

Buffalo Hide Academy:

September 2020

Culture of the Academy – 2020 Virtual Edition: Charlie Speicher

This course is a weekly mental health focused seminar aimed at “forming and norming” our culture at BHA. Not only is this time critical at shaping our expectations for day to day life at BHA but it also provides a “family meeting” format to educate our students in topics that affect their lives and well-being. This virtual course is designed to foster the core elements of our empathic culture at Buffalo hide: safety, empathic/supportive environment, engaging curriculum, healthy community, etc.

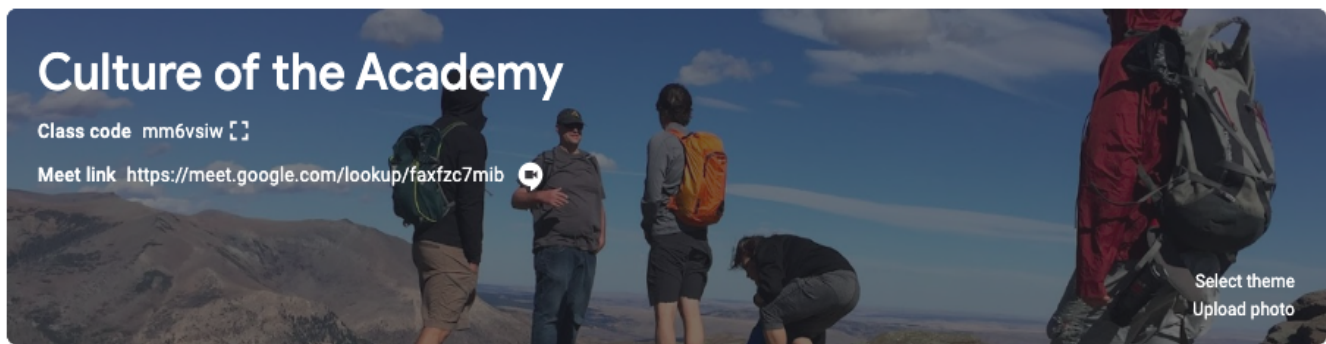
In normal years this class is administered in person, school-wide, on a weekly basis. However, this year things are obviously a little different. Every student at BHA is enrolled in this course. Assignments are administered weekly in Google classroom and typically include recorded videos of BHA counselors presenting relevant info., links to various resources, and short answer questions. School wide announcements and other student related information are also included in this class.

The assignments are geared toward the broader studies and implications of trauma science as well as providing concrete coping strategies to reduce anxiety and distress. The assignments and content of this class also aims to create a compassionate and empathetic school climate. This serves as the launchpad for deeper dives into topics such as:

- Brain Evolution and overview of our intellectual, emotional neurological systems; brain wiring and learning, and the phenomenon of neuroplasticity
- Our executive neural network and related anatomical, chemical components, and how they evolved to current functions over time
- ACE study and survey (in order to address the symptoms of toxic stress, we first must screen for it)
- Bullying awareness and education
- Fight or Flight (how do we each individually respond to adversity? What is our “default” defense mechanism when it comes to dealing with conflict?)
- Mental Health disparities in Indian country (historical, epigenetic trauma)
- Suicidality, and abnormal psychology in Indian country

- Traumatic Experiences and Grief related issues and how they impact our lives
- The dangers of colonialism, and decolonizing our minds in an evidence-based framework to retrain our nervous systems to positively respond to adverse stimuli
- Mindfulness, and other neural restructuring strategies to offset emotional numbing
- Healthy sleep, diet, exercises, lifestyle to foster healthy brain development
- Self-care
- School/Career Advising
- Navigating post-secondary education and workforce opportunities

Below is an assignment from last week:



Upcoming

Due Friday
2:00 PM – Week 6 - The C...

[View all](#)



Share something with your class...



Charlie Speicher
Aug 27 (Edited Oct 5)



Welcome to the Buffalo Hide Academy Fall 2020 - Virtual Edition! If you're a returning student - Hi! If you're new, we're glad to have you join us.

The Culture of the Academy course will be taught by your counselors, Chris and Charlie. We'll be posting assignments weekly which will include videos, short answer questions, surveys, links to articles, announcements, and other important stuff. This course is meant to be meaningful and informative. We'll aim to provide information on important mental health topics, as well as all the pertinent academic information you'll need as we march toward graduation.

See you online for now!

The three requirements for this class are:

- 1) Stay engaged
- 2) Complete weekly assignments
- 3) Weekly Advising session w/ Chris or Charlie via Google meet, phone, or messaging/email (we'll be reaching out to you to see what format works best for you)

Week 6: The Care of Self

1) Self-care is the deliberate act of taking care of your physical, mental, and spiritual health. In the video, Charlie highlights 4 major features of his self-care (family, loud music, running, and climbing). What would your “big 4” items be in your self-care?

2) In order for self-care to truly be effective, it has to be a regular part of your routine. If an activity is forced, it's probably no good to us. What activity do you wish was a part of your routine, but so far it hasn't happened yet?

3) Taking care of our physical selves might seem easy to some of us. But what about our emotional and spiritual health? What do you currently do, or wish you did, to maintain your spiritual health?

4) Think of a relative or a close friend that you admire and look up to.....from your observations, what does their self-care routine look like?

5) How do you know if whatever you're doing for self-care is actually working?

6) In the article, the researchers noted they found that people who felt a strong connection to their community or family tended to have lower stress levels and better health outcomes in life.....no matter how many traumatic experiences they'd been through. What is your take on that finding?

7) "These findings suggest that maintaining a strong connection to the culture and community may be protective with regards to physical health, particularly for individuals who have experienced high levels of trauma in their childhood." - BCC Researchers, 2018

My question is, how do we measure if someone has a strong connection to their culture and community? And if we identify that a string connection is lacking, how can we create a strong connection to culture and family?

Credit Recovery: Jason Krane

Although student engagement can be hit or miss during the time of COVID-19, BHA would like to acknowledge the hard work and determination put forth by students in the Independent Learning Center during 1st Quarter. As of this writing (October 5) there have been 23 classes that have been recovered and 2 original credit classes completed! This is something that the students should truly be proud of, for this is positioning many of them on track to graduate at the end of this school year. There are three students we would like to spotlight:

- Maleighia SpottedEagle: Maleighia is beginning her 3rd year at the Academy. In that time, we have seen tremendous growth and maturity in her as a student and, even more importantly, as an individual. She has attended nearly every synchronous learning meeting and is staying on top of her schoolwork. During her time in Independent Learning, Maleighia has recovered five classes, ranging from Blackfeet Literature to Health/PE to Government. She is currently working on an original credit English class that she hopes to have completed by the end of this quarter. Keep up the great work, Maleighia!
- Timothy LittleYoungMan: Timothy has been with the Academy for several years now, but was difficult to track down at the beginning of this school year. After weeks of asking and calling around, Chris Lewis was able to make contact and create a plan of action for him. Because Timothy does not have internet access where he's staying, we were able to provide him with enough readings and assignments for him to recover two classes – Health/PE and Literature of a Theme. Now, all Timothy needs to do to graduate is complete four English classes, one of which he is currently working on!
- Lacie Pamburn: Lacie is one of BHA's new students this year. Because of distance learning, it has been difficult to build relationships and routines with the new group. But this hasn't stopped Lacie from getting stuff done – she recovered the only class she had available AND completed an English original credit class. Way to go!