



Pre- Columbian

Before 1600

Native American Voices

- “American” and “Indian”
 - Both terms are historical inaccuracies prescribed by early Europeans
 - Native Americans had their own languages, traditions, beliefs, and laws for hundreds of different tribes and millions of individuals

Cahokia

- As many as 100,000 citizens at its peak
- Largest Western city until Renaissance London
- Canals, irrigation, sports, gov't, even suburbs
- One of the great cities of the Western world
 - So why don't we think of it as such?*
 - History is written by the winners
 - Native American history is almost entirely oral

Oral Traditions

- Communication wherein knowledge, art, ideas, and cultural material is transmitted orally from one generation to the next
- All cultures have them
- Explain:
 - Natural Phenomenon
 - Relationship to Nature
 - Cultural History
 - Laws
- Having created thousands of poems, songs, and myths, “American” literature begins here

Stories of Origin

- Often performance-based
 - Poems, Songs, Dance
- Origin of the natural world or humanity itself
- Belief in a natural order and balance to things
- Non-Hierarchical
 - Animals and humans are equal
- Non-Dualistic
 - Good and Evil co-exist as necessary
 - Good and Evil co-exist without judgment

Walam Olum

–Delaware Tribe

- Pictograph
 - A picture representing a word or idea
- Manito
 - Power, Mystery, Magic, Spirit
 - All shapes and sizes, human or animal
- Myth vs. Religion
 - Explain origins, traditions, and values
 - Earth, Man, Marriage, Sin
 - Share common stories
 - Floods, Dying Gods, Undiscovered Kings

Unwritten Laws

- Like stories of origin, all cultures have them
- Often dictate social norms and customs and can be as effective as written law
- Some have faded
 - Electoral College Independence
- Some have persisted
 - Presidential Cabinet
- Some have been codified
 - Presidential Term Limits

Iroquois Constitution

- How is the Iroquois Constitution similar to ours?
- Metaphor
 - An implied comparison between two seemingly unlike things
- Tree of the Great Peace
 - Leaves
 - Shade
 - Roots
- Eagle
- Wampum
- Deer Antlers

Literature of Exploration

- Extremely Euro-Centric
- Three Purposes
 1. Familiarization
Though often inaccurate (e.g. Indians!)
 2. Conquest
New England, New Amsterdam, New World
 3. Economic
Trade, treasure, and natural resources
- In the end, it's all about the money