

Title

Vine Deloria, Jr. & Black Elk Speak: Recorded Lakota Visions as Artful Literary Expression (precursor to the film excerpts for the following week).

Grade Level

Oglala Lakota College (OLC) students who have completed the following prerequisites with at least a grade of 'C': ENG 113 Freshman Writing II, LIT 203 Introduction to Literature (*See OLC Catalog 2009-10 for further course requirements of these listed courses*).

Theme

The theme of this lesson is based on the recorded Lakota visions of Black Elk, coupled with relevant critical writings from Vine Deloria, Jr., that are to be read as artful literature.

Duration

One week online.

Goal

With the aid of Vine Deloria, Jr.'s writings, students will explore, reflect, learn, discuss, and blog on the visions of Black Elk.

Objectives

- Online students will explore, discuss, reflect, and blog about Black Elk's '*The Great Vision*' (from *Black Elk Speaks: Being the Life Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux*) recorded by John G. Neihardt; and '*Hanblechayapi: Crying for a Vision*' (from *The Sacred Pipe: Black Elk's Account of the Seven Rites of the Oglala Sioux*) as recorded by Joseph E. Brown.
- Online students will explore, discuss, reflect, and blog the writings of Vine Deloria, Jr. who also writes about visions of the Lakotas, Black Elk's '*Great Vision*' and '*Hablechayapi: Crying for a Vision*', and other works.
- See '**Resources/Assignment Readings**' below for further reading list to meet said objectives.

South Dakota Standards

N/A.

Cultural Concept

The significance of visions of Lakotas, particularly those of Black Elk, are the cultural concept/focus of this lesson.

Cultural Background

Visions—Brief Definition: Vine Deloria, Jr. begins to describe the visions of his people, the Lakotas, in the following manner:

Initial and unexpected contact with the Great Mysterious power must have come prior to the development of ceremonies and rituals for seeking a relationship with the spirits. We can imagine the surprise of the first person having an unusual, and perhaps prophetic, dream and then discovering that it accurately described an event that came to pass in his or her daily life. Surely, here was reliable information, but from an unknown source that could not be summoned at one's pleasure (1).

Since Deloria mentions in the above quote that such visions are “not...summoned at one’s pleasure”, they can happen at any time. It is not unusual that many Lakota receive such visions while awake and alert, asleep, during a traditional ritual, or in a state undefined (Ibid.). They can also include other human beings that are not ethnically Oglala, but have or will have a great connection to them in some significant way or another, such as the visions between John G. Neihardt and Black Elk long before the two ever met vis-à-vis to collaborate on a great publication for the latter’s words, visions (Deloria, 1). Further, the visions of the Lakotas can be described as strokes of daily inspiration for a task while the person is conscious of the ‘revelation’, or they can be a greater event where it is as if the person is transfigured into another, unexplainable state and therein, endowed through heightened ‘spiritual’ experience gains a prophetic revealing from undefined (yet known) beings or phenomenon. Like daily, less dramatic visions, the larger visions also offer extant inspiration and instruction as to what that particular Lakota should do about a particular situation (known and unknown to the receiver of such enlightenment). Visions have occurred since time immemorial for Lakotas, and can be complex as well as simple depending upon the weight of the situation of which summoned the Great Mysterious power to ‘speak’, instruct.

Why visions for Lakotas are significant (in brevity):

Since there is much instruction in several forms while one is in the very act of receiving a vision, it is not unusual to assess that visions are remarkable and significant for the Lakotas. And since the nature of such visions are usually unpredicted, they are classically deemed a thing of great power authored by undefined, yet not unknown beings or powers in the mind, heart, soul, lives, language, ritual, and art of the Lakota people. Most aspects of life, formal and informal, are not viewed, understood, or lived without its relation to beings that are of the spirit world – highly intelligible, systematic, and natural to Lakota peoples, and at times, so commonplace in the ‘Indian perspective’ are these vision occurrences. Visions are not an unusual event. However, they remain significant. The few (out of countless!) examples listed below will show how some visions have variously manifested themselves.

Some examples of visions we will explore in this lesson:

- Black Elk’s ‘Great Vision’
- Black Elk’s explanation of vision in relation to the Lakota ritual, Hanblecheyapi
- Vine Deloria, Jr.’s explications of visions, particularly Black Elk’s, as well as his own as a writer, thinker.
- Student sharing of personal visions (if applicable or possible) through Moodle blog/forum
- TBD: Podcast interview with local Lakota visual artists who utilize visions in their creativity. *Stay tuned!*

Student Activities

LIT 290 Students will complete one of the following by the end of the week:

- MLA style essay focusing on one particular aspect of visions. Writing must contain 2 paragraphs, 10+ sentences/10+ words in each sentence/Times New Roman font/font size 11-12/No boldfaced, italicization, or underlining of main body. Cite where needed. Upload as an attachment on the Moodle where properly designated (Do not use MSWord 2007 format! Please use older versions).

- Film yourself on your phone, video camera, or other visual recording device for 8-10 minutes, explaining your feelings about a particular aspect of visions. Upload this videobyte onto the blog or forum provided by the LIT 433 students.
- If you know someone personally who has received a vision, ask them about it. In an essay (see 1) above for writing criteria).
- Reenact a portion of Black Elk's 'Great Vision', then upload online to Moodle class site in the blog/forum.
- Creative Student Assignment choice (approval by instructor).

LIT 433 Students will complete one of the above and one of the following by the end of the week:

- Volunteer to initiate and lead the discussion on the Moodle class website blog. This assignment will require you to post every weekday for one week beginning today. You prompt all students in class via online Moodle class website.
- Search 3-5 relevant clips of the Lakota speaking about their cultural concept of visions online in some way (e.g., Lakota artists/writers/community leaders/educators/housewives, etc. (either living or deceased). Clips must be Lakota in cultural nature, and found on YouTube. Present these clips, their sources (as best you can), the use of visions in that particular situation (if not a vision only), and blog for a week about it beginning today. You prompt all students in class via online Moodle class website.
- Creative Student Assignment choice (approval by instructor).

Resources

This week's resources/assignment readings (with permission, online links, photocopied then scanned, and uploaded on Moodle for all students):

- *The Great Vision*, chapter III from *Black Elk Speaks...*, by John G. Neihardt
- *Hanblecheyapi: Crying for a Vision* chapter IV from *The Sacred Pipe: Black Elk's Account...*, by Joseph E. Brown.
- *Dreams—[sic]The Approach of the Sacred* (pp. 1-2, stop before *Eagle Shields Dream*), and *Black Elk's Dream Vision* (pp.5-6, stop before *The Dangers of Daydreaming*); chapter I from *The World We Used to Live In: Remembering the Powers of the Medicine Men*, by Vine Deloria, Jr.
- *Introduction* (pp. 1-4, entirety) from ebook: *A Sender of Words: Essays in Memory of John Neihardt*, edited by Vine Deloria, Jr. found at:
http://books.google.com/books?id=nmv1fGlgH_YC&pg=PP8&lpg=PP8&dq=%22Vine+Deloria%22+audio&source=bl&ots=sXuODpfOjT&sig=XpsJu9pZM4d1LMKF6zeaxLKNkQw&hl=en&ei=_-FDSsaIPJSuNoTJtZ8B&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=2

Assessment

Students will be evaluated by how well they follow assignment instructions (e.g., listed writing criteria, thoughtful blog/forum posting consistency throughout the week, ENG 113 level of quality of thought articulation in written then uploaded assignments, and if they meet weekly deadlines).

References

(Photocopy, then upload the following with printed permission by publisher.)

Brown, J. E. "Hanblecheyapi: Crying for a Vision." *The sacred pipe: Black Elk's Account of the Seven Rites of the Oglala Sioux*. Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1970.

Deloria Jr., V. ed. "Introduction." *A sender of words: Essays in memory of John G. Neihardt*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 2005. 25 June 2009.
<<http://books.google.com>>.

---. "Dreams—The approach of the sacred." *The world we used to live in: Remembering the powers of the medicine men*. Golden, CO: Fulcrum, 2006.

Neihardt, John G. "The Great Vision." *Black Elk Speaks: Being the Life Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux*. New York: State University of New York, 2008.

Oglala Lakota College 2008-2010 Catalog. Kyle, SD: Oglala Lakota College, 2008.

Developer

Kiri Close

119 ½ North Main Street

Gordon, NE 69343

kclose@olc.edu

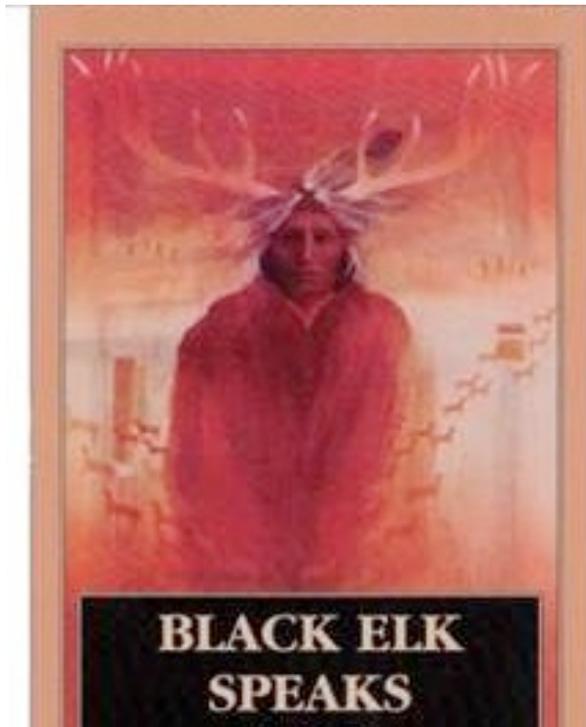
Facebook, Bebo, Linked in, Twitter

(308) 360-0668

Date

26 June 2009

*The following page contains the cover to this lesson plan.



Vine Deloria, Jr. & Black Elk Speak: Recorded Lakota Visions as Artful Literary Expression (precursor to the film excerpts for the following week).

Educators are welcome to modify this lesson plan accordingly, for either online or traditional classroom settings that may or may not include relevant films.

Online Course Titles and Descriptions

LITERATURE 290 LITERARY CINEMA (enhanced) – This course is designed to be an enhanced survey of literary texts (oral, written, performed, cinematic, etc.) that follow the prerequisite LIT 203 INTRODUCTION TO LITERATURE, in addition to other relevant texts. Students will critically assess the reading material coupled with an analytical viewing of the films based on various original literature works. Finally, students will explore the adaptation process and will achieve an enhanced understanding of it.

SPECIAL TOPICS: LITERATURE 433 LITERARY CINEMA (mastery) – In its emphasis on the ability to discern qualitative storytelling in literature and cinema, this survey concentrates on reinforcing students' *mastery* of existing analytical literature skills explored in LITERATURE 290 listed above, in addition to other relevant texts. Students will critically assess the material while reading the stories [or other selected printed texts] coupled with an analytical viewing of the films based on original literature works. Finally, students will explore the adaptation process and will achieve a mastery understanding of it. (See *OLC Catalog 2009-10, p.185*).