

Introduction to Native American Literature

Class times: MWF 10:00-10:50

Professor Huhndorf

Office hours: MW 11:00-12:30

English 245/CRN 21941

Classroom: 185 Lillis

Phone: 346-1310

Office: 256 PLC

Course Description:

In this course, we will analyze several key works of Native American literature, focusing on the ways histories of European colonization and Native resistance shape twentieth-century texts. In addition to exploring these connections between literature and politics, we will consider the role of traditions and issues of gender in Native writing as well as the ways the assigned works engage stereotypes of and popular narratives about Native peoples. Our analyses will cover a broad range of materials including novels, plays, essays, manifestoes, poems, and films.

This course is also designed to teach essential skills for the study of literature. During the term, students will be expected to learn to read texts critically and to write analytical essays.

Required Readings:

- The following novels are available at the University of Oregon bookstore:

D'Arcy McNickle, *The Surrounded* (1936)

Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony* (1977)

Louise Erdrich, *Tracks* (1988)

Sherman Alexie, *Reservation Blues* (1996)

- Other assigned readings will be available electronically on Blackboard or distributed in class.

Grading:

- Two essays**, 4-5 pages (1,000-1,250 words) in length

60% of the final grade (30% each)

Due dates: February 13, March 16

I will provide topics for these essays, but you may write on other subjects with my prior approval. We will discuss paper topics and guidelines in class well before the due dates, and they will also be posted on Blackboard. Papers are due at the beginning of class; late papers will be marked down by one letter grade, and no papers will be accepted more than one week after the due date.

- Six quizzes**

30% of the final grade

Quizzes are designed to ensure that you finish the readings in a timely manner and think about the issues they raise. Some quizzes will be given in class, and others will be take-home assignments. I will give at least eight quizzes, but only your six highest scores will count towards your grade. No make-up quizzes will be given.

•Participation

10% of the final grade

You may earn participation points in two ways: regular, productive participation in class discussions and/or thoughtful postings on the Blackboard discussion site. Students who do not speak in class may earn full credit with four substantive postings, each at least one full paragraph (several sentences) in length. These postings can focus on your analysis of the assigned readings and/or engage other students' comments on these materials. Each must relate to assigned readings under discussion at the time you post.

Other Requirements:

- Punctual, regular attendance is mandatory for all students. After three absences, your final grade will be dropped by one third of a letter (e.g., from B+ to B) for each absence. Students who miss more than six classes will not receive a passing grade in the course. Excessive tardiness will also affect your final grade. Exceptions will be made only in the case of extreme documented emergencies.
- Come to every class prepared, with required reading done and ready for discussion.
- Treat one other and different perspectives with respect. This is especially important because many of the subjects we will address are controversial and conflicting opinions are bound to emerge.
- Observe appropriate classroom etiquette. Activities that are inappropriate during classtime include (but are not limited to) conversing with other students except at times designated for discussion, reading, sending/receiving email or text messages, working on laptops, and walking in and out of class unnecessarily. Such behaviors are disrespectful and distracting to the professor and other students. Those who engage in them may be asked to leave class and will receive a participation grade of zero automatically and without prior warning.
- Submit written work in hard copy only (**no email submissions**).

Other Policies:

- The University policy regarding academic dishonesty (described in the *Schedule of Classes*) will be strictly enforced in this class. The penalty for plagiarism is a failing grade in the course.
- Students with special needs should notify both the Counselor for Students with Disabilities (Office of Academic Advising and Student Services) and the professor at the beginning of the term.
- If class must be cancelled because of inclement weather or another emergency, you will be notified via the email function in Blackboard.

Schedule

Readings and Assignments Due

Week One

January 5 Introduction: Historical issues shaping Native American literature
January 7 Introduction (continued)
January 9 Introduction (continued)

Week Two

January 12 D'Arcy McNickle, *The Surrounded*
January 14 *The Surrounded*
January 16 *The Surrounded*

Week Three

January 19 Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday (no class)
January 21 *The Surrounded*
January 23 In-class screening: James Fortier, *Alcatraz Is Not an Island*

Week Four

January 26 American Indian Movement, "20-Point Indian Manifesto" and
Indians of All Nations, "The Alcatraz Proclamation"
January 28 Hanay Geiogamah, "Indian Theatre in the United States" and *Foghorn*
January 30 *Foghorn*

Week Five

February 2 Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony*
February 4 *Ceremony*
February 6 *Ceremony*

Week Six

February 9 *Ceremony*
February 11 Monique Mojica, *Birdwoman and the Suffragettes*
February 13 *Birdwoman and the Suffragettes*
PAPER #1 DUE

Week Seven

February 16 Wendy Rose, "Truganinny" (poem) and
in-class screening: Shelley Niro, *The Shirt*
February 18 Louise Erdrich, *Tracks*
February 20 *Tracks*

Week Eight

February 23 *Tracks*
February 25 *Tracks*
February 27 NO CLASS

Week Nine

March 2

In-class screening: Terry Macy, *White Shamans, Plastic Medicine Men*

March 4

Film discussion and Sherman Alexie, "White Men Can't Drum"

March 6

Sherman Alexie, *Reservation Blues*

Week Ten

March 9

Reservation Blues

March 11

Reservation Blues

March 13

Reservation Blues and wrap-up

Exam Week

March 16

PAPER #2 DUE by 12:00 noon in 256 PLC