

Syllabus for Native American Literature

– A Postgraduate Course

(Spring 2016)

Institute: Shanghai International Studies University, P.R. China

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Course Description:

This course is designed to introduce students to a variety of Native American literature; to brief them on the cultural, religious, philosophical and historical ideas that are particularly relevant to this field of study; and to examine the thematic concerns and artistic values of Native American literature. It will also explore the interaction between American Native and non-Native writings. The works to be read include novels, poetry and drama by Native American writers, along with literary criticism. Studying these works will enable students to interpret Native American literary texts of distinct features written in different eras, to have an overall understanding of the history and trend of Native American literature, and to acquire a methodology for the study of Native American literature. This course aims to help students to interpret and criticize both Native American literature and literature by other ethnic groups from multiple perspectives as well as improving their proficiency in, and awareness of, literary criticism.

Week 1 Orientation and Overview of American Indian literature

Week 2 American Indians in Historical Perspective

Week 3 Oral Literature (Orature)

**Week 4 Early Native American non-fictional writings in English (I):
sermons and historical narrative**

“A Sermon, Preached at the Execution of Moses Paul, An Indian” (Samson Occom)

**Week 5 Early Native American non-fictional writings in English (II):
essays and autobiography**

“An Indian's Looking-Glass for the White Man” (William Apess)

**Week 6 Contemporary Native American writings (I):
postcoloniality and the political elements**

“A Good Chance” (Elizabeth Cook-Lynn)

**Week 7 Contemporary Native American writings (II):
Indianness and survivance**

“Literary Aesthetics and Survivance” (Gerald Vizenor)

“The Last Lecture on the Edge” (Gerald Vizenor)

**Week 8 Contemporary Native American writings (III):
historicity, empowerment, and short story cycle**

Love Medicine (Louise Erdrich)

**Week 9 Contemporary Native American writings (IV):
sense of space and identity, and time in Native American storytelling**

“Borders” (Thomas King)

**Week 10 Contemporary Native American writings (V):
female narrative, the role of storytelling and Native respect for ancestry**

“Aunt Moon's Young Man” (Linda Hogan)

“New Shoes” (Linda Hogan)

**Week 11 Contemporary Native American writings (VI):
cultural values, American Indian boarding schools, and Relocation Act**

“Yellow Woman” (Leslie Marmon Silko)

“Lullaby” (Leslie Marmon Silko)

**Week 12 Contemporary Native American writings (VII):
the Native American Literary Renaissance, Native American views on
nature and governmental policies**

House Made of Dawn (N. Scott Momaday)

Week 13 Contemporary Native American writings (VIII):

Native American irony, styles of Native American poetry

“The Killing of A State Cop” (Simon Ortiz)

“Relocation” (Simon Ortiz)

Week 14 Contemporary Native American writings (IX):

Tribalography and hybridity

“Moccasins Don't Have High Heels” (LeAnne Howe)

Week 15 Contemporary Native American writings (X):

Native American humor and youth writing

“How to Write the Great American Indian Novel” (Sherman Alexie)

The Absolute True Diary of a Part-Time Indian (Sherman Alexie)

Week 16 Contemporary Native American writings (XI):

Reservation and off-reservation narrative

“Earl Yellow Calf” from *The Indian Lawyer* (James Welch)

Notes: This schedule is subject to change. Deviations may be necessary and will be announced to the class by the instructor.

Course Policies:

Attendance and participation are crucial components of this course. Each student will be allowed no more than 2 absences without suffering a penalty on his or her final grade.

The grade breakdown is as follows:

Attendance: 5 %

Participation: 10%

Presentation 15%

Essay (3000 Words) 70%

Must read:

- Ruoff, A. LaVonne. *American Indian Literatures: An Introduction, Bibliographic Review, and Selected Bibliography*. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1990. (PDF available)
- Weaver, Jace. *Other Words: American Indian Literature, Law, and Culture*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001. (PDF available)

Strongly Recommended Secondary Reading**Reference for basic information of Native Americans and Native American literature:**

- McClinton-Temple, Jennifer, and Alan Velie. *Encyclopedia of American Indian Literature*. New York: Facts on File, Inc., 2007. (PDF available)
- Johansen, Bruce E., and Barry M. Pritzker, eds. *Encyclopedia of American Indian History*. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2008. (PDF available)

Reference for further academic research on Native American literature:

- Allen, Paula Gunn. *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1986.
- , ed. *Spider Woman's Granddaughters: Traditional Tales and Contemporary Writing by Native American Women*. New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1989.
- Barclay, Barry. "An Open Letter to John Barnett." *Spectator* 23.1 (2003): 33-36.
- Bevis, Williams. "Native American Novels: Homing in." *Critical Perspectives on Native American Fiction*. Ed. Richard F. Flick. Washington, D.C.: Three Continents Press, 1993. 15-45.
- Coltelli, Laura. *Winged Words: American Indian Writers Speak*. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1990.
- Deloria, Vine, Jr. *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto Paperback*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988.
- Fleck, Richard F., ed. *Critical Perspectives On Native American Fiction*. Washington: Three Continents, 1993.
- Horne, Dee. *Contemporary American Indian Writing: Unsettling Literature*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 1999.
- Hurtado, Albert L., and Peter Iverson, eds. *Major Problems in American Indian History*. 2nd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2001.
- King, Thomas. "Godzilla Vs. Post-Colonial." *World Literature Written In English* 30.2 (1990): 10-16.
- Krupat, Arnold. "Local, National, Cosmopolitan Literature." *The Voice in the Margin: Native American Literature and the Canon*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989. 202-32.
- . *Ethnocriticism: Ethnography, History, Literature*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.
- Krupat, Arnold, and Brian Swann, eds. *Recovering the Word: Essays on Native*

- American Literature*. Berkeley: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987.
- Lincoln, Kenneth. *Native American Renaissance*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983.
- Matthew, Herman. *Politics and Aesthetics in Contemporary Native American literature: Across Every Border*. New York: Routledge, 2010.
- Miller, Susan A., and James Riding In, eds. *Native Historians Write Back: Decolonizing American Indian History*. Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2011.
- Nelson, Robert M. *Place and Vision: The Function of Landscape in Native American Fiction*. New York: Peter Lang, 1993.
- Ortiz, Simon. "Towards a National Indian Literature." 1981. Rpt. in *American Indian Literary Nationalism*, Eds. Jace Weaver, et. al. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005. 253-260.
- Owens, Louis. *Other Destinies: Understanding the American Indian Novel*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992.
- Porter, Joy, and Kenneth Roemer, eds. *The Cambridge Companion to Native American Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Pulitano, Elvira. *Toward a Native American Critical Theory*. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2003.
- Schweninger, Lee. *Listening to the Land: Native American Literary Responses to the Landscape*. Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2008.
- Silko, Leslie Marmon. "Language and Literature from a Pueblo Indian Perspective." *Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996. 48-59.
- Spicer, Edward H. *The American Indians*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980.
- Swann, Brian. *Smoothing the Ground: Essays on Native American Oral Literature*.
- Trafzer, Clifford E., ed. *American Indians/American Presidents: A History*. New York: Harper Collins, 2009.
- Velie, Alan R., and A. Robert Lee, eds. *The Native American Renaissance: Literary Imagination and Achievement*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2013.
- Vizenor, Gerald. *Native Liberty: Natural Reason and Cultural Survivance*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009.
- , ed. *Survivance: Narratives of Native Presence*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010.
- Warrior, Robert Allen. *Tribal Secrets: Recovering American Indian Intellectual Traditions*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994.
- Weaver, Jace. *That the People Might Live: Native American Literatures and Native American Community*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Wiget, Andrew. *Critical Essays on Native American Literature*. Boston: G.K. Hall, 1984.
- . *Native American Literature*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1985.

Important Historical Places, Persons, Moments and Events

Alcatraz Island
American Indian Movement (AIM)
American Indian Literary Renaissance
Battle of the Little Bighorn
Boarding schools
Captivity narrative
Carlisle Indian Industrial School
Chief Joseph
Chief Seattle
Custer, George Armstrong
Lewis and Clark Expedition
Columbus Day
Crazy Horse
Eastern Navajo Dine against Uranium Mining (ENDAUM)
Ethnography
Five Civilized Tribes
General Allotment Act (1887)
Geronimo
Ghost Dance
Hiawatha
Indian Gaming Regulatory Act
Indianness
Indian Reorganization Act (1934)
Indian Territory
Long Walk of the Cheyenne
Manifest Destiny
Navajo Long Walk of 1864
Navajo Code Talkers
Peltier, Leonard
Pocahontas
pow wow
Red Cloud
Removal
Relocation
Sacajawea
Separatism
Strategic essentialism
The Comanche Code Talkers of World War II
Trail of Broken Treaties
Trail of Tears
Wounded Knee Massacre (1890)