

American Indian Studies 301: Introduction to Ojibwe

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Office Hours: Tu - Th, 12:00 - 1, and by appointment

Class Location 224 Ingraham
Class Hours Tu Th 9:30-10:45; Final exam: 2:45 pm, Fri Dec 17

This course is the first of a four-semester sequence introducing Ojibwe (Anishinaabemowin), an Algonquian language of the Great Lakes region and Canadian and U.S. prairies, and areas inland to the north. The course is designed to equip you with a modest speaking ability, and to help you gain sufficient knowledge of the grammatical features of the language to begin to appreciate the vast amount of transcribed oral literature in Anishinaabemowin. We will also learn about Ojibwe society, particularly as it has been represented by speakers of the language in published materials.

Evaluation

Evaluation will be on the basis of the following weighting:

Attendance, participation	10%
Weekly Quizzes	50%
Assignments	15%
Final Exam	25%

Particulars of Evaluation. Language learning is a very learner-based activity. The course is set up to help you learn. There are many distinct kinds of activities that you will be regularly involved in over the course. Here are the main ones:

1. Memorization of vocabulary and other materials. We will learn various bits of Ojibwe over the semester, each week, building cumulatively as we go. There are weekly vocabulary sets to learn, posted on the website listed below. There will be brief weekly quizzes focussing on materials assigned for a given week, but also including material from earlier sets. There will be no new conversational material in the last 2 weeks of class, but we will continue to have quizzes over previously assigned material, and I will probably have you keep learning more vocabulary. There will be a cumulative final exam, but if you keep up in class, this should not present any problem to you, and in fact, boost whatever grade you may have. Language courses are such

that the only way to thrive is to work each week on new materials--it's not possible to "cram" in a language course.

2. Grammar assignments. Because Ojibwe is so different from familiar European languages in its grammatical workings, we will spend a fair bit of time talking about grammar. This should be very valuable to you and help you with the learning of any language that you seek to learn in the future. We will have grammar-based assignments often, and quizzes will commonly have questions of grammar. But non-quiz grammar assignments will simply be marked on a credit/non-credit basis, on the basis of your apparent effort. This is so you are not penalized for trying to learn.

3. Lecture and Reading Content. You are responsible to retain the content of readings and lectures, and weekly quizzes will sometimes include questions covering this material, though I will strive always to let you know exactly what you need to know of this material.

4. Writing assignments. You will sometimes write short reaction pieces to reading assignments. These will almost always be graded on a credit/non-credit basis. If you are instructed to write a reaction, it should be 1-2 pages, typed, double-spaced.

5. Attendance. Many language classes meet 4 or more times a week; we meet two. Most languages taught at UW have vast web resources, and for many, you can take a trip to the local video store to find materials in the language. This is not the case with Ojibwe. So attendance is all the more important. I will take roll and use this in my assessment of your final grade. On the one hand, it's an easy way to get points; on the other, it's an easy way to lose them. Please honor your instructor, your fellow students, and the university, by arriving to class on time.

Texts

Kegg, Maude. 1991. Portage Lake: Memories of an Ojibwe childhood. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press. (required)

Nichols, John and Earl Nyholm. 1995. A concise dictionary of Minnesota Ojibwe. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. (required)

In addition, we will make extensive use of web materials. Most of the materials for this class will be posted on the web, at:

<http://imp.lss.wisc.edu/~jrvalent/ais301/index.html>