Course Description

Anishinaabe teachings tell us it was from (Ma’iiingan—Wolf) that humanity learned of our close relationship to the planet and other species. Indigenous cultures around the world emphasize the importance of learning both from and about our animal relations in order to see the world from the perspectives of the Animal Nations and to better understand our role in contributing to the ecological balance necessary to a healthy Mother Earth. NAS 440 is based on this concept, that our animal relations are our teachers.

As humans, however, we are limited to the human perspective on our non-human animal relations. In NAS 440, we make full use of a variety of human perspectives, including our personal ones, in order to better understand these relations of ours. Indigenous and Western science are used throughout as are Indigenous cultural expressions and TEK. In selecting course material, the primary factors used were to select material that teaches us about the Animal Nations themselves (rather than about any particular human culture), to select material that respects the Animal Nations as beings, and to select material that is informative. As we do our research and reading, always keep a filtering eye out for the particular human biases that color how the author presents the non-human animals being discussed.

The course meets weekly. On varying weeks, the class will engage in forest immersion to learn directly from the Animal Nations themselves. In between these forest immersion weeks, the class will read, research, discuss and present on, first and foremost, the Animal Nations themselves.

Secondary course topics include TEK’s perspectives on the Animal nations; traditional Indigenous cultural expressions relating to the Animal Nations including Indigenous star knowledge (particularly Ojibwe astronomy); wildlife management in modern Western and modern Indigenous traditions including their approaches to our animal relations, “wildlife” research, and human/“wildlife” interaction; and the conflicts and mergings between traditional Indigenous values and traditional Western scientific values in their perceptions of the Animal Nations.

Grading

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<td>Relevant Discussion</td>
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<td>Observation Reports</td>
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<td>Animal Relations Panels</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creative Research Project</td>
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<td>Research Notes for Project</td>
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GRADING SCALE

100-94% A  89-87% B+  79-77% C+  69-67% D+  59-0% F
93-90% A-  86-84% B  76-74% C  66-64% D
83-80% B-  73-70% C-  63-60% D-

Outcomes and Assessment

Outcome 1:  Develop an understanding of our animal relations, their lifeways and cultures through research/analysis of TEK, traditional Indigenous cultural expressions and Western science.
Assessment:  Animal Relations Panels, Creative Research Project

Outcome 2:  Develop an understanding of the Animal Nations in the Northwoods through forest immersion
Assessment:  Observation Reports

Outcome 3:  Conduct comparative analysis of cultural attitudes and research approaches toward our animal relations in Western, traditional Indigenous, and modern Indigenous sciences and wildlife agencies.
Assessment:  Discussion

Required Texts

Ackerman, Jennifer.  *The Genius of Birds.*
Johnston, Basil.  *Honour Earth Mother.*
Mowat, Farley.  *Never Cry Wolf.*
Young, Jon.  *What the Robin Knows: How Birds Reveal the Secrets of the Natural World.*

Optional Text


Assignments

*Observation Reports*

Outside of classtime, you will need to visit a personal sit spot weekly to which you can regularly return to unobtrusively observe the lifeways, cultures, and habits of the wild (i.e. undomesticated) Animal Nations there. You will need to visit this sit spot at least once a week for a half-hour or more of learning from our animal relations who visit or live at that sit spot.

*Observation Reports are simply legible notes of the your sit spot observations. To that end, you should either bring a weatherproof notebook with you to your sit spot or jot down detailed notes immediately on your return from your sit spot.* For those weeks when the class travels into the field for forest immersion, the Observation Report needs to include the your observations for that class period as well.

*Observation Reports need to include the date, times and general location of your sit spot sit.*
Animal Relations Panels

You need to sign up to be part of 2 Animal Relations Panels. These are listed in the schedule. We’ll sign up for these the first day of class.

Animal Relations Panels need to team-research their topic thoroughly and present their findings to the class. Sources need to come from Indigenous sources as much as possible. Interviews with people who live on the land, whether or not they have degrees, are strongly encouraged. Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission’s *Mazinge’igan* is an excellent Indigenous-based resource for animal behavior in the Northwoods. It can be found at the CNAS Resource Room (112 Whitman), the NMU Library, or online at [http://glifwc.org](http://glifwc.org).

Plan for an approximately 30 minute panel presentation plus 10-15 minutes for discussion.

Creative Research Project - **Due Week 16**

You will need to research one of our wild animal kin using TEK, Indigenous language(s), and information from modern tribal “wildlife” agencies and Western science that is respectful of other animals as fully sentient beings. Other material may be used for research but in a supplemental capacity only.

The project may also include, as a secondary theme, an exploration of how this animal appears in Indigenous cultural expressions such as star knowledge, traditional stories, beadwork, and/or other cultural examples.

**The goal of the Creative Research Project is to integrate factual research into an entertaining format.**

You choose your own method of artistic expression (e.g. video animation, board game, painting, oral story, beadwork, etc.) to integrate the information from your research into a creative project that transforms your research information into an easily accessible, entertaining format. See pbskids.org for Wild Kratts videos that may provide inspiration on how to combine facts with creativity.

**Complete research notes for your project need to be turned in on Week 12.** This will then give you 4 more weeks to work on the creative aspect of your research.

Anishinaabe Homeland Statement

NMU sits on the traditional homeland of the Anishinaabeg and is part of the 1842 ceded territory. One major intent of the 1842 treaty was to open the area to mining interests. Predatory missions with this in mind were sent by the United States into Anishinaabe territory beginning at least in 1820. The impacts of this have not abated – in fact, the environmental and cultural threats continue to increase throughout the northern Great Lakes area, not only for the Anishinaabeg but for all our relations, including the Menominee who have lived in the northern Great Lakes area for 10,000 years.

ADA Statement

If you have a need for disability-related accommodations or services, please inform the Coordinator of Disability Services in the Dean of Students Office at 2001 C. B. Hedgcock Building (227-1700). Reasonable and effective accommodations and services will be provided to students if requests are made in a timely manner, with appropriate documentation, in accordance with federal, state, and University guidelines.

NMU Non-Discrimination Statement

Northern Michigan University does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, height, weight, marital status, familial status, handicap/disability, sexual orientation, or veteran status in employment or the provision of services, and provides, upon request, reasonable accommodation including auxiliary aids and services necessary to afford individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in all programs and activities. Anyone having civil rights inquiries may contact the Equal Opportunity Office, 502 Cohodas Hall, telephone number 906-227-2420.
WEEK 1: Forest Immersion and Introductions
Aug. 31
Course introduction
Introductory Bird Language

WEEK 2: Forest Immersion
Sept. 7
Due: (69 pages total for reading assignment)
Young: Introduction (xiii–xxxiii), Ch 1 (1-18) and Ch 4 (48-79) What the Robin Knows
Gawboy: Prologue (1-19) Talking Sky

WEEK 3: Family & Community
Sept. 14
Due: (64 pages total for reading assignment)
Johnston: Introduction and Preface (vii—xii) Honour Earth Mother
Ackerman: “Twitter” Ch 4 (101-135) The Genius of Birds
Masson: “Love and Friendship” Ch 4 (64-90) When Elephants Weep

Animal Relations Panel: Social Relationships and the Family

WEEK 4: Forest Immersion
Sept. 21
Due: (44 pages total for reading assignment)
Sit Spot Journals from Weeks 1-3
Young: Ch 2 and Ch 3 (19-47) What the Robin Knows
Gawboy: Ch 1 (10-24) Talking Sky
Hunter: (EduCat) “The Creation of the First People”

WEEK 5: Forest Immersion
Sept. 28
Due: (41 pages total for reading assignment)
Young: Ch 5 and Ch 6 (80-118) What the Robin Knows
Gawboy: Ch 10 (83-86) Talking Sky

WEEK 6: Family & Community (cont’d)
Oct. 5
Due: (63 pages total for reading assignment)
Galdikas: “Akmad” (57-67) Intimate Nature
Angier: “Bonobo Society: Amicable, Amorous and Run by Females” (68-70) Intimate Nature
Bekoff: Ch 1 (1-28) The Emotional Lives of Animals
Masson: Ch 8 (154-178) When Elephants Weep

Animal Relations Panel: Primate Communities

WEEK 7: Forest Immersion
Oct. 12
Due: (80 pages total for reading assignment)
Young: “Birds” (83-100) Honour Earth Mother
Johnston: Ch 7 and Ch 8 (119-182) What the Robin Knows

WEEK 8: Forest Immersion
Oct. 19
Due: (35 pages total for reading assignment)
Sit Spot Journals for Weeks 4-6
Moss: “Elephant Memories” (115-125) Intimate Nature
Bekoff: Ch 4 (85-109) The Emotional Lives of Animals

WEEK 9: “Wildlife Management” - Western
Oct. 26
Due: (131 pages total for reading assignment)
Mowat: First half (3-120) Never Cry Wolf
Johnston: “Animals” (111-123) Honour Earth Mother
Hobson: (EduCat) “Deer Hunting”

Animal Relations Panel: “Wildlife Management” - Western
**WEEK 10: “Wildlife Management” - TEK/Contemporary Tribal**

Nov. 2 Due:  
Mowat: Finish (121-246) *Never Cry Wolf*  
Johnston: Finish “Animals” (124-134) *Honour Earth Mother*  
Tall Mountain: “The Last Wolf” (51-52) *Intimate Nature*

**Animal Relations Panel: “Wildlife Management” - TEK/Contemporary Tribal**

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**WEEK 11: Communication**

Nov. 9 Due:  
Sit Spot Journals for Weeks 7-10  
Ackerman: Ch 5 (137-168) *The Genius of Birds*  
Bekoff: Ch 3 (43-83) *The Emotional Lives of Animals*  

**Animal Relations Panel: Communication**

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**WEEK 12: Non-Human TEK**

Nov. 16 Due:  
Notes for Creative Research Project!!  
Ackerman: Ch 3 (63-80, 90-95) *The Genius of Birds*  
Gertsch: (EduCat) “Houdini of the Spider World” (143-149) *The Fabulous Insects*  
Dixon: (EduCat) “The Private Life of Insects” (250-256) *The Fabulous Insects*

**Animal Relations Panel: Tool Use and Home Building**

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**WEEK 13: NO CLASS**

Nov. 23

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**WEEK 14: Navigational TEK**

Nov. 30 Due:  
Sit Spot Journals for Weeks 11-12, 14-15  
Creative Work  
Creative Work Presentations  
Ackerman: Ch 7 (195-237) *The Genius of Birds*  
Johnston: “Insects, Bugs and Little Creatures” (59-81) *Honour Earth Mother*  
Teale: (EduCat) “The Most Amazing Insect” (91-95) *The Fabulous Insects*

**Animal Relations Panel: Animal Navigation**

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**WEEK 15: Relations with the Human World**

Dec. 7 Due:  
Sit Spot Journals for Weeks 11-12, 14-15  
Creative Work  
Creative Work Presentations  
Bekoff: Ch 6 (133-166) *The Emotional Lives of Animals*  
Johnston: “Fish” (135-143) *Honour Earth Mother*

**Animal Relations Panel: Animal Relations of the Water**

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**WEEK 16: Final Exam Week**

Dec. 14 Due:  
Sit Spot Journals for Weeks 11-12, 14-15  
Creative Work  
Creative Work Presentations