Anthropology 19
Winter Quarter 2008

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WHO OWNS OUR PAST?

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 seminar will examine this phenomenon. Topics will include a history of federal and state legislation pertaining to repatriation; the role and strategies Native American leaders have used in bringing about this legislation; historical practices of "collection" for museums and scholars; native objections to the study of this material; the various types of scientific and scholarly knowledge obtainable from skeletal remains, etc.; the complexities and difficulties involved in the actual repatriation process; and new relationships which are developing between Native Americans and scholars and scholarly institutions. Seminar material will be drawn from a variety of sources and disciplines, including recent repatriation cases from the Smithsonian Institution and state museums and universities.

Reading:


Course Outline

1/10/08: Overview and Introduction

1/17/08: Background

  Video: *Thieves of Time* (30 minutes).

1/24/08: Repatriation as a Social Movement

1/31/08: History of Repatriation Law
2/07/08: Science, Ethics and Native Americans
Reading: Thomas, *Skull Wars*.

2/14/08: Issues in the Return of Human Remains
Video: *The Long Journey Home* (15 minutes).
Slide Presentation

2/21/08: Case Studies: Human Remains
Slide Presentation

2/28/08: Case Studies: Cultural Objects-I
Videos: *Return of the Sacred Pole* (30 minutes).

3/06/08: Case Studies: Cultural Objects-II
*Zuni Repatriation* (13 minutes).

3/13/08: Steed-Kisker and the Search for Cultural Affiliation