Repatriation of Native American Human Remains and Cultural Objects

Native Americans in the United States recently have been successful in obtaining the passage of federal and state laws not only preventing the further disenfranchisement of human skeletal remains and cultural objects but also repatriating remains and objects to appropriate tribes and individuals. The course will examine this phenomenon. Topics will include a history of federal and state legislation pertaining to repatriation (including religious freedom and the protection of graves); the role and strategies Native American leaders have used in bringing about this legislation; historical practices of "collection" for museums and scholars (i.e., the ways remains and objects have been obtained); ethical issues involved; native objections to the study of this material; the various types of scientific and scholarly knowledge obtainable from skeletal remains, etc. (and the importance of this knowledge); the complexities and difficulties involved in the actual repatriation process (including contamination;) and new relationships which are developing between Native Americans and scholars and scholarly institutions, including traditional care. Course material will be drawn from a variety of sources and disciplines, including recent repatriation cases from the Smithsonian Institution and state museums and universities.

NOTE: Course grading will be based on a final exam (80 %) and class attendance and participation (20%).

Required Readings

Books:


On Reserve in the Department of Anthropology Reading Room:

**Course Outline**

1/09/07: Overview and Introduction

1/16/07: Background

Thomas, Parts I, II, III

Video: *Thieves of Time* (30 minutes).
Video: *Science or Sacrilege* (60 minutes).

Slide Presentation

1/23/07: Repatriation as a Social Movement

Readings: Mihesuah, ed., pp. 59-120.
Thomas, Part IV, Chapters 18, 19 & 20

Repatriation at UCLA and in the UC System

Reading: Leonard and Feezor-Stewart, "Human Remains at UCLA."

Video: *Life Spirit* (24 minutes).

1/30/07: History of Repatriation Law

History of Federal Law

Thomas, Part. IV, Chapter 21; Part V

History of State and International Law

2/6/07: Science, Ethics and Native Americans


2/13/07: Issues in the Return of Human Remains

Slide Presentation

Video: The Long Journey Home (15 minutes).

2/20/07: Case Studies: Repatriation of Non-Skeletal Human Remains: Ishi’s Brain, Swanson Harbor Jim’s Brain, and Sitting Bull’s Braid

Readings: Report on Ishi

Slide Presentation

2/27/07: Case Studies: Wounded Knee

Slide Presentation

3/6/07: Case Studies: Cultural Objects


Videos: Return of the Sacred Pole (30 minutes).
Zuni Repatriation (13 minutes).

3/13/07 Case Studies: Steed-Kisker and the Search for Cultural Affiliation

3/23/07 (FRIDAY): FINAL, 11:30-12:30