**Native American Stereotypes**

One of the questions we explored with the *CSA: The Confederate States of America* movie was why most offensive and stereotypical images of African Americans had been removed from public discourse by a combination of social progress and Political Correctness, but equally offensive and racist images of Native Americans had not.

For this assignment you will write a paper that seeks to answer that question – why do racist images of Native Americans continue to appear routinely in present-day mainstream U.S. culture when equally offensive examples of racist imagery of other ethnic minority groups have been eradicated and removed.

You should consider what it is about Native Americans that seems to make them different, in the eyes of mainstream white U.S. society, than other minority groups in America today. Why, when Indigenous People say they find a portrayal of their culture and ethnic identity offensive, does white society ignore their views and carry on using that offensive imagery? What is different about Native Americans?

**Sources**

Your paper **MUST** draw on course materials about Native American stereotypes we have explored in this course, and you **MUST** quote from these materials in support of your argument in your paper.

In addition, you should draw from at least one of these two additional sources:

* Informal interviews conducted with people of different generations (e.g. peers of your own age, people of older generations (e.g. your parents and/or your grandparents, or equivalent). If you conduct interviews with people from your own age group, they **CANNOT** be taking this course with you this semester.
* Web material. This **MUST** be from credible and legitimate sources. This includes: scholarly/academic journal articles (e.g. found via the MSU Library website); national newspapers (e.g. the *New York Times* or *Washington Post*, but NOT small regional or local newspapers); official tribal websites (e.g. of one of the twelve tribes still resident in Michigan today); or U.S. government websites (e.g. that of the Bureau of Indian Affairs). You CANNOT use blogs/vlogs, random search engine websites, or sites that are not affiliated with a U.S. government agency or a Native American tribe.

If you do conduct informal interviews, then to cite those interviews in your paper you should give the name of the person you are interviewing, the date the interview took place (in mm/dd/yyyy format, i.e. 03/10/2021), the method of interview (e.g. in-person, or on the phone), and your relationship to that person (e.g. roommate, parent, uncle, grandmother etc.).

**Paper Structure**

* Page 1: **Title/cover page** with your name, the date, and **a creative title for your paper** (this allows you to establish the tone for what follows).
* Pages 2, 3, 4, and 5: Your essay, which should be **four full pages** **of text**.
* Page 6: Works cited.
* **Writing to length**: You have been asked for four full pages of text. Papers over **OR** under 4 pages in length will lose 0.5 off for every half page over/under they are.

**Formatting**

* Your paper should be **double-spaced** in 12-point Times New Roman font with 1” margins (to ensure uniformity in length), with page numbers inserted bottom right**.**
* Your thesis statement must be *italicized* or in **bold**.
* You **must** provide citations/references for all course materials used to support your argument. Use whatever form of citation you are most familiar and comfortable with - footnotes, endnotes, or in-text. Use only one citation format and use it consistently.
* When quoting Kilpatrick give the author’s name, the title of the article, and the page number your information or quote comes from (listed on D2L). If you use lecture material, give the lecture title from the Course Schedule. References to films and documentaries (also listed on the Schedule) need their own citations too.
* You must cite all of your sources. If caught using uncited internet material you will receive a **failing grade for the paper, and, depending upon the severity of the case, possibly the course overall** (see pages 6-7 of the Syllabus for more on Academic Honesty).

**Grading:**

Your paper will be graded, based upon the following criteria:

* The clarity of your thesis statement.
* The strength, clarity, and coherence of your argument.
* Your **balanced** use of material to support your argument. This means **substantive** use of course materials - lectures, Kilpatrick, films, documentaries, and readings – plus at least one other source (interviews or web material) to support your argument.
* The elegance and ‘readability’ of your writing.
* Correct spelling, grammar, punctuation, and syntax.
* Your adherence to the above-listed structure and format guidelines.

**Hints and Suggestions**

**Provide a supported position, not just an opinion**

There is no definitive ‘right’ answer I am looking for. As such, there is no specific factor you need to have that makes it ‘right’. So, the purpose of the exercise is for you to formulate an argument to support your position on the question. This means your grade for the paper will be based not on the specific position you take – on the specific factor you cite as the reason for the persistence of Native American stereotypes – but on how well you support your argument with proof. In short, can you draw on evidence that shows other people would agree with you? And does the argument you present make logical sense? In short, is it convincing?

That is the difference between a purely opinion piece (with statements beginning ‘I think’ or ‘I believe’ but with no supporting evidence), and a reasoned position (with statements beginning ‘Kilpatrick argues in her article…’ or ‘As we saw in the film *Hostiles*…’).

**Interviews**

The benefit of doing interviews is that it gives you insight into another person’s thought process. Everyone (and I mean *everyone*) has a different life experience than you. This means how they interpret the world around them is different than how YOU interpret the world around YOU. This is because they have a different knowledge base than you, and a different set of life experiences than you. An international student will not view American foreign policy the same way a domestic U.S. student does. A student who comes to MSU from out of state will not view the recent protests against Governor Whitmer in the same light as a student born and raised in Michigan (whatever your/their political viewpoint). Equally, people born into a previous generation to you will have a different view of Native Americans, because they were born in a different era, with different values. So, their generation views the world differently than your generation does. Thus, getting the opinions of people older than yourself can give an insight into a different view of Native Americans. This is because they will have grown up watching films like *Stagecoach* rather than ones like *Hostiles*. So, doing informal interviews with your parents and grandparents could provide you with useful insights into this question.

NOTE: While you can interview your friends and peers about this issue, you cannot interview friends/roommates/colleagues who are also taking this course this semester!

**Web Material**

One spur to the eradication of offensive African American stereotypes was the Civil Rights movements of the 1950s and 60s. Did Native Americans have a similar movement to draw strength from? If so, what was the effect of it? Do Native Americans have as strong a political constituency today as African Americans? Why might this be?