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Lakota language class begins at Yankton Trusty Unit

Pierre, S.D. – State prison inmates assigned to the Yankton Trusty Unit now have the opportunity to take a class on the Lakota language.

While the course listing initially set the class size at fifteen students, twenty inmates showed up to take part in the initial class, including three inmates who are not Native American.

The class also offers a unique situation for inmates. The class instructors are fellow inmates, including Neil Young, Cecil Red Eyes, Sr. and Lynes End of Horn.

Young said they welcome any inmate to attend the class, regardless of their race. "Another instructor joked with the group, 'Come on Natives, these others speak better than you!'" Young said.

The class meets three times per week for one hour per meeting. The class will meet for seven weeks. At the conclusion of the class, those who have attended the full 20 hours of Lakota Language will earn 5 credits and receive a certificate for successfully completing the class.

Lakota language classes are also taught at the Mike Durfee State Prison in Springfield.

Similar classes have also been held at the South Dakota State Penitentiary in Sioux Falls.