Native American & Indigenous Studies Newsletter
Indiana University - American Studies Program

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kunaa’ú NAhkaawíhíní
(Medicine Lodge)

By Standing Bear (Brad) Kroupa,
PhD Student Anthropology

Nawah!

In May of 2009, the Arikara returned to the land of their ancestors along the Missouri River in South Dakota to build a Medicine Lodge. For the first time in more than a half-century, an Arikara Medicine Lodge was constructed for ceremony. This event will be remembered as a significant time in the history of the Arikara. It symbolizes a new beginning and hope for all Arikara people.

With special acknowledgement this is dedicated to all of the lodge builders and Three Affiliated tribal members who participated during the ceremony. Without the sacrifices, belief, and unwavering commitment of these individuals, this historic episode of the Arikara would not have taken place.

At the turn of the nineteenth century, the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nations united for their mutual survival and welfare. Each enjoyed its own cultural worldview while continuing to honor the traditions, mores, and beliefs of their ancestors. The Arikara people did this with fervor and the spirit of revivalism lived until the most recent devastating blow was dealt during the 1950s when the Garrison Dam drove the river people onto the upland area of the reservation. Being relocated away from the Missouri river which provided arable land for gardening and spiritual connections for ceremonies insured that the Medicine Lodge and horticulture practices would be dismantled and seemingly thought to never return.

During this time prophecies were brought forth which spoke of a time when the Arikara people would not be able to hold the potent symbols of their ancestors—and that the language and ceremonies would fall into disuse. This time has come to be among the Arikara community. However, the internal desire for spiritual union with Neešaánu NačitákUX (Chief Above) and Atná Neššu (Mother Corn) never ceased to drive its members to seek, refine, and revitalize an Arikara belief system. In the present time, a core group of believers have taken action to revive an Arikara worldview, language and ceremonial structure. This generation has developed a small group of leaders who have evolved an Arikara belief into a cultural revitalization movement. Integral to this development is the Arikara belief that the Chieftainship, the spirit of Atná Neššu, and the Medicine Lodge hold the promise of communal Arikara health and well-being.

“The dream of the Medicine Lodge of the Arikara people is steeped in the historical and communal life that at one time was prophesized to fade to nothing. A belief has developed in the past few decades regarding its resurgence which denotes that it is destined to change the cultural landscape of the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation.” —Arikara kunaaananá

Present during the Medicine Lodge ceremony was the leader, his main assistants, and apprentices who acted as assistants and errand men. The errand men were stationed on each side of the lodge entrance at the east. The duty of an errand man is an important position. They are granted access into the lodge at all times and allowed to witness the performances inside the lodge. The leader and other head men are willing to give them information in return for their services.

Several ritual procedures are connected with the Medicine Lodge and need to be completed before the lodge ceremony. Each one of these symbolic rituals and ceremonial figures represent an involved ideological network of Arikara religious beliefs. These tasks included constructing the huukAhunaahní (altar), the Garden of the Gods, the fire pit; and the representation of Atná Neššu, tstoóxu (water), wind and the earth. Another ceremonial task was to embody the infinity of the sky. The cosmos were represented by painted rawhide cutouts suspended from the roof of the lodge. Each was hung approximately where it appeared in the sky—creating a symbolic representation of the star formations, deities, and powers that influenced the Arikara.

Lastly, we had to get Atíka (Grandfather) Rock and the holy tree, Atíka (Grandmother) Cedar, which would stand directly outside of the lodge entrance. An errand man was sent to scout for and locate the Cedar tree. After the right Cedar tree had been spotted, offerings and prayer to Atíka followed. The tree was then cut down and brought back to the lodge by neetAhkas and myself. Inside the lodge, the leading kunaaananá and others stood ready to receive the Cedar tree which was ceremonially treated and prayed with. That evening, with a special ritual, it was stood in the ground outside of the lodge.

“In the end of this generation, the fruition of the dream of the Medicine Lodge shall come to reality, as well as a stronger connection with the powers above, Mother Corn, and the implementation of both secular and ceremonial leadership. When the Medicine Lodge displays its full dynamic potential, the
Arikara people will see that anything is possible and that they will be able to transcend their existence and new ceremonies, language development, and pragmatic traditions will ensure that the community shall once again be able to return to harmony and growth.” —Arikara kunaananá

The Arikara have been documented by anthropologists and ethnographers to be a people who once displayed such a rigorous belief that many of their ceremonies and displays of power are legend in the annals of Native American culture. The Arikara Medicine Lodge and all that it represented has shown itself to be a potent symbol in the minds of many people, expressing that the Universe is very much alive and that we are internally and invisibly connected to it. Today, in 2009, the Arikara Medicine Lodge continues to represent a place to belong, to be loved, and to discover that one is authentically connected to themselves, their community, and the living flow of thought, power, and life. The Medicine Lodge is representative of an Arikara worldview and of how the Universe functions. It is a symbolic representation and direct connection to the Universe.

After the completion of the ceremony, a friendship and reconciliation between the Lower Brule Sioux and the Arikara occurred. Today, the Lower Brule Sioux, or Kul Wicasa Oyate, live among the ancestral villages of the Arikara along the Missouri river in South Dakota. On May 16, 2009, members of the Three Affiliated Tribes, Kul Wicasa Oyate, and others came to see the finished lodge for a blessing and dedication. The Kul Wicasa Oyate created a special historical interpretive area in the Narrows (Little Bend) where the lodge was built. As stewards of this revered place, the Kul Wicasa Oyate will maintain the lodge as part of their efforts to preserve traditional cultural ways and educate their young people and other tribal members.

“The renewal of the Arikara way and its practices [language and ceremony] are destined to once again surge and become a viable vehicle for the health and happiness of Arikaras, the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation, and as an example to all Native people to believe in themselves, their ancestors, and their connection to all that is sacred.” —Arikara kunaananá

This remarkable episode of Arikara history will always be remembered and cherished by those involved. It is a movement to bring back our people. What we’re doing is creating. Here, this story and new chapter of Arikara history is shared. Nootuhnaanu. Nawah.

Student Profile: Standing Bear Kroupa (Brad) Kroupa (Arikara), PhD student in Socio-Cultural Anthropology (Major), Native American Studies (Minor) and History of Education (Minor)

Interviewed by Joseph Stahlman, NA&IS Newsletter Editor

Can you tell me about your Nation?

Presently, among many in the Arikara community, there is a tremendous sense of urgency to insure the survival of Arikara cultural traditions—specifically, language and ceremony. An endangered language that now has only a handful of partial speakers, it is at a critical stage that requires immediate action by tribal members. Its survival has become the responsibility of a core group of dedicated individuals who have assumed leadership positions and created a society of hope in a cultural revival effort. This contemporary revitalization movement among the Arikara is a language revival and spiritual (ceremonial) resurgence; a reorganization of the Arikara people; and a new development of an evolved belief of Arikara thought, tradition, and ceremony.

In March 2008, the American Indian Studies Research Institute hosted the first-ever intensive Arikara language course. A second language summit was organized in January of 2009. Each has provided an important cornerstone to the revival of the language. The intensive course provided a language environment with concentrated learning through work with second-language teaching materials and presentation, and through peer interaction and practice. It is by this means—a core group learning the Arikara language—that future learning becomes sustainable and younger generations will acquire native speaker status.

In May of 2009, the Arikara returned to the land of their ancestors along the Missouri river in South Dakota to build a Medicine Lodge. For the first time in more than a half-century, an Arikara Medicine Lodge was constructed for ceremony. This event will be remembered as a significant time in the history of the Arikara. It symbolizes a new beginning and hope for all Arikara people.

Why are you pursuing a PhD?

My concern is the future of the Arikara people. This is why I have decided to pursue a PhD. Spurred by the desire to maintain

“Kroupa,” continued on page 4
Professor Profile: Tarajean Yazzie-Mintz, Assistant Professor of Curriculum Studies, IU School of Education

Interviewed by Joseph Stahlman, NA&IS Newsletter Editor

Dr. Yazzie-Mintz is Assistant Professor of Curriculum Studies in the IU School of Education. She is an assistant professor in Curriculum & Instruction at Indiana University-Bloomington. Her research interests include documenting teacher knowledge (pre-K-12), particularly teachers’ conceptions of culturally appropriate curriculum and pedagogy. Currently she is working with American Indian teachers and teachers who teach in language immersion or bilingual schools or programs.

Can you tell me the positions you hold on the IU campus?

I am an assistant professor in the School of Education’s Curriculum and Instruction Department. I also serve on the NAIS committee under the American Studies Program.

Why did you choose to teach at IU?

I guess I can answer this question by saying... IU found me (or chose me). Prior to IU finding me, I was most familiar with IU through the American Indian Reservation Project, once directed by Dr. Jim Mann. Many teachers I had as a child in grade school came from IU. When I was working in Boston Public School as a research analyst in the Office of Language Learning and Support Services, a unique opportunity to visit IU came about. I accepted an invitation to visit the campus in 2005. I explored the campus, its resources, and visited with potential colleagues. I liked the faculty, students, and the city of Bloomington and decided to join the faculty when I was officially offered a position within the Curriculum and Instruction department. I ultimately made my decision based on the question: Can I live in this town? Can I conduct my work from this location? Will I be supported by my colleagues? Can I offer my home department something new? When the answer to these questions was “yes” – I choose to teach at IU.

Why did you take part in the NAIS minor?

I support the minor because I believe that through interdisciplinary study we can offer a richer curriculum focused on the study of Native issues.

What classes do you teach within the NAIS minor?

Currently none. But in the future, I plan to cross-list my research course J760: Cultural Research with Native Educational Communities with the American Studies NAIS Ph.D. Minor. There may be other opportunities as the NAIS program grows.

Tarajean, you are very knowledgeable about many subject and research areas? Are there resources at IU that students and faculty may not be aware of in terms of American Indian studies?

FNECC is a resource that few non-Native faculty and students know about. The Native students are a hidden resource, as well as the few Native faculty on campus. I like the Cooper Kent film library, which has many films relevant to Native issues. The American Indian Reservation Program (currently directed by Dr. Laura Stachowski) is also a wonderful program for students interested in becoming teachers. It’s a student teacher placement program, not a stand-alone educational program.

Can you tell me about some of your current research endeavors?

I am working on a few projects that involve researching and studying the work of teachers in different schooling contexts. I am most interested to understand the ways in which teachers incorporate language and culture in classroom instruction. Working with teachers in their classrooms and documenting their conceptualizations of curriculum and culture is important to informing Native education in a variety of educational contexts (rural, urban, reservation, non-reservation). Another project involves surveying Native college students about their aspirations and processes toward educational attainment. This research is a collaboration with a Native faculty member at Tufts University, Dr. Randall Akee.

How do you make your research beneficial for your targeted communities?

I only work with schools and Native communities who have invited me to work with them. I work collaboratively to develop research questions that are important to them, and I follow tribal and school institutional research review boards’ protocols and processes. If we cannot determine whether the research will benefit the community, I do not conduct research with that community. For research to benefit Native communities, Native teachers (and community) must be involved and they must want to learn how to document their own successes so that people like me do not have to be the only ones working on issues of educational access. I believe that Native communities must enact their own processes of research to study their own problems. Collaborative projects benefit communities both in terms of gaining new knowledge about schooling, but also to gain knowledge about how to conduct research.

Are there funding resources that students should consider applying for, aside from the usual sources Wenner-Gren, Ford, NSF?

For Native students – seek all possibilities. One major funding source is the American Indian Graduate Center, the Catch the Dream Foundation, and local organizations supporting the educational goals of Native students (Your local community, tribal educational offices, in-state scholarships, businesses). Strong students should apply for the Spencer and the AERA pre-dissertation Fellowship (Education), as well as other competitive grants. When I was a graduate student I applied for numerous small and large grants and scholarships, awards were in the amounts spanning from $50 to $20,000. I found that being extremely organized and consistent was the key to being prepared for applying for grants and scholarships. Obviously excellent academic performance is assumed.

How can students get more involved in NAIS?

Choose NAIS as your Ph.D. Minor. Take relevant course work offered under this minor.

“Yazzie-Mintz,” continued on page 5
Can you tell me about your research focus?

The cultural revitalization movement has been a principal factor in the direction of my research focus. Over the years I have been documenting the resurgence of the Arikara. It is an invaluable story about the movement to bring back our people. What we’re doing is creating. My research will share this story and provide a new chapter of Arikara history.

Deficient literature in the field of American Indian history is another factor in my focus. The once powerful Arikara are now virtually ignored and undermined in survey histories of American Indians. This is both a curious and distressing fact that can probably be explained by historians’ infatuation with the nomadic buffalo hunters of the Plains. An influential, populous, and settled nation many centuries ago, the Arikaras do not fit this prototype. Maintaining elaborate sets of skills and cultural practices in areas such as horticulture, commerce, and ceremonialism, the Arikara long ago established themselves as a dominant and cosmopolitan center. Their advanced horticultural activities and scientific sophistication in the development of corn established them as cultural pioneers. They carried a communal ceremonial organization of considerable complexity represented by the village sacred bundle, a religious system of priests, and a distinctive class of curers. Additionally, the Arikaras acted as barterers and controlled trade as middlemen in an extensive commercial network. These cultural achievements, particularly in corn agriculture, market economics, and ceremonialism, substantiate the Arikara as an integral part, if not at the forefront, of the peoples of the Plains; yet, they remain neglected on the pages of Plains history. In beginning to paint a fuller picture of Indian history and culture, my research will contribute to the field by enhancing the richness of Plains Indian scholarship.

Why did you choose a NAIS minor?

In regards to American Indians, Indiana University is culturally bankrupt. The establishment of the NAIS program is a step in the right direction to overcome the ignored and distorted view of the Indian experience here at IU. Deservingly so, American Indian studies programs have begun to earn a significant place in academia at many colleges and institutions. If diversity remains a concern at Indiana University, the NAIS program will continue to develop and eventually thrive as an academic field.

Why did you come to Indiana University, and not other universities?

I came to Indiana University to work cooperatively with the American Indian Studies Research Institute (AISRI). The current research activities at AISRI include Arikara language documentation, cultural history, and musical projects. It is essential that Arikaras are directly involved with these projects.

What do you hope to do after your PhD?

Essentially, I aspire to take my knowledge and experiences back to my own people and share it, hopefully sparking an interest within the young people of the Arikara Nation. I want to develop a learning environment that respects the integrity of Arikara culture, recognizes and integrates pre-existing traditional knowledge of the area, serves the people I’m working with, and helps Arikara students to succeed in any setting.

Why would you suggest the NAIS minor to other graduate students?

NAIS will offer students the opportunity to learn to conduct research from a cross-cultural perspective, investigate and overcome stereotypes of Indian people, and develop an understanding of the worldviews, institutions, and social-cultural characteristics of historical and contemporary Native North America.

Standing Bear, Thank you for sharing your time and your article.
This is an academic program and not a student-services program, so it is important to view involvement as an academic or scholarly pursuit.

Why would you advise students to choose a NAIS minor? How does the NAIS fit with school of ed.? How does it fit into other social sciences?

Currently the program is only for Ph.D. students. Any doctoral student within IU can declare a minor in NAIS. I would only advise Ph.D. students to consider this minor if they are interested in initiating meaningful research with Native communities. This Ph.D. minor is housed under the auspices of the American Studies Program and the School of Education is not necessarily a supporting school in terms of financial or institutional support. The link to the School of Education is the SoE faculty.

In my experience with American Indian studies I see the minor somewhat different from other universities, but I don’t feel an authority to talk about it much. [I am sure your perspective is important] In your opinion, how is IU’s NAIS different from other American Indian studies programs across North America? and, does it make IU unique in that regard?

The IU NAIS program is only a minor area of study (as a Ph.D. Minor) and is not housed in an American Indian Studies program. IU does not have an American Indian Studies Program that offers undergraduate or graduate degrees. This is the major difference.

Thank you Dr. Yazzie-Mintz for sharing with us.

Resources

| Scholarships, Fellowships, Conferences, and Employment Opportunities |

**Fellowships**

**The Roe Cloud Fellowship** will support a graduate scholar in any doctoral field for the academic year, September 2010-August 2011. Graduates working towards careers in higher education who have completed all doctoral requirements but the dissertation are invited to apply. The expectation is that the dissertation will be completed during the fellowship year. The criteria for selection will be based solely on an assessment of the quality of the candidate’s work and the project’s overall significance for the study of American Indian and/or Indigenous Studies.

The **Roe Cloud Fellowship** will provide support comparable to that for Yale University graduate students, including an annual stipend of $26,000, full access to Yale facilities and services, and health care coverage. The fellow will have office space in the Lamar Center and access to Yale’s exceptional research libraries.

Applications must include a CV, the dissertation prospectus, a writing sample of approximately 25 pages, a letter describing plans to complete the dissertation during the fellowship period, as well as three letters of recommendation, sent under separate cover, including one from the candidate’s dissertation advisor. The application deadline is March 5, 2010. All materials must be sent to:

**Henry Roe Cloud Fellowship Committee.**

Howard R. Lamar Center for the Study of Frontiers and Borders.

**Yale University**

PO Box 208201
New Haven, CT 06520-8201

For more information: RoeCloud.Fellowship@yale.edu.

The **Institute of Museum and Library Services**, the Oklahoma Department of Libraries is sponsoring a 26-month course of study that will introduce selected participants to methods and strategies for designing research projects, identifying sources, accessing and using American Indian materials in local, regional, and national collections, and producing a short documentary using the information collected. A maximum of 20 Research Fellows from across the nation will be selected through a competitive process. Stipend awards are available.

Application guidelines, forms, and a sample application may be downloaded from the front page of the Oklahoma Department of Libraries website at http://www.odl.state.ok.us/.

Applications are due by 5 PM CST on February 1, 2010.

For more information, contact:

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**Conference**

**Native American and Indigenous Studies Association Conference, May 20-22, 2010, Tucson, AZ**

The **Native American and Indigenous Studies Association** is having its third organizing meeting. The membership/audience for this conference is very multi-disciplinary (many historians, social scientists, etc), and most participants teach in American Indian studies. However, there are representatives from New Zealand and Australia on their governing board. They have 500-600 attendees at their meetings. For more about the organization, please visit their website.

The committee hopes to organize panels for this conference that introduce their audience to a broad spectrum of contemporary native/indigenous arts and issues (Native American and Pacific) in hopes of illuminating major concerns in indigenous studies. To that end, there will be panels that focus on contemporary arts and addresses issues of sovereignty, self-determination, hybridity, gender, etc.

Presenters must be members, but currently dues are very inexpensive: regular = $25; student, retirees = $10.

For more information, visit: http://naisa.asis.arizona.edu/.

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