

American Indian Literature  
Fall 2008  
Professor Maddox  
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Office hours: Tuesday 3:30-5:00

- 9/2 Introduction; Simon Ortiz, "Towards a National Indian Literature: Cultural Authenticity in Nationalism," MELUS 8, no. 2 (summer 1981), 7-12; Ortiz poems
- 9/9 Welch, *Fools Crow*; Julie Cruikshank, "Claiming Legitimacy: Prophecy Narratives from Northern Aboriginal Women" (Xerox)
- 9/16 *Fools Crow*; Louis Owens, "Columbus Had It Coming" (Xerox)
- 9/23 Paula Gunn Allen, "The Sacred Hoop: A Contemporary Perspective"; Robert Warrior, introduction to *The People and the Word*; Craig Womack, *Red on Red*, introduction and chapter two; Thomas King, "Godzilla vs. Postcolonial" (all Xerox)
- 9/30 Erdrich, *Tracks* **close reading due**
- 10/7 *Tracks*; Craig Womack, "Theorizing American Indian Experience" (Xerox)
- 10/14 D'Arcy McNickle, *The Surrounded* **close reading due**
- 10/21 Luther Standing Bear, *My People the Sioux*
- 10/28 Scott Momaday, *Three Plays* **Critical essay due**
- 11/4 Scott Momaday, *The Way to Rainy Mountain*; Christopher Teuton, "Theorizing American Indian Literature: Applying Oral Concepts to Written Traditions" (Xerox) **research project due**
- 11/11 Greg Sarris, *Grand Avenue*
- 11/18 Sherman Alexie, *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven*
- 11/25 Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony*; essays by Silko (Xerox) **close reading due**
- 12/2 *Ceremony*
- 12/5 **Critical essay due**

### **Required Texts**

James Welch, *Fools Crow*  
Louise Erdrich, *Tracks*  
D'Arcy McNickle, *The Surrounded*  
Luther Standing Bear, *My People the Sioux*  
N. Scott Momaday, *Three Plays*  
N. Scott Momaday, *The Way to Rainy Mountain*  
Greg Sarris, *Grand Avenue*  
Sherman Alexie, *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven*  
Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony*

### **Writing Assignments**

CLOSE READINGS. For each of these three assignments, choose a passage from one of our texts to read closely in 2-3 double-spaced pages. Please choose a different text for each assignment. The passage may be as short as a sentence (or even part of a sentence) or as long as a page; it should definitely not be longer than a page. The process of close reading is simply a matter of looking very carefully at a section of text or passage and considering (1) what this passage accomplishes and (2) how the passage works. You should consider the placement of the passage in the text, thinking about how it might affect the reader's understanding of what comes before or after. However, the primary focus of a close reading should be on the particulars and details of the passage -- the small stuff: particular word choices; the kinds of metaphors used; the kinds of images used; the presence of a pattern of images; repetitions; seeming inconsistencies; tone and possible shifts in tone. In each of these cases, you want to think about the kinds of choices the writer was making. You probably can't write about all of these things, even if your chosen passage contains examples of all of them. You need to think about how you want to focus your discussion. What is it that made you choose this passage?

When you post your close readings on Blackboard, please identify very short passages by quoting them and longer passages by giving the page number(s).

**RESEARCH PROJECT.** For this project, you should choose a non-literary topic that you would be interested in researching. You might choose a person from Native history, a historical event (Wounded Knee massacre, Navajo Long Walk, occupation of Wounded Knee or Alcatraz, opening of the National Museum of the American Indian), a significant policy (relocation policy, termination policy, Indian Reorganization Act), a group or movement (WWII code talkers, American Indian Movement, a boarding school), or some other topic of your choosing. You do not have to write a research paper; instead, you will submit (1) an annotated bibliography of at least six items (no more than three should be websites) that provide useful information on your topic and (2) a three- to four-page summary of the most important of your findings. Each annotation should consist of a full paragraph indicating the content of the source and commenting briefly on its usefulness for your project (a sample annotation is posted on Blackboard). Please feel free to discuss with me your options for this project at any time.

**CRITICAL ESSAYS.** A six- to eight-page critical essay, on any one or more of the texts on the syllabus, is due on October 28. A ten- to twelve-page critical essay, on a different text or texts, is due on December 5. For the first essay, you may use secondary sources, but you are not required to. The second essay should incorporate, and engage with, at least one secondary source (from those on our reading list or from sources you locate yourself). You are encouraged to consult with me about your plans for both essays.

**ORAL REPORTS.** Everyone will give at least one very brief oral report on a story or news item from a recent issue of *Indian Country Today*. These reports should be about three minutes and no longer than five minutes. The newspaper can be found at [www.indiancountry.com](http://www.indiancountry.com).