

Prof. Channette Romero

Office: Humanities 021

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 2-3 pm and by appointment

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EGL 239: American Indian Women Writers
Humanities 117
T, TH 10:55 am-12:40 pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will explore narratives of American Indian women in tribal myth, literature, and film. We will examine how these writers witness, renew, and revise a variety of issues, such as gender roles, spirituality, sexuality, politics, and land rights. Because many of these narratives address our national history and its affects on contemporary American Indian women's lives, this course will also explore the ethics surrounding these narratives. We will continually ask the following questions: What are American Indian women writers seeking to communicate to their readers? How should non-native Americans respond to these narratives? How should non-native Americans respond to their nation's history? How can literature and film effectively address history and politics? The goal of this course is to learn to read, write, and think critically about narratives by native women.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Zitkala-Sa, *American Indian Stories*

Beth Brant, *Writing as Witness*

Diane Glancy, *Pushing the Bear*

Leslie Marmon Silko, *Storyteller*

LeAnne Howe, *Shell Shaker*

Louise Erdrich, *The Last Report on the Miracles at Little No Horse*

Betty Louise Bell, *Faces in the Moon*

Additional required speeches, stories, and myths will be distributed in class; they are designated with an asterisk () below.

The following text is required *only* for students unable to attend the class fieldtrip:
Elizabeth Cook-Lynn's *Anti-Indianism in Modern America*

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Prerequisite

Each student must have taken at least one class offered through the English Department prior to taking this course. (Freshmen Precept does not count as an English course.)

Plagiarism

Each student will be asked to abide by the College's Code on Plagiarism (see attached Exhibit A). If any portion of a student's assignment is plagiarized, the student will automatically fail the course.

Attendance & Participation

Each student will be expected to attend every class and actively participate in class discussions. After two absences, each additional absence will incrementally lower your total grade by 5%. This includes any and all

absences resulting from illness, emergencies, college and athletic activities, etc. Students with more than five absences (whether excused or unexcused) will automatically fail the course.

Film Requirement

Each student must view the assigned films before the class in which the film is discussed. The best way to see these films is during the class viewings. However, students who are unable to attend the class viewings should check the film out from Schaffer Library's Reserve Desk for in-library viewing before the class viewing.

Fieldtrip

The class will be taking a fieldtrip to the nearby Iroquois Indian Museum in Howes Cave, New York on September 27 from 3-5:30 pm. Students who cannot attend the fieldtrip will be required to complete an additional writing assignment on Elizabeth Cook-Lynn's *Anti-Indianism in Modern America*.

GRADING CRITERIA

Weekly Writing Assignments: 30%

Writing assignments will be given weekly throughout the course. These writing assignments are intended to help prepare you for the kinds of critical reading and writing skills required in the course papers. If you are absent the day a writing assignment is given out in class, it is your responsibility to locate the assignment on the class Blackboard page (online.union.edu) under "Assignments" and complete the assignment before returning to class.

Paper 1: 30%

A short paper, approximately 5 pages, will be due on October 16. This paper will ask you to provide a critical reading of the importance and function of a key topic in one of the texts we have read thusfar in the course. You should not merely summarize all the places in which your topic appears in the text of your choosing. Instead, your goal in this paper should be to make your own original argument about the importance and function of your topic, basing that argument on critical readings of a few key passages. A one-page paper proposal will be due on October 10.

Paper 2: 40%

A longer paper (7-8 pages) will be due on November 14. This paper assignment asks you to look critically at a common theme in two of the texts we have read this term. (For instance, you might want to look at the function of storytelling in *Storyteller* and *Writing as Witness*, the role of nature in *Sacred Water* and *Naturally Native*, or the results of land removal in *Pushing the Bear* and *Shell Shaker*, etc.) This assignment asks you to examine not only the similarities and differences between the texts' representations of a particular theme, but to make an argument about how their pairing allows you to read each more complexly. Your goal in this paper is to make nuanced, critical connections between two texts. A one-page paper proposal will be due on November 7.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

Witnessing

- SEPT 7 Introduction
*Nancy Ward's speeches
- SEPT 12 Zitkala-Sa, *American Indian Stories* (67-117, 132-154)
SEPT 14 *Iroquois origin myth and longhouse legend
*E. Pauline Johnson, selected short stories
Beth Brant, *Writing as Witness* (5-24, 49-54, 67-74)
- SEPT 19 *Cherokee origin myth
Diane Glancy, *Pushing the Bear* (1-103)
- SEPT 21 Diane Glancy, *Pushing the Bear* (104-162)
- SEPT 26 Diane Glancy, *Pushing the Bear* (163-233)
SEPT 27 NO CLASS-Iroquois Indian Museum Fieldtrip (3:00-5:30 pm)

Renewing

- SEPT 28 *Choctaw origin myth
LeAnne Howe, *Shell Shaker* (1-51)
- OCT 3 LeAnne Howe, *Shell Shaker* (52-169)
OCT 5 LeAnne Howe, *Shell Shaker* (170-222)
- OCT 10 Leslie Silko, *Storyteller* (1-17, 33-52, 63-123, 130-169, 177-181)
PAPER PROPOSAL DUE
- OCT 12 Leslie Silko, *Storyteller* (182-211, 226-265)
- OCT 16 **NO CLASS-PAPER 1 DUE**
OCT 17 (in library) Leslie Silko, *Sacred Water*
FILM: Dir. Lisa Denker and Charlotte LaGarde, *Heart of the Sea* (2002)
- OCT 19 FILM: Dir. Catherine Anne Martin, *The Spirit of Annie Mae* (2002)
FILM: Dir. Alanis Obomsawin, *My Name is Kahenttiosta* (1995)
- Revising**
- OCT 24 *Ojibwe origin myth
Louise Erdrich, *The Last Report on the Miracles at Little No Horse* (1-131)
- OCT 26 Louise Erdrich, *The Last Report on the Miracles at Little No Horse* (132-188)
- OCT 31 Louise Erdrich, *The Last Report on the Miracles at Little No Horse* (189-295)
NOV 2 Louise Erdrich, *The Last Report on the Miracles at Little No Horse* (296-355)
- NOV 7 Betty Louise Bell, *Faces in the Moon* (1-130)
PAPER PROPOSAL DUE
- NOV 9 Betty Louise Bell, *Faces in the Moon* (131-193)
- NOV 14 FILM: Dir. Jennifer Farmer and Valerie Redhorse, *Naturally Native* (1998)
PAPER 2 DUE

CONTACT SHEET

Name:

Phone:

Email:

Major/Minor:

Previous literature and American Indian studies coursework:

Favorite movies, books, other interests, etc:

“I have read and understood the requirements for this course and agree to them,”
