

CAVEAT LECTOR: The following slides were shown in the “LGBT Religious History: Queering the Spirit” sessions indicated in the PowerPoint presentation title because they related to the required readings for those days. These can be found on the course syllabus.

**The slides do not necessarily reflect the views of the instructor and in some cases were selected precisely because they contain errors of fact or differences of opinion with the authors whose scholarship students were reading.** The more controversial graphics were intended to prompt conversations in college classroom settings and lead to engagement and respectful dialogue.

There is no straightforward way to “teach the slides”—nor should there be. It is up to individual teachers to use their judgment as to what materials are age-appropriate and decide whether they fit within existing lesson plans or can form the basis for new ones.

“Consider how textbooks treat Native religions as a unitary whole. The American Way describes Native American religion in these words: ‘These Native Americans [in the Southeast] believed that nature was filled with spirits. Each form of life, such as plants and animals, had a spirit. Earth and air held spirits too. People were never alone. They shared their lives with the spirits of nature.’

Way is trying to show respect for Native American religion, but it doesn’t work. Stated flatly like this, the beliefs seem like make-believe, not the sophisticated theology of a higher civilization.

Let us try a similarly succinct summary of the beliefs of many Christians today: ‘These Americans believed that one great male god ruled the world. Sometimes they divided him into three parts, which they called father, son, and holy ghost. They ate crackers and wine or grape juice, believing that they were eating the son’s body and drinking his blood. If they believed strongly enough, they would live on forever after they died.’

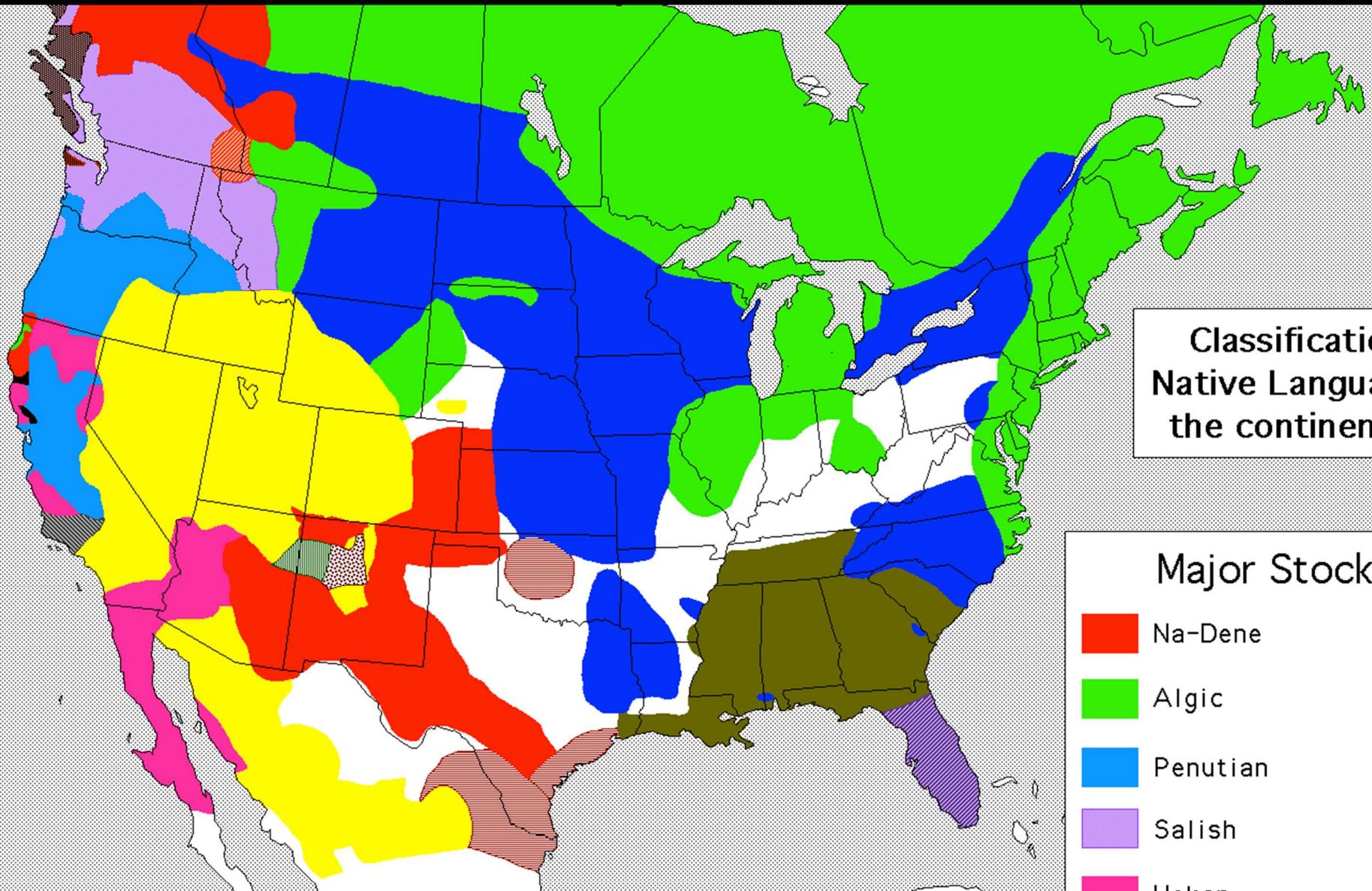
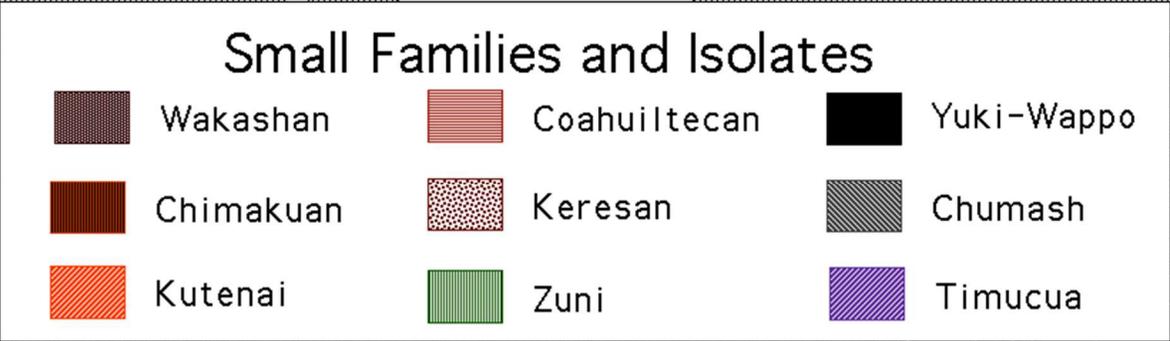
Textbooks never describe Christianity this way. It’s offensive. Believers would immediately argue that such a depiction fails to convey the symbolic meaning or the spiritual satisfaction of communion.”

— *Lies My Teacher Told Me*, James Loewen





**Classification of Native Languages of the continental US**





Comanche family from the early 1900s and the contemporary Foxx family, from Katy June-Friesen, “An Ancestry of African-Native Americans: Using government documents, author Angela Walton-Raji traced her ancestors to the slaves owned by American Indians” (<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/an-ancestry-of-african-native-americans-7986049/>)

Native people could not lawfully conduct spiritual practices until 1978 because of America's tyranny of Christianity. It literally took an act of Congress, the American Indian Religious Freedom Act, to ensure we would not go to jail for praying. [#Indigenous](#)  
[#ReligiousFreedomDay](#)

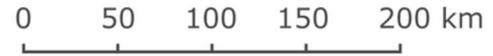


Map from <https://newjourneys.ca/en/articles/resources-for-learning-mi-kmaq>



### The Mi'kmaq

- Gespegeoag
- Sigenigteoag
- Pigtogeoag and Epegoitnag
- Onamag
- Esgigeoag
- Segepenegatig
- Gespogoitnag
- Historic Site
- Orientation site (today)
- International border (today)
- Province border (today)

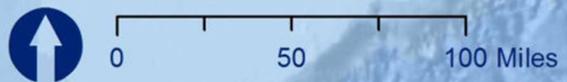


# Lands of the Mi'kmaq

460



Sources of boundary info and names:  
<http://www.danielnpaul.com/Map-Mi%27kmaqTerritory.html> and  
<http://www.avonriverheritage.com/mikmaq-of-the-avon-river.html>



# MI'KMAQ

WIKEWIKU'S HISTORY MONTH OCTOBER 2020

## Plant Knowledge and Use



### Medicine

Plants were boiled into teas, pounded into ointments, chewed, smoked and eaten as part of traditional medical practices. They were used for both prevention and for cure of a wide range of ailments including generalized conditions like pain, fevers, and infection, as well as to treat specific conditions like asthma or hemorrhaging. Plants could be used for sedation and to ease or promote childbirth. Some were used for general wellbeing; others to combat fatigue, relieve muscle aches, or aid digestion. Often only one part of the plant cycle is beneficial, so knowing when to harvest the leaf, branch, flower or root is important.



ewne'k jipi'j' vetch



timwey / tobacco

### Naming

Plant names often carry information about their use and importance. For example, ewne'k jipi'j' (little bluebird) is the name for common vetch. The name comes from the flowers, which look like little bluebirds, because they are good to eat. The pea that comes later is poisonous in large quantities, and used as a medicine to induce vomiting in smaller doses. Names often convey information about shared habitats as well, like with the name for muskratroot (also called sweetflag or flagroot), which shares its habitat with muskrats (ki'kwesu'k).



s+pekn ground nut  
sna'skwi cattails

### Ceremonial Plants

Certain plants, including sweetgrass, cedar, sage, and tobacco, are used in ceremonies for cleansing and other purposes. With smudging, one or more of these plants are lit to create sacred smoke. Teachings say that the smoke attaches itself to negativity and carries it away. Tobacco plays a special role in pipe ceremonies. Before the widespread use of contemporary tobacco, the Mi'kmaq used a tobacco indigenous to Mi'kma'ki that was combined with other plants to make a smoking mixture called "kinkinik."



welima'qij'kewe'l sweetgrass

### Ecology

Plants are integral to healthy habitats and ecosystems. Some plants are indicators of contamination: like canaries in a coal mine, they are the first to struggle when the environment is damaged. Other plants are powerful filters removing harmful elements from the ecosystem. Wetland areas are often called the kidneys of nature, because wetland plants such as cattails absorb naturally-occurring contaminants as well as those from farming and industrial activities.



welima'qij'kewe'l / sweetgrass

Plants have always been an important part of Mi'kmaq life, not just for food and materials for living, but also to prevent and to cure many sicknesses. It is not unusual to see Mi'kmaq, especially Elders, picking sweetgrass for ceremonies and other plants to treat everything from stomach cramps to the common cold.

Mi'kmaq recognize the importance of plants to our culture and lives. Today, we use modern science and traditional knowledge to improve our understanding of the habitats and health of key plant species. Mi'kmaq organizations, such as the Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources, have been interviewing knowledge keepers to figure out which species are important and why.

Often particular families are known for their plant expertise that is passed down through generations. Mi'kmaq speakers are sharing traditional names of the plants as well. These names often contain information on the plant's use, growth and habitats. Bringing traditional and scientific knowledge together is helping better protect ecosystems across Mi'kma'ki.



kjelamusi / sage

ma'sus'i' fiddleheads



su'ni (berries) su'naqsi'i (plant) cranberries



ka'qaju'mann' (berries) ka'qajumanaqsi (plant) Indian teaberry



plawaju'mani partridgeberries

### Food

Diverse habitats across Mi'kma'ki provide a large number of foods including nuts, berries, roots, leaves, bark, and flowers. S+pekn (ground potato) and other tubers like muskrat root as well as hazelnuts, beechnuts, and butternuts provided energy and healthy fats. Berries contain essential vitamins and minerals as well as lots of fiber. Bearberries, strawberries, teaberries, huckleberries, gooseberries, partridgeberries, cranberries, blueberries, currants, elderberries, fobberries and blackberries are eaten fresh or dried for winter storage. Boiling roots and leaves to make s+lawey (tea or broth) is common for both food and medicines. Fresh leaves like dandelions, flowers such as milkweed, and the inner bark of trees like poplars have been important food sources.

malipqwanij hazelnuts



pkwimann (berries) pkwimanaqsi (plant) blueberries



sko'q+tpikusuiwasuekji' mayflowers



qaskusi / cedar



maskwi birchbark



tupli spruce root

### Colours & Dyes

- strawberries, chokecherries, dandelion root, rose hips
- inner birchbark
- cone flower, golden rod, clover blossoms
- black-eyed susan, grass
- blueberries, elderberries
- cherry roots, red cedar roots, inner red maple bark
- acorns
- iris root, coal, carbon

### Art

Plants are key to many Mi'kmaq artistic traditions. Baskets and quillwork use wood (ash and maple) and birchbark, which often are adorned with plant dyes and braided grasses (sweetgrass). Fiber arts such as woven mats and bags were made from reeds, cattail leaf, white cedar bark, and even beach grass. Often artisans use seasonal materials to make specialty items like mayflowers wrapped in birchbark cones, which have been sold in early spring on trains and in urban areas for generations.



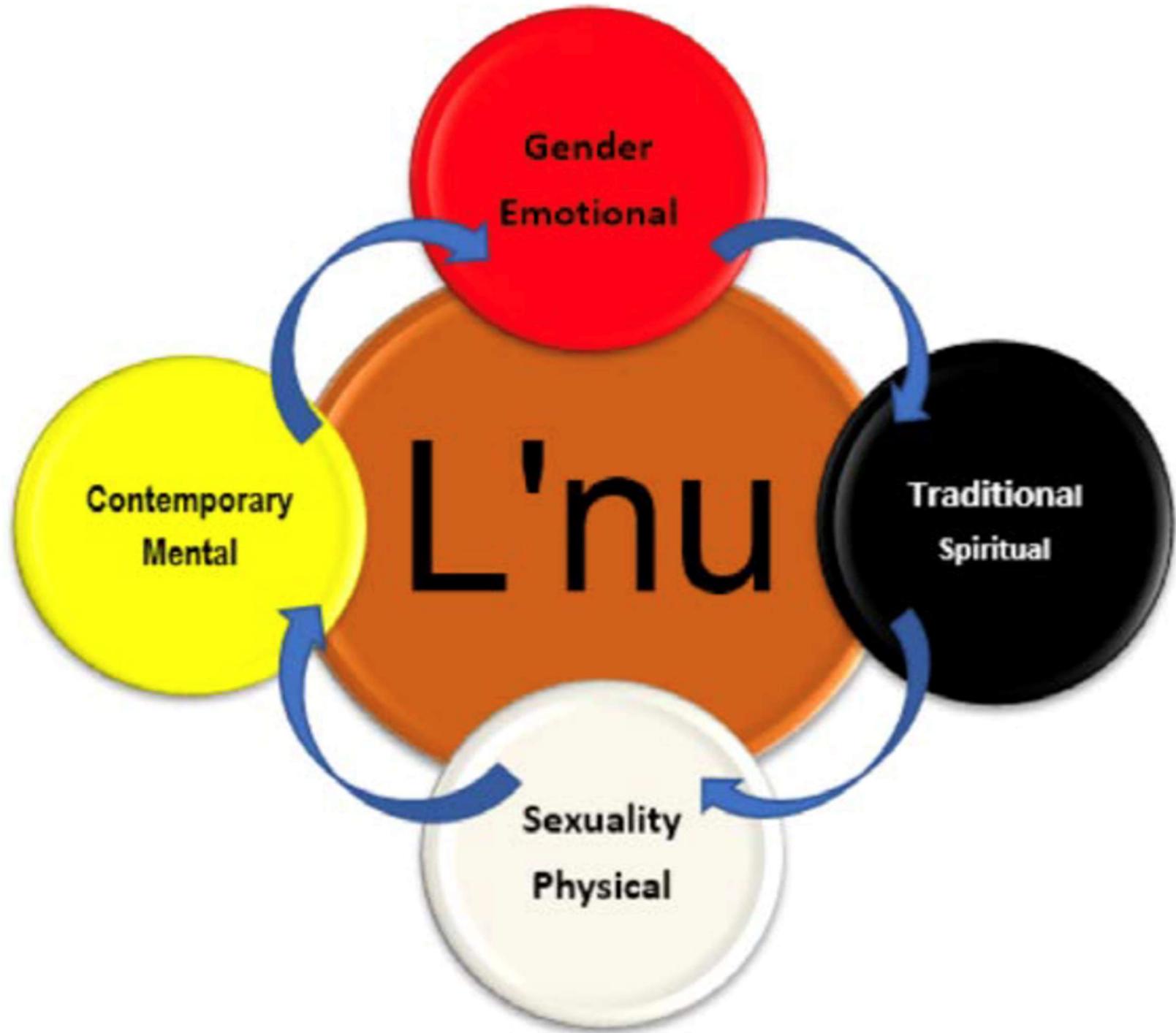


Figure 2 Mi'kmaq Sacred Teachings: 7 Stages of Life with the 7 Gifts

## Mi'kmaq Sacred Teachings

7 Stages of Life with the 7 Gifts

