

Meredith Indigenous Humanities Center



2008 Conference

*Real Humanities for
the Real Human Beings:
Teaching Native Humanities
from Tribal Perspectives*

November 20-23, 2008

*Anadarko, Oklahoma and
Surrounding Environs*

Registration

Please fill out the brief form on the left and mail to:

University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma
Attn: Academic Affairs
Troutt Hall 215
1727 W. Alabama
Chickasha, OK 73018.

An information packet with maps and specific schedules will be sent to you upon registration.

Cost

Participation in the conference is \$35 for students and Indigenous Humanities class teachers and \$50 for supporters of MIHC. Scholarships are available for individuals who wish to participate but have limited funds. Checks can be made out to USAO.

Hotel

We will be staying at the Best Value Inn and Suites on 1415 East Central Boulevard in Anadarko, OK. Their phone number is (405) 247.3100. Please mention the Meredith Indigenous Humanities Center and the code #39182 to receive a 20% conference discount.

Questions?

For more information, call (415) 877.2065 or (405) 574.1221 or email nativehumanities@gmail.com or check out our website at: www.nativehumanities.com.

Meredith Indigenous Humanities Center 2008 Conference Registration Form

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

Mailing Address (street): _____

City: _____ State/Province: _____

Country: _____ Zip / Postal Code: _____

Tribal Affiliation (if any): _____

Organization / Native Humanities Class Affiliation: _____

About the MIHC

Our organization, originally named the Pan-American Indian Humanities Center, was renamed to honor the group's founder, the late Dr. Howard L. Meredith. The MIHC works with indigenous communities in the Americas to create tribally specific humanities courses tailored to the stated needs and desires of those communities.

Our goal is to provide practical and financial assistance to teachers, tribes, and institutions of higher learning in sustaining these courses and facilitate communication between different indigenous humanities courses. We hope this conference will bring together Pan-American humanities and indigenous language teachers, students, tribal elders, and other interested parties to facilitate scholarship from native perspectives. We are grateful for the ongoing support of the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma, in Chickasha.

Native Humanities Courses

Our Native Humanities courses take inspiration from the Clemente model established by author Earl Shorris. In his investigation of poverty and disenfranchisement in America society, Shorris concluded that humanities, such as literature, logic and philosophy, were the keys to developing the political and reasoning skills that enable people to overcome poverty and regain political power in a democratic society.

Shorris put his theories to test teaching a wide range of humanities to a group of multi-generational poor people from New York City. He brought in the finest teachers from the top of their fields to teach rigorous, demanding lessons,

using the Socratic method to their students. This Clemente course was an unmitigated success, with the majority of the students stabilizing their lives, finding work, and going on to college. At the conclusion of the first year, Bard College evaluated the course and agreed to give the students six college credits.

The Clemente course expanded to new communities, including the Yucatecan Maya. The Maya course added the component of the Mayan language — not just everyday Yucatecan Maya — but the classical language of their ancestors' poetry and literature.

When Howard Meredith, Earl Shorris, and the students of USAO met and created the first Native humanities courses, they wanted to create courses that brought tribal values and perspective into Western academic environments. The first classes, Cherokee, Kiowa, and Chickasaw, were created after asking the tribal communities and elders what they wanted taught in each course.

Each course is specific to the tribe. The classes are designed with Native students in mind, many of whom may have been alienated from Western academic approached in the past. Instead of “dumbing down” the coursework, the teaching is kept to the highest caliber — challenging the students with demanding intellectual questions that affect their lives. The language component is essential, and students learn their languages in the context of songs, stories, and dialogue.

Students learn their tribe's political philosophies, enabling students to participate more fully in their own tribe's politics. By examining the philosophical underpinnings of Western political theory, students also gain greatest access to the mainstream political arena.

Conference Event Schedule

Thursday, Nov. 20:

- Welcoming dinner at Redstone Baptist Church, 6.00pm. The Church is one mile north of the Apache Wye (where Highway 9 and 281 meet west of Anadarko).

Friday, Nov. 21:

- Greeting Ceremony, Anadarko, OK, dawn
- Breakfast Roundtable Discussion, topics relating to indigenous humanities classes
- Brief outline of the history and philosophy of Clemente course
- Humanities teachers give course updates
- Caddo tribal complex: talks, presentations, and dinner
- Cherokee Arts and Humanities Council leads participatory stomp dance

Saturday, Nov. 22:

- Breakfast Roundtable Discussion, topics relating to indigenous humanities classes
- Update by John Feaver and Sanders Huguenin about ongoing development of the Center
- Afternoon: board meeting, elections
- Concurrent visit to the Southern Plains Indian Museum and local galleries
- talks and presentations
- Southern Plains buffalo dinner

Sunday, Nov. 23:

- Breakfast Roundtable Discussion, topics relating to indigenous humanities classes
- Wrap-up session

This schedule subject to change.