakota language, culture, and history.

CULTURAL BACKGROUND

This assignment should demonstrate the importance of recognizing the interconnectivity between Lakota history, culture, place, and language and should differentiate between the Ameroepan sense of American Indian literature and Lakota literature from a Lakota cultural perspective. Because, if the forced assimilation of Lakota and American Indian contemporary texts by Ameroepan critical paradigms continues, the assimilation processes are also allowed to continue. It is important that there be recognition of an American Indian history, culture, place, and language. A true interconnectivity that is demonstrated in the literature and read through an American Indian critical hegemony is essential to recognizing the importance of history, culture, place, and language to American Indian communities, like Marshall's Lakota.

Some terminology defined through critical sources:

- Janette K. Murray writes in “An Overview of Literature by Dakota/Lakota Authors” in An Illustrated History of the Arts in South Dakota:

Literature is an expression of the ideals, beliefs, values, and history of a culture. Literatures may or may not be factual, may or may not be real, but it is always true. Truth in literature means that the story tells us something about human behavior. Whether a story is fiction or non-fiction is not the most important distinction of Dakota/Lakota literature. Of more significance is what the story expresses about Dakota/Lakota existence, about relationships with the natural and supernatural world, and about relationships with other people and other cultures. (147)

- Oceceti Sakowin – Seven Council Fires

Dakota

- 1) Mdewakentowen
- 2) Wahpekwte
- 3) Waptenwan
- 4) Sisitan

Nakota

- 1) Ihanktonwan
- 2) Ihanktonwana

Lakota

- 1) Titowan

Lakota Oyates

- 1) Ogalala
- 2) Sicangu
- 3) Mniconjou
- 4) Houkpapa
- 5) Oohenumpu
- 6) Itazipaco
- 7) Sihasapa

- Albert White Hat Sr. writes in the introduction to his work Reading and Writing the Lakota Language, “Language is vital to Lakota culture. It is our bloodline. History has demonstrated that how we handle our language and how we develop it can cause the Lakota people to grow or it can destroy us.... It is time the Lakota language returns as a vehicle of empowerment” (1).
- P. Jane Hafen writes in “Indigenous People and Place”:

American Indian authors write about land with an imperative that goes beyond establishing setting or creating a descriptive backdrop for action and characters. Land gives life, identity, and wisdom to tribal communities. Land is the center of language, culture, and existence. The word “indigenous” implies native to a place. Descendants and survivors of the original peoples of this hemisphere know that being and place are inseparable” (169).
- N. Scott Momaday explains the relationship between place and the American Indian in his essay “The Man Made of Words,” “I am interested in the way that a man looks at a given landscape and takes possession of it in his blood and brain. For this happens, I am certain, in the ordinary motion of life. None of us lives apart from the land entirely; such an isolation is unimaginable” (85-86).
- Leslie Marmon Silko, in particular, integrates place into her storytelling. She observes in her essay “I Still Trust the Land”:

One of the advantages that we Pueblos have enjoyed is that we have always been able to stay with the land. Our stories cannot be separated from their geographical locations, from actual physical places on the land. We were not relocated like so many Native American groups who were torn away from their ancestral land. And our stories are so much a part of these places that it is almost impossible for future generations to lose them—there is a story connected with every place, every object in the landscape. (295)

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

- Students should read Joseph Marshall III’s text The Day the World Ended at Little Bighorn: A Lakota History or excerpts from the text
- Students should read critical articles from numerous Native and non-Native sources listed in the REFERENCE section; these articles should be chosen by instructor to correspond to assigned primary readings
- Students should read at least one account of “The Battle of Little Bighorn” that does not correspond to Lakota philosophy and may read other accounts of “The Battle of Little Bighorn” which correspond to Lakota philosophy
- Students should discuss texts in class using a large group “talking circle,” small group discussions, and teacher instructed lectures
- Lakota community members may be asked to deliver lectures during one or more classes; lectures should concern Lakota language, place, history, philosophy, and/or culture
- Students should write response papers (300-600 words) for each reading assignment
- Students should do individual library research incorporating varying sources; i.e. journal articles from scholarly journals, articles from scholarly books, or scholarly books
- Students should write a research essay of at least 3000 words (see ASSIGNMENT SHEET)

RESOURCES

Writing utensils, paper, notebook, computer access, internet access, copies of primary text or excerpts of text, copies of articles and/or copies of excerpts from texts and/or articles

ASSESSMENT

Because class participation is essential to this assignment students will be graded on how well they contribute to class discussions. This grade will reflect not only the degree of participation, but also the quality of contributions. Students will be expected to be involved in every class. Active and engaged in-class participation in writing exercises, class discussions, and workshops is expected. The quality of this class is directly related to the quality of discussions, so students should take responsibility by asking questions, offering ideas, and responding to their peers. Additionally, each student should come to class prepared; having completed assignments, having read assigned materials carefully, making notes, forming thoughtful responses, and they should be prepared to discuss each assignment in class.

Brief response papers will be assigned for each reading. Assignment details should be announced prior to due dates and will be collected at the beginning of the class in which they are due. Each paper must be typed, double-spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman font, and follow standard MLA format. Each paper should be 300-600 words in length.

The final essay assignment must adhere to MLA format. For specific guidelines for the essay assignment see **ASSIGNMENT SHEET**. Essays should be graded using the following grading rubric:

A: Writing that demonstrates unusual competence. Thesis statement is clear and specific. Content is both unified and coherent. Evidence from primary text and secondary scholarly source material is abundant and directly develops thesis statement, which supports a cogent, persuasive argument. Grammatical/mechanical or documentation errors are minimal, with no patterns of serious error. Sentence patterns are varied. MLA style documentation of secondary source material is accurate. Diction is tight, fresh, and appropriate to audience and purpose. The “A” essay is imaginative. The writing is thoughtful and avoids the obvious. “A” writing offers analysis rather than summary, interpretation of literary elements rather than description

B: Writing that demonstrates competence. Thesis statement is clear and specific. Content is organized and generally coherent. Key ideas are supported with details from primary text and secondary scholarly source material. Essay may contain grammatical/mechanical and documentation errors, but those errors do not detract from the essay’s content. Sentence patterns are generally varied but may show some repetition. MLA style documentation is sufficient with few errors. Diction is generally concise, accurate, and appropriate to audience and purpose. The “B” essay offers substantial information with few distractions. “B” writing offers some analytical interpretation of a literary text, combined with summary and description.

C: Writing that suggests competence, but with a tendency to depend upon the self-evident and the cliché. Thesis statement is non-specific. Content may be ineffectively organized, with weak or missing transitions. Grammatical/mechanical errors may be repeated or frequent. Development is thin: Generalizations are not developed with appropriate details; source material may be used inaccurately. MLA style documentation contains errors but may still be judged as sufficient for freshman writing. Diction is limited in range, occasionally marred by repetition, redundancy, imprecision. Sentences may be choppy, monotonous. The “C” essay lacks both

imagination and an awareness of choices that effect style. “C” writing offers light analysis and interpretation. Summary and description of literary texts predominate in “C” papers.

D: Writing that suggests incompetence. Thesis statement may be unclear or missing. Content is disorganized. Essay fails to provide the reader with clear direction and focus, and transitions between ideas are missing. Ideas are left undeveloped. Generalizations are not supported, with source material frequently used inaccurately.. Grammatical or sentence structure errors may distort the intended meaning. Mechanical errors or problems with MLA style documentation are prevalent. Diction is limited in range and may be inappropriate. Evidence of proofreading is scanty. The “D” essay often gives the impression of having been conceived and written in haste. “D” writing for offers summary and description; Interpretation and analysis are weak or missing.

F: Writing that demonstrates incompetence. Essay lacks thesis statements, unity. Writing is marginally coherent. Few ideas are developed or supported, and inaccuracies are common. Serious errors in MLA style documentation are frequent, or documentation is missing. Grammar, spelling, and sentence structure are weak. In short, the ideas, organization and style fall far below what is acceptable in college writing. “F” writing is characterized by summary and description only.

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DATE

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