

**Title**

Lakota Winter Counts: An Alternative View of History.

**Grade level**

University Upper Division Course: *Red Earth White Lies: Indian History 1840-Present*.

**Theme**

Challenging traditional interpretations of Native American history.

**Duration**

1 lesson period of in-class work, plus group work outside of class.

**Goal**

Students will use this as a spring-board to launch into a semester-length Native American history class to allow students to both have exposure to and experience of a non-western approach to history.

**Objectives**

Through this opening lesson students will gain knowledge of Lakota winter counts as a counterpoint to western History styles/format that will help them rethink additional aspects of Native American history during the remainder of the course.

**South Dakota Standards**

N/A.

**Cultural concept**

That understandings and interpretations of history are not contained in one single style or format and that each societies/cultures past need to be understood, and respected, in their own format.

**Cultural Background**

Examining Lakota Winter Counts, pictographic texts used to record events, as a key to understanding Lakota past I plan to use them as a tool to allow students to encourage students to both, challenge historical concepts and gain knowledge of Lakota History.

**Student Activities**

Introduction to Lakota and role of Winter Counts (Instructor).

Pull one story from sample Winter Count as demonstration (Instructor).

The class will then be split into groups and asked to select one event from the Winter Count (need to have full description available). Out of class work for group is to use their event to develop the story of the “year” around which the event is based or form context based discussion of complementary Winter Counts. Use <http://wintercounts.si.edu> as source base.

In addition have groups create their own semester by semester Winter Count for their time at school to date, events to be decided by group as relevant – not individual events – events can be within school or outside. Finally the class as a whole create a class Winter Count based on selection/combination of events drawn each groups Winter Count.

**Resources**

For both the in-class and out-of-class work a copy of a selected winter count will be needed in addition to access to a computer for the out of class work.

**Assessment**

This has been my biggest problem/question. How do I then utilize this, can I incorporate this into grading criteria rather than allowing this to be an object lesson followed by a regular “western format” class? One possibility I have considered is to have as part of the final grade based upon individual Winter Counts based on a week by week pictograph on the class. I hope that this would allow students not only to think about recording history in a different format but also to reconsider the information received through class time and course readings and to prioritize that information in their own mind.

**References**

The primary resources will be the Smithsonian’s web based analysis of several Winter Counts (see <http://wintercounts.si.edu>) and in-class hand-outs.

Selections from C. S. Greene and R. Thorton, (Eds.) *The year the stars fell: Lakota Winter counts at the Smithsonian*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

**Developer**

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