

**Native American
Field Report #3
*Smoke Signals***

As it is difficult to attend a Native American faith community activity, the alternative for this unit is to analyze the film *Smoke Signals*. This film is available at the library and it is also streamed through the Knowledge Common's web page.

Approach the film just as you would the other field reports. However, unlike the other services you might attend, there is nothing overtly "religious" about this film. There are no rituals or religious people portrayed. Still, the film is deeply "religious"—it tells much about the worldview, values, and beliefs of Native American people. You will have to pay more attention to the subtle details of the film than you would to a religious service.

Carefully watch the film. Watch it several times, with the assignment in mind. In your essay, discuss how the "four Cs"—Community, Creed, Code, and Cultus—appear in the film. These will not be obvious; you will have to understand the lectures and other films in order to pull out from *Smoke Signals* descriptive elements of this faith community. Re-read the general instructions to help you unwind the elements of *Smoke Signals*.

After you have pulled out the main elements of community, creed, code, and cultus; ask yourself "what have I learned in class that helps me understand why they are like they are"? The analytical part of the paper explains reasons why the characters are behaving the way they are or saying what they are saying. Look at the film itself—what visual elements connect to Native American religious concepts? There are many points in the film where you can understand what is being said *better* because you understand the lectures. Your interpretation of the movie needs to be informed by what you have learned in class.

Again, as with all the field reports, your essay should explain what they are doing and why they are doing it by using the course lectures, guest visits, films, and readings.

Excellent papers will make persuasive connections between the film and *Way to Rainy Mountain* and *In the Light of Reverence*.