

Professor Janet McAdams

English 291.00: Unlearning Native America

COURSE DESCRIPTION

A humanities-based introduction to the field of Native American Studies, this interdisciplinary course critically examines an array of cultural expression by contemporary indigenous American writers, filmmakers, visual artists, and performers. While the course emphasizes the way Native people represent themselves, we begin with the powerful stereotypes of Native Americans that continue to circulate (hence, the “unlearning” aspect of the course), then look to the ways Native artists and writers appropriate, refute, and rewrite these images. As we read, screen, and listen, we’ll attend to the political, regional, and tribal contexts informing these works, through supplementary reading in history, literary criticism, gender studies, and other disciplines. Key critical issues will include nation and sovereignty, indigenous feminism and two-spirit traditions, displacement and community, and the role of humor.

TEXTS

In the bookstore:

Diaz, *When My Brother Was an Aztec*

King, *Green Grass, Running Water*

Miranda, *Bad Indians*

Silko, *Storyteller*

Critical articles, assignment details, and other resources on the class *Moodle* page.

Films:

Dir., Chris Eyre, *Smoke Signals*

Dir., Diamond, Bainbridge, Hayes. *Reel Injun*.

Dir., Zacharias Kunuk, *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner*

ASSESSMENT

15% Participation

Writing Assignments & Due Dates:

These assignments may be linked, that is, you may write on a particular topic or text in a reading response, then decide to develop the response into a paper. Or you may wish to expand and revise your shorter paper into the final paper by including an additional text or texts.

35%. 8 short writing assignments, a mix of reading responses & film reviews, due Sept. 8, 15, 22, 29; Oct. 6, 20 Nov. 3.

20%. 2000-1500-word paper, preceded by a proposal, due Oct. 27.

30%. 2500-3000-word paper or project of comparable scope, also preceded by a proposal, due Nov. 18.

Week	Date	<u>English 291</u> Topic	<u>Unlearning Native America</u> Reading/ Viewing Assignment	Writing Assignments: reading responses and/or film reviews (8), 1200-1500-wd paper + proposal, 2500-3000-wd paper + proposal
1	Sept 2	Intro: stereotypes; narratives, master narratives, stories & storytelling	Essays by King, Chaat Smith; poems by Erdrich, Alexie, Gansworth.	
2	9	Storytelling	<i>Smoke Signals</i> ; Silko, "Storyteller 1-50 (esp. "Storyteller)	1-page reading response (400 words +/- 20%, uploaded to Moodle by Midnight Tuesday
3	16	Storytelling, cont., (1 st half), Intro Gender: Yellow Woman,	Silko, finish, but we will focus on 'Yellow Woman portions; Green, "Pocahontas Perplex"; Treuer, "Powwow"	1-page reading response (400 words +/- 20%, uploaded to Moodle by Midnight Tuesday. Sept 19 trip to Great Mohican Powwow.
4	23	Writing about Film	Miranda, Bad Indians, p. 1-33; Rader, from <i>The World is a Text</i> .	
5	30	Miranda, Bad Indians	Miranda 33-105; see a film*	Film Review (500 words +/- 20%) Uploaded to Moodle by Midnight Tuesday
6	Oct 7	Miranda, <i>Bad Indians</i>	Miranda, finish. <i>Oct 13 Common Hour Skype with Deborah Miranda</i> .	1-page reading response (400 words +/- 20%, uploaded to Moodle by Midnight Tuesday
7	14	Poetry, Two Spirit Traditions, Natalie Diaz, <i>When My Brother Was an Aztec</i>	Miranda, "Dildos, Hummingbirds, and Driving Her Crazy"; and "The Extinction of the Joyas"; Diaz, "When My Brother Was an Aztec," p. 1-2 "Abecedarian Requiring. . ." p. 5 "Hand-Me-Down Halloween," p. 6-8 "If Eve Side-Stealer. . ." p. 25 & all of Section II, pp. 43-70	Proposal for paper #1, uploaded to Moodle by Midnight Sunday, Oct. 11

8	21	Diaz, continued.	"I Watch Her Eat the Apple," 73-74 "Toward the Amaranth. . ." 75-76 "Dome Riddle," 79-80 "I Lean Out the Window," 81-82 "The Elephants," 94-95 "When I Don't Mention Flowers. . ." 96-97 "The Beauty of a Busted Fruit," 98	1-page reading response (400 words +/- 20%, uploaded to Moodle by Midnight Tuesday
9	28	Indigenous Film	Film Screening, 7 PM, KAC Theater: <i>Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner</i>	Paper #1 Due by Midnight, Oct. 27
		<i>Nov. 2 Poetry Reading with Natalie Diaz</i>		
		<i>Nov. 3, Common Hour Talk with Natalie Diaz</i>		
10	Nov 4	Thomas King, <i>Green Grass, Running Water</i>	King, 1-250	Proposal for final paper or project, due Sunday, Nov. 8 by Midnight.
11	11	King	King, 251-361	1-page reading response (400 words +/- 20%, uploaded to Moodle by Midnight Tuesday
12	18	King	King, finish	Final Paper Due
13	Dec 2	Art	Jaune Quick-to-See Smith; Steven Paul Judd	"Reading" response due; specifics discussed in class.
14	7	Humor	Drew Hayden Taylor, from <i>Me Talk Funny</i> ; 1491s; Steven Paul Judd.	Reading/talking/thinking response Due; specifics TBA..