Course Outline
Picturing the Past: Winter Counts of the Lakota
Anthropology 19, Fall Term, 2005

Professor: Russell Thornton
Office: 306 Haines Hall
Office Hours: 1:00-3:00 Thursdays
(and by appointment)

Classroom: 314 Haines Hall
Day: Thursday
Time: 12:00-12:50

Description

This is a consideration of what are know as “winter counts,” from the Lakota waniyetu yawapi,” literally “winters they count.” Winter counts are Native American calendars whereby years are recorded in terms of the most significant event that occurred during the year. Most existed historically as oral remembrances then later in pictographic (and written) forms. They typically cover events of the 19th century, though many extend back into the 18th century (and beyond) and some extend to today. They are associated with the plains tribes, especially the Lakota of the northern plains and the Kiowa of the southern plains. Here, consideration is focused on the northern plains winter counts, especially those of the Lakota. Special attention will be focused on a newly rediscovered Lakota winter count—the Rosebud Reservation Winter Count—and its relationships to other winter counts.

Topics

9/29/05: Overview and introduction

10/06/05 Native American Pictographs

Readings:
Garrick Mallery, Picture-Writing of the American Indians, 2 volumes (Dover Publications).

10/13/05: Norther Plains Calendars

Reading:
Hugh Dempsey, A Blackfoot Winter Count (Glenbow Museum).

10/20/05 Lakota Winter Counts
10/27/05: The Rosebud Reservation Winter Count

Reading:


10/03/05: The Rosebud Reservation Winter Count: circa 1751-52 to 1786-1787

11/10/05: The Rosebud Reservation Winter Count: circa 1787-88 to 1833-34

11/17/05: No Class

11/24/05: Thanksgiving Holiday

12/02/05: The Rosebud Reservation Winter Count: circa 1834-35 to 1882-83

12/09/05: The Rosebud Reservation Winter Count: The Last Years