

**21A.441**  
**Study Questions**  
**The Jesuit Relations**

What do you see as the most important aspects of the mind set of the Jesuits---what were their goals, their values, their beliefs? What seems most different from our own? How did their values and assumptions shape what they observed and wrote? Were there ways the Jesuits and Hurons were closer to each other than either one to us?

How was the situation of Jesuit missionaries like an anthropologist doing fieldwork? Like someone else encountering a foreign society?

What were the goals and interests of the Jesuits in publishing their Relations? How do you suppose that might have affected what they wrote?

How are the Relations structured? What are the characteristic events? high points? low points?

How did the Jesuits see God working in the World? What was his role in their struggles with the Huron?

What were the greatest difficulties in translating Christianity to the Huron? What caused the greatest resistance?

In what ways were the situation and the methods of the Jesuits in New France different from missions in Latin America as we know them from the article by Sweet, other readings and lectures?

How did the Jesuits characterize the Huron and Iroquois? in terms of their virtues and vices, their practices and attitudes, their preoccupations? How is the Jesuit portrait of the Huron different from today's stereotypes about Indians? How might one interpret Jesuit claims that the Indians were improvident?

What sources can you find in the Jesuit Relations for scenes, ideas, and characters in Black Robe?

What were the Jesuit assumptions and methods concerning baptism? How did the Huron see baptism? What were the politics of Baptism?

What were the politics of illness? How did the struggles in Huron villages turn into contests of magic?

What methods did the Jesuits use to sell Christianity and establish their own influence over the Huron?

How did the Hurons see writing? How did the Jesuits use it? Do you think the Jesuits were objective about writing? Why might the Jesuits have studied native languages other than the direct tactical benefits?

Consider the drama of the torture of prisoners: In what different ways did the Huron and Jesuits interpret torture? Does "Black Robe" give a good idea of the meaning of torture? Was there anything positive for the Jesuits when an enemy warrior was tortured? when a Jesuit was tortured?

What do you make of the story of Isaac Jogues? Why did it matter so much to the Jesuits?

How can we understand war and violence in ways different from the understanding of the Jesuits? different from the film?