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Jean M. O'Brien to Speak at Inaugural Wilbert H. Ahern Distinguished Lecture

Summary: Watch the lecture streamed [online](http://www.morris.umn.edu/ondemand/) at 7:30 p.m.

(February 6, 2013)-The University of Minnesota, Morris is pleased to welcome Jean M. O'Brien as the featured speaker in the inaugural Wilbert H. Ahern Distinguished Lecture in American Indian Studies. O'Brien is White Earth Ojibwe and a professor of history at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, where she is also affiliated with the American Indian Studies and American Studies Departments. Her lecture is based on her latest book and is entitled, "Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians Out of Existence in New England." This lecture will be held on Monday, March 4, at 7:30 p.m. in the Humanities Fine Arts Recital Hall.

O'Brien will argue that early colonial histories became a primary means by which Anglo-Saxon Americans asserted their own modernity while denying it to Indian peoples. Drawing on more than six hundred local histories from Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island, the lecture will explore how these narratives advanced the myth of Indian extinction, a myth that has stubbornly remained in the American consciousness.

Additionally, special guest Jill Doerfler '01, assistant professor of American Indian Studies at the University of Minnesota, Duluth, will share her experiences as a former Morris student. In 2009, Doerfler became the first Morris graduate to deliver the prestigious O. Truman Driggs Distinguished Lecture. Both she and O'Brien will be available for book signing following the evening lecture.

O'Brien is the author of *Dispossession by Degrees: Indian Land and Identity in Natick, Massachusetts, 1650-1790* and *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians Out of Existence in New England*. She is also the co-founder and past president of the new Native American and Indigenous Studies Association (NAISA) as well as president-elect of the American Society for Ethnohistory. O'Brien has recently been named the inaugural co-editor of the NAISA journal *Native American and Indigenous Studies*. She received her PhD in history from the University of Chicago in 1990.

The Wilbert H. Ahern Distinguished Lecture Series was inspired by Professor Emeritus Wilbert H. Ahern, one of the founders of the American Indian Studies Discipline at Morris. This lecture series is meant to honor his legacy by furthering opportunities for students, staff, faculty, and alumni to participate in a community of Native American scholarship. The Wilbert H. Ahern Distinguished Lecture Series is made possible, in part, by gifts and contributions to the Bert and Janet Ahern American Indian Studies Enhancement Fund, established in recognition of their retirements from the University of Minnesota, Morris.

The lecture will be streamed [online](#).

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