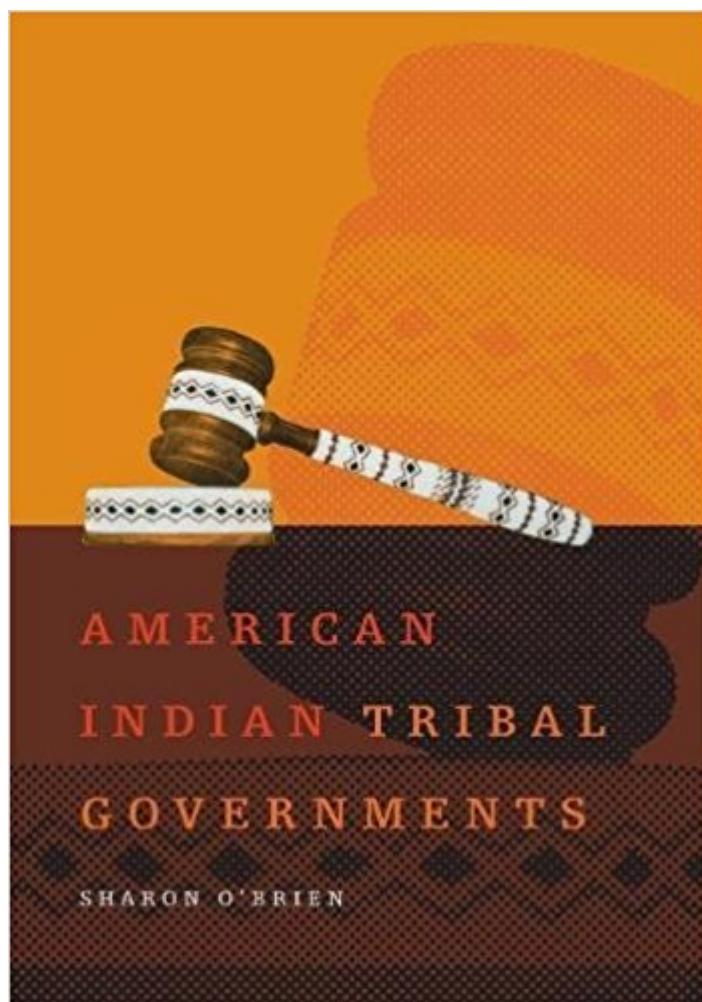


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# American Indian Tribal Governments (The Civilization Of The American Indian Series)



## Synopsis

This book describes the struggle of Indian tribes and their governments to achieve freedom and self-determination despite repeated attempts by foreign governments to dominate, exterminate, or assimilate them. Drawing on the disciplines of political science, history, law, and anthropology and written in a direct, readable style, *American Indian Tribal Governments* is a comprehensive introduction to traditional tribal governments, to the history of Indian-white relations, to the structure and legal rights of modern tribal governments, and to the changing roles of federal and state governments in relation to modern tribal governments. Publication of this book fills a gap in American Indian studies, providing scholars with a basis from which to begin an integrated study of tribal government, providing teachers with an excellent introductory textbook, and providing general readers with an accessible and complete introduction to American Indian history and government. The book's unique structure allows coverage of a great breadth of information while avoiding the common mistake of generalizing about all tribes and cultures. An introductory section presents the basic themes of the book and describes the traditional governments of five tribes chosen for their geographic and cultural diversity—the Senecas, the Muscogees, the Lakotas, the Isleta Pueblo, and the Yakimas. The next three chapters review the history of Indian-white relations from the time Christopher Columbus "discovered" America to the present. Then the history and modern government of each of the five tribes presented earlier is examined in detail. The final chapters analyze the evolution and current legal powers of tribal governments, the tribal-federal relationship, and the tribal-state relationship. *American Indian Tribal Governments* illuminates issues of tribal sovereignty and shows how tribes are protecting and expanding their control of tribal membership, legal systems, child welfare, land and resource use, hunting and fishing, business regulation, education, and social services. Other examples show tribes negotiating with state and federal governments to alleviate sources of conflict, including issues of criminal and civil jurisdiction, taxation, hunting and fishing rights, and control of natural resources. Excerpts from historical and modern documents and speeches highlight the text, and more than one hundred photos, maps, and charts show tribal life, government, and interaction with white society as it was and is. Included as well are a glossary and a chronology of important events.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Sharon O'Brien, who received the Ph.D. in political science from the University of Oregon, is an Associate Professor in the Department of Government and International Studies, University of Notre Dame.

Most Excellent!

Great book.

just ordered, impatiently waiting havent read it yet, but know its great looking forward to it great real life native american resource thank you !!!

I am obviously very skilled in finding exactly what I want in products on ! Or I am very lucky....

This book focuses on six tribes, the Mississippi Choctaw, Iroquois League (Haudenosaunee), Muscogee (Creek), Lakota (Teton Sioux), Pueblo, and the Yakima. This is a nice mix of tribes from all regions of the country except Alaska. These are all relatively large tribes, so the experiences of smaller tribes aren't really reflected here. O'Brien emphasizes the history of all American Indians as well as the history of her six featured tribes. These histories are fine for a textbook, but many of these stories are better told elsewhere. It would be sad to rely on this book for a history of Wounded Knee, for example. She emphasizes formal government structures of these tribes and not how politics really works on each reservation. This would be like presenting the powers of the US presidency without giving examples of how Reagan, Clinton or Bush used these powers in recent

years, and how these presidents struggled with Congress and other players to increase their powers. There are merits to O'Brien's purely structural approach but I would prefer more discussion of intratribal debates and politics. For a much more political book that also includes a discussion of formal government structures, I'd recommend Lopach et al, *Tribal Government Today*. As you'd expect from a textbook, O'Brien emphasizes factual material. She writes well, so that this material is not dry. She is politically sympathetic to the tribes but does not have any ideological axe to grind. She wrote her study with the cooperation of the tribes she studied, and I would think that they would be happy with how they are treated in the book. There are also extensive photographs, which help maintain reader interest. The margins include many quotations from other authors or from relevant statutes or treaties. While the pictures were a welcome feature, I found the textual marginalia distracting. All in all, a perfectly fine textbook.

There is much to say in favor of this book. Its main focus is the operation of tribal governments. Because there is so much variety, the author looks at five representative governments in some detail--the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois League), the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, the Teton Sioux, the Pueblos, and the Yakimas (who since the publication of this book have revised the official spelling, using the name that appears in the treaty of 1855, Yakama). O'Brien wrote this book with the cooperation and assistance of those she was writing about. In addition to this focus, the book has the best brief overview of Federal Indian policy I've seen anywhere (about 70 pages). Unlike most books on the subject, the book is amply illustrated with photographs and other images, as well as maps, graphs, and abundant sidebars. I always use one or more texts on Federal Indian law and policy in my American Indian history courses. Students often call these books dry. When I have used O'Brien's book, students have praised the book and said they enjoy reading it.

Sharon O'brian replaced the juicy radical language of most books written on American Indian-US government relations such as *Custer Died For Your Sins* with the text of acts of congress, Supreme Court decisions, and presidential administration policies. Included also is a chapter on European land claims and conflicts that arose between them and the Indians and amongst themselves. It is none of it controversial, all of it educational. It's an excellent guide for anyone claiming to be a U.S. historian.

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