



**UNION**

*Religious Worlds of New York • Curriculum Development Project*

# Sacred Water, Sacred Land in Ashiwi:Awan, Dinétah, Nuevo México, and New Mexico Communities

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## Abstract

This 16 session course will explore the sacred dimensions of water and land for many of our New Mexican communities through a series of seminars that are thematically integrated, product oriented and guided by the following ideas and values: **Sacredness, Home, Belonging, Memory, Identity, Wisdom, Balance, and Fragility.**

A variety of interdisciplinary “texts” will be used including visual art, speaker presentations, poetry, film, short stories, newspaper articles, and selections from fiction. The class will learn about the religious, cultural, historic and environmental role water and land with Zuni, Dine, Hispano, Mormon, Palestinian, and African American communities with the aim of developing active thinking through dialogue, conceptual understanding, intercultural competencies and opportunities for self-reflection. As a culminating project, students will create their own “New Mexico Earth Almanac.”

## Pedagogic Goals

Students will practice active thinking through dialogue by analyzing the ideas and values presented in class through a variety of seminar texts and field experiences. These Socratic discussions will use a “Paideia” Socratic seminar protocol. When engaged in seminar, each student is witness to both the thinking process of other students, the collective thinking process of their class group and a model of collaborative discourse that requires everyone to practice complex social skills. Texts and field experiences will be selected based on the relevancy to the cultures of the Gallup area and New Mexico at large.

## **Each Seminar Meeting will Include:**

- Pre-Seminar Content Activity focused on Guiding Ideas and Values along with Background Information
- Pre-Seminar Process Activity that helps students set participation goals for
- Seminar Dialogue
- Post-Seminar Process Activity: 5 minute Seminar Written Reflection
- Post-Seminar Content Activity/Assessment

## **Final Project:**

Students will create a New Mexico Earth Almanac using their written reflections content activities and photos and a final 750 word Reflection on the guiding concepts. Students will get extra credit points for additional content outside of their content activities.

# **Curriculum Map**

*NOTE: You will find links below to many of the texts, videos, and other sources mentioned in descriptions of seminar sessions.*

## **Session 1/2: The Ground Truth: Soil and Water in New Mexico Today**

**Tentative Texts: Newspaper Articles from the Albuquerque Journal on Water Situation. Navajo Water Lady Piece on Television**

***Essential Questions:*** Apart from sustaining life and the cultivation of food, what are other reasons water and land is important to New Mexicans? How does the concept of **fragility** affect other areas of our personal lives? What does it mean to have a **home** with limited water?

***Content Activity:*** Students will write a personal letter from their future selves to someone in the past describing the water and environmental situation 50 years from now. Is it hopeful or depressing, or something else, and if so why? Does Gallup still Exist? Have New Mexican's changed for the better or the worse or are they the same? Is there any advice you can dispense on how to prepare or live happily?

## **Session 3/4: Water, Earth, and Corn Mothers: Sacredness in Ashiwi:Awan and Pueblo Culture**

**Texts:** Surviving Columbus Film Clip on Pueblo Religion, Presentation by Tanya Shekya on Zuni Creation, Migration and the role of Rain and Water, **Ashiwi: Awan Museum Maps**. Alex Seotewa Mural Pictures

**Essential Questions:** How is water and the land tied to remembering ancestors (**memory**) for the Zuni? How are some Kachinas tied to Zuni understandings of water and soil and its **sacredness**? How do Zuni's and other Pueblos view **belonging** to the land vs. owning the land? How do Zuni waffle gardens carry **wisdom**?

**Content Activity:** Students will either create a map tracing their family's migration and/or homes, including sites that have special meaning, or a visual art piece depicting sacred or precious things that have special meaning in their everyday lives.

## **Session 5/6: Water Sprinkler, the Beauty Way of Dine**

**Tentative Texts:** Selections from **Dine Bahane: Navajo Creation Story**, Presentation from Dr. Elvira Bitsoi and or Sunny Dooley on Navajo Views on Beauty Way, Balance and the role of water and planting for the Navajo.

**Essential Questions:** How are these texts related to the previous texts? How are these this text different? How is the concept of the Yei Be Che similar to that of a Kachina? How does the Navajo Creation story tied to Navajo **identity**? How is the concept of the four sacred mountains tied to the idea of belonging and **home**?

**Content Activity:** Using their previous assignment, students will write a story meant to be told as a story for younger students on the origins of their family, how they found in Gallup and any how they maintain balance with each other and their family environment?

## **Session 7/8: Ramah Mormons, Ramah Lake and the Land's Bounty**

**Tentative Texts:** Selections from the **Book of Mormon, (If Lehi's descendants keep God's commandments, they will prosper in the land of promise, 2 Ne. 1:5–9)** Presentation by Ronnie Ladon on Community of Ramah, Video Clips: The Law Of Harvest, Church-Owned Ranch Balances Agriculture and Conservation

**Essential Questions:** How are these texts related to the previous texts? How are these texts different? What do these texts say about guiding concepts we have talked about in previous sessions? How do Mormons view land and water as compared to Navajo People and Zuni's?

**Content Activity:** Using the provided guidelines, students will design a self-sustaining village in New Mexico located in the High Desert.

## **Session 9: Ancient Way Field Trip**

Students will visit the Pueblo of Zuni and the Ashiwi: Awan Museum, Ramah Museum and the village of Ramah, El Morro National Monument and Acoma Pueblo. Students will take pictures of images that might speak to **Sacredness, Home, Belonging, Memory, Identity, Wisdom, Balance, and Fragility**. We will post these in our classroom walls and use them for our Almanacs.

## **Session 10/11: Tierra Sagrada, Agua Sagrada in the Indo-Hispano Homeland**

**Tentative Texts:** Sabine Ulibarri **Colores: A Mi Raza and Quest for a Homeland: "The Land is Sacrosanct/Acequia Scene"** Pilgrimage to the Center Space: Chimayo Emergence, Video Clips from Bless Me Ultima and Colores: Acequia

**Essential Questions:** How are these texts related to the previous texts? How are these texts different? What do these texts say about guiding concepts we have talked about in previous sessions? How do Hispanos differ and similar to Navajo, Zuni and Mormon concepts of land, water and sacredness?

**Content Activity:** Students will write a poem, a short story describing their connection to the Gallup Area, New Mexico or any of the guiding concepts covered in class.

## **Session 12: Chimayo and the Acequia System of Northern New Mexico (Field Trip)**

Students will take a guided tour by the New Mexico Water Research Institute hosted by Jose Juan Cruz Chaireze titled *Acequia Connections Between Hydrology and Community*. Students will also visit the santuario of Chimayo. Students will take pictures of images that might speak to them of **Sacredness, Home, Belonging, Memory, Identity, Wisdom, Balance, and Fragility**. We will post these in our classroom walls and almanac project.

## **Session 13/14: Blackdom and the Promise Land: African American Pioneers of New Mexico**

**Tentative Texts: Video Clip from Colores: Blackdom.** Selection From Michael Sernets Book “Bound for the Promise Land,” Music Video: Take me to your River by Leon Bridges. Article on Take me to your River its meaning and its relationship to Hope after Baltimore uprisings.

**Essential Questions:** How are these texts related to the previous texts? How are these texts different? What to these texts say about guiding concepts we have talked about in previous sessions? How did African American pioneers differ and are similar to Navajo, Zuni and Mormon concepts of land, water and scaredness?

**Content Activity:** Students will look for music on YouTube related to water with possible spiritual overtones and transcribe lyrics.

## **Session 15: From Ramallah to Gallup: Palestinian Muslims, Memory, and Belonging**

**Tentative Texts: Al Jazeera, Mainstreet USA video on Palestinians In Gallup and reflection on Home.** Islam and Water: The Hajjar Story and Guide.

**Essential Questions:** How are these texts related to the previous texts? How are these texts different? What to these texts say about guiding concepts we have talked about in previous sessions? How does Islam differ from and is similar to Navajo, Zuni and Mormon concepts of land, water and scaredness?

**Content Activity:** Student will work on their New Mexico Earth Almanac.

## **Session 16: Canyon De Chelly Field Trip**

Students will visit Canyon De Chelly. Students will take pictures of images that might speak to **Sacredness, Home, Belonging, Memory, Identity, Wisdom, Balance, and Fragility.** They will use these to finalize their final project due last day of Finals.

## Links to Selected Resources and Texts

### A:shiwi A:Wan Museum Programs

<http://ashiwi-museum.org/discover/exhibitions/traveling-exhibition/>

<http://ashiwi-museum.org/community/ashiwi-doyenakwe/>

### Blackdom

<https://www.dailykos.com/stories/2012/2/29/1068565/-Black-History-Month-in-New-Mexico-III-Blackdom>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AZO0-8P6hso>

### Acequias

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zQ3IbO4vFBA&spfreload=5>

<http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/water-solutions/ancient-traditions-keep-desert-waters-flowing>

### Bless Me Ultima River Chat Clip

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=arYhME\\_SDM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=arYhME_SDM)

### Chimayo

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bcaQq72hLLc>

[http://www.csicop.org/si/show/miracle\\_dirt\\_of\\_chimayo](http://www.csicop.org/si/show/miracle_dirt_of_chimayo)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s\\_0K6JKoD10](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s_0K6JKoD10)

### LDS Scriptures on “ Promised Land”

<https://www.lds.org/scriptures/gs/promised-land>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Niks92Ab5N4&t=4s>

### Navajo Water Lady

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hk8Rm9EsET4>

### Navajo Beauty Way

<https://nativeamericanconcepts.wordpress.com/walking-in-beauty/>

### Navajo Harvest Dance

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-eIDXX-cmyE>

Navajo Yei Be Che Song

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IORojHDj\\_U0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IORojHDj_U0)

Palestinians of Gallup, New Mexico

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DNwC3OsL7GA>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6\\_voByeTCz8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6_voByeTCz8)

Pueblo Perspectives on the Land and Home/Surviving Columbus

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4yPi2RRpgv8>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sJJ-t2RQknI>

Sabine Ulibarri

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=arYhME\\_SDM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=arYhME_SDM) (forward to 3:22)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PDbkFkUSD\\_M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PDbkFkUSD_M)

Water Scarcity in New Mexico

<http://nmindepth.com/2016/01/05/is-the-rio-grande-headed-for-permanent-drought/>

<https://weather.com/science/news/nearly-300-new-mexico-towns-face-water-crisis-20130808>

Zuni Social Dance-Harvest

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tebfVDRBUxA>

Zuni Murals

<http://www.hanksville.org/voyage/stories/ZuniLife.html>

***For information about the Religious Worlds of New York  
summer institute for teachers, and more resources to enrich your teaching  
on religious diversity, see: [www.religiousworldsnyc.org](http://www.religiousworldsnyc.org).***