

ENGLISH 341

Contemporary Alaska Native Literature

3 credits

Spring Semester 2009

Tuesday/Thursday

5:10-6:40 PM

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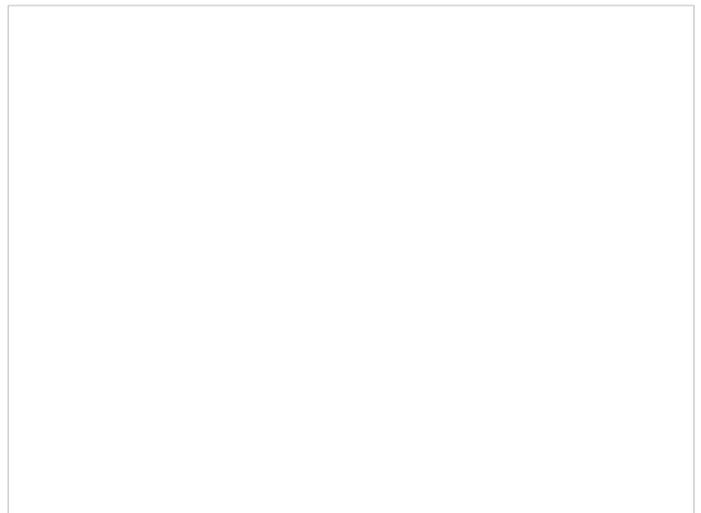
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Appendix A:

Instructor Evaluation

Letter From Your Instructor



Hello, and welcome to English 341, Contemporary Alaska Native Literature!

Though we may have already spoken by audioconference, I thought that I would take this opportunity to offer you a little more information about your instructor (me) and the class.

My name, as you know, is Ron Illingworth, and in addition to serving as a Professor of English for the Department of Developmental Education of the College of Rural and Community Development, I also teach literature, written composition, and a philosophy course as well as work with CRCDC's Interior-Aleutian Campus. From 1980 to 1987, I taught English 111, 211, 212, and 213 and several literature courses on a part-time basis for Tanana Valley Community College's Military Education Program at Eielson AFB and Ft. Wainwright. Then from 1988 to 1990, I taught Developmental English 060, 068, 070, and English 211, 212, and 213 full-time as a Visiting Instructor for UAF's School of Career and Continuing Education (SCCE). Since then, I've been teaching audioconference courses for the Interior-

Aleutians Campus. For twenty years, from 1965 to 1985, I worked as an Aircraft Maintenance Officer for the Air Force at various locations around the world, including Southeast Asia, eventually spending the last five years of my service here in Alaska as the Maintenance Control Officer for the Strategic Air Command's 6th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing at Eielson Air Force Base.

Because I can't see my student's faces, I will rely on each of you to communicate your feelings about the class to me, either during question sessions in class or in private phone calls. I believe that this approach will let you take responsibility for your own learning. Much of the class will be devoted to in-class discussions of the assigned readings.

In order for me to know you better, please write one short paragraph about yourself that gives your name, where you grew up, and anything you would like me to know about you. Please send this in immediately to me. **PLEASE DO THIS NOW.**

Also included in this booklet are your course syllabus, your assignment schedule, and your course lesson plans. The syllabus contains important information about the course, including course requirements and grading policy. The assignment schedule includes a list of assignments and when each is due; the lesson plans provide you with discussion questions and readings.

Should you need to contact me for any reason, you can call my office in Fairbanks at 474-5890. The best time to do so is between the hours of one and three p.m. Monday or Wednesday.

Please Note: You may attend class when traveling. If you know you will be traveling during the semester, please try and make arrangements to attend class. Your part in the discussions is very important. If you have to travel out of the state and wish to attend class, discuss this with your instructor before you leave. You can have access to the class from any state-side location.

I am really looking forward to working with each of you this semester.

Sincerely,

Ron Illingworth

STUDENT SYLLABUS

English 341 Contemporary Alaska Native Literature Fall 2007

I. Instructor:

Ronald D. Illingworth
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II. Course Description:

ENGL. 341 is designed as an exploration of contemporary Alaska Native literature, and will focus primarily on short stories, novels, and poetry written since about 1950. The purpose of this class is to get you to read, think about, and write about a wide sampling of this literature. We will be introduced to both well-established and new writers including material written by people from all age groups.

III. Texts:

A Lagoon is in My Backyard by Sister Goodwin. New York: Ismael Reed Company, 1984. ISBN: 0-918408-21-0.

Alaska Native Writers, Storytellers & Orators: The Expanded Edition, Alaska Quarterly Review, Executive Ed, Ronald Spatz. University of Alaska Anchorage, 1999. ISBN 0-9673377-1-2.

Two Old Women: An Alaska Legend of Betrayal, Courage and Survival by Velma Wallis. Seattle, Epicenter Press, 1993. ISBN 0-060975-84-9.

A Quick Brush of Wings by Mary TallMountain. San Francisco: Freedom Voices Publications, 1991. ISBN: 0-9625153-1-0.

Raven Tells Stories: An Anthology of Alaskan Native Writing edited by Joseph Bruchac. Greenfield Center, N.Y.: The Greenfield Review Press, 1991. ISBN 0-912678-80-1.

IV. Course Requirements:

To successfully complete this course, you must fulfill the following requirements:

A. *Keep a journal.*

This journal will consist of your personal reactions, thoughts, and responses to the readings. A minimum of thirty (30) journal pages (2-3 pages per week) will be required by the end of the semester. These entries can be handwritten, preferably in ink, they may be

typed, or they may be kept on a computer and printed out. The journal counts 15% of your final grade.

B. *Complete five analytical/reader response papers* (approximately 600 words, or three typed pages).

These papers may discuss one or more writers or their works. The papers may expand on the ideas generated in your journal, they may reflect your thoughts after discussion in class, or they may compare your reading to other assigned readings or other material with which you are familiar.

These papers must be turned in typed and double-spaced. *Keep a file of ALL writing done for this class and PLEASE KEEP A COPY OF ALL PAPERS YOU SEND TO ME.* Papers will be graded either "A", "B", "C", or "Rewrite". If a "Rewrite" paper is not rewritten to a passing level, it will receive the grade of "F". Papers can either be mailed or FAXed to me. The successful completion of these five short analytical papers counts for 50% of your final grade.

C. *Participate in all class discussion and assignments.*

Your attendance and participation is an essential part of the collaborative learning process. Please notify me in advance (preferably, though in some cases letting me know as soon as you can is acceptable). If you miss more than four class periods, you can fail the class participation portion of your final grade. Missing more than five classes can prevent you from passing this course. Participation and attendance counts for 15% of your final grade.

D. *Complete one major project*

This project may be unit lesson plan if you are in a teacher prep program or are a teacher, it may be a research project focusing on one writer or work or some combination of writers or works, it could be a creative work of your own, or it might be a collection of previously unpublished materials, with the author's permission, from a contemporary Alaska Native writer. This project will count for 20% of your final grade.

V. **Grading:**

Typical characteristics of graded essays:

C: This essay is characterized by clarity of purpose and coherence of structure. It contains some original thought, yet the content is not developed beyond the obvious and the organization is predictable. It may have some mechanical errors.

B: This essay has the clarity and coherence of a competent one, yet also has depth of content. The organization is logically and rhetorically effective. It displays independent thought and a concern for careful expression with few, if any, mechanical errors.

A: This essay is characterized by masterful control of purpose and by graceful expression. The content is of compelling interest; the organization and style enhance the meaning. The essay has virtually no mechanical errors.

Grading Policy:

Analytical/Reader Response Papers (5):	50%
Major Project:	20%
Participation and attendance:	15%
Response Journal:	15%

VI. **Plagiarism:**

Plagiarism involves presenting another person's ideas or writing as your own. It is dishonest, and in many people's eyes, it is the same as theft. Anyone doing so cheats him or herself of learning and will fail this course.

ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

Following is a list of due dates for the essays you will be writing for this class. For specific assignments, see the individual lesson plans for each week of class. All essays must be typed and double-spaced. Please do not use erasable bond typing paper.

Critical Analysis Response Essay #1 (*Two Old Women*): Postmark on or before Friday, Feb 14th. Paper Mailed: _____ Paper Grade: _

Critical Analysis Response Essay #2 (*AQR*): Postmark on or before Friday, March 6th. Paper Mailed: _____ Paper Grade: _____

Critical Analysis Response Essay #3 (*Lagoon*): Postmark on or before Friday, March 27th. Paper Mailed: _____ Paper Grade: _

Critical Analysis Response Essay #4 (*A Quick Brush of Wings*): Postmark on or before Friday, April 8th. Paper Mailed: _____
Paper Grade: _____

Critical Analysis Response Essay #5 (*Raven Tells Stories*): Postmark on or before Friday, May 1st. Paper Mailed: _____ Paper
Grade: _____

Practicum Project: Postmark on or before Friday, May 1st.

Send journals with your final project no later than Friday, May 1st.

MODULE ONE: Introduction, First Impressions, and the Historical and Cultural Contexts

Note: By the time you receive this booklet and your course materials, we may have already begun this module. If so, you will be responsible for reading this material before starting your readings for the other lessons.

1. *Why you might be interested:*

Since this is an audioconference course, starting with an assignment in which we can introduce ourselves and our experiences and which introduces contemporary Alaskan Native literature can help bridge the distance gap. Sharing this information about ourselves, as we will do in class, can help us develop a greater sense of the person behind the voice.

2. *What you will learn:*

* how to practice listening critically and to respond to and participate in discussions.

* how to begin to listen to what responses your classmates have and to begin to practice evaluating both yours and your classmates responses in order to better understand the literature.

* how to understand contemporary Alaska Native literatures in light of its traditions -- literary, political, and cultural.

3. *How you will learn it:* **YOUR ASSIGNMENTS**

Lesson One.

a. Prepare to participate in an in-class discussion involving the following questions:

- 1) Where you are from -- your home, your personal interests, your experiences with Alaskan Native literature
- 2) What your goals for this class are -- what do you want to get out of it, what are some things you would like to be able to do.
- 3) If you could design this class, what would you put in it?
- 4) Course requirements and expectations
- 1) Who are some of your favorite Alaska Native writers?

Lesson Two.

a. Read the following and be ready to participate in a general in-class discussion involving Alaska Native literature, both oral and written.

- 1) Introductory and explanatory material in *Alaska Native Writers, Storytellers & Orators*, pp. 274-291.
- 1) An Introduction to Myth essay in this syllabus, pp. 10-14.
- 3) After reading the introductory material, try and answer the following questions before coming to class. We will spend some time discussing them in class.
 - a) Oral literature is often told at special times. What are some of those times? Have you had any first hand experience with oral literature?
 - b) Why would a course on contemporary Alaska Native literature start out with a discussion about oral literature?
 - c) How might oral and written literature be related? How are they different?
 - d) Alaska Natives have a tradition of living in the area we now refer to as Alaska for generations and of travelling both to the Asian continent and to what we, in Alaska, refer to as the lower-48 as well as to Central and South American and returning. How might these traditions affect contemporary Alaska Native literature?
 - e) What are some of the myths and stereotypes of Alaska and its people with which you are familiar?

4. Journal writing:

The journal is a collection of your personal reactions and responses to the readings from this assignment. You will be expected to write at least 30 pages in your journal to satisfactorily complete this requirement. Consider the following questions as you make your journal entries.

- a. What did you like or dislike about the readings? Why?
- b. How does this relate to your previous readings?
- c. What theme or common strand runs through the readings? Are there commonalities or connections which you can identify?
- d. How are these readings different from what you have read before? How are they the same?
- e. Why did the writer use this form?

An Introduction to Myth, Legend, and Folktale

All literature is dependent, to a greater or lesser degree, upon myths, legends, folktales, and folklore. Most often these are culture specific or vary strongly dependant upon an understanding of the culture for an understanding of they myths, legends, etc. However, while culturally related in the specific, ie, Greek stories about Hercules or Norwegian stories about Thor, when one looks at mythology more broadly one sees that Hercules and Thor share similar experiences and serve similar functions.

An example of similar experiences can be found in the concept of being swallowed by some large being. The idea that the passage of a magical threshold is a transition into a sphere of rebirth is symbolized in the worldwide womb image of the belly of the whale. The hero, instead of conquering the power of the threshold, is swallowed into the unknown, and would appear to have died. In Iroquois legend, Hiawatha is swallowed by a great fish:

Mish-Nahma, King of Fishes,
In his wrath he departed upward,
Flashing leaped into the sunshine,
Opened his great jaws and swallowed
Both canoe and Hiawatha

Longfellow, *The Song of Hiawatha* VIII

Jonah is swallowed by a great fish:

So they picked Jonah up and threw him into the sea;
and the sea ceased from its raging. Then the men
feared the Lord even more, and they offered a
sacrifice to the Lord and made vows. But the Lord
provided a large fish to swallow up Jonah; and Jonah
was in the belly of the fish three days and three
nights.

Jonah 1: 15-17

The Zulus have a story of two children and their mother who are swallowed by an elephant. The Irish hero, Finn MacCool is swallowed by a monster. The little German girl, Red Ridinghood, is swallowed by a wolf. The Greek hero, Hercules, while saving the daughter of the King of Troy, is swallowed by a water monster sent against the city by the sea-god Poseidon. The Haida have a story of a hunter who exacts revenge on a giant devilfish (octopus) for destroying his village but who is swallowed by the devilfish while fighting it. When his son pulls the dead devilfish onto shore and cuts it open, out steps his father. Similarly, Hercules, Red Ridinghood, Finn MacCool, Jonah, and Hiawatha all survive their adventures as well.

So what are myths, legends, folktales and folklore and how do they relate to Alaska Native literature? Myths are symbols of human experience and they embody the spiritual values of a culture. Societies preserve their myths because the beliefs and worldview found within them are crucial to the survival of that culture. A myth's serious purpose is either to explain the nature of the universe or to instruct members of the community in the attitudes and behavior necessary to function successfully in that particular culture. Myths develop out of the ancient oral traditions of the culture. Some explain origins, natural phenomena, and death; others describe the nature and function of divinities; while others provide models of culturally appropriate behavior by relating the adventures of heroes or the misfortunes of arrogant humans. They depict humans as an integral part of a larger universe, and they impart a feeling of awe for all that is mysterious and marvelous in life. Myths often involve named human or non-human characters. Legends are stories about real people or real events that occurred long ago in distant times. For example, the story of Davy Crockett at the battle of the Alamo in Texas has moved from simple history into legend. Folktales, sometimes called fairy tales, are short stories that are not usually thought of as being true. These stories often rely heavily on magic.

While there are similarities among the stories told by people from all cultures, it is important to note that there are significant differences between European folktales and Alaska Native stories. One common assumption is that because of their strong supernatural or spiritual cast, Alaska Native stories are analogous to magical fairy tales, and are therefore children's stories. However, a more in-depth analysis

reveals otherwise. Indigenous genre divisions are not based on a dichotomy between "truth" and "fiction".

"In traditional times, all stories that were worth repeating were believed to have been true, and all stories similarly had a strong spiritual component, just as life itself did.

A common way of dividing story types in the narrative traditions of most Eskimo, Aleut, and Athabaskan groups recognized ancient stories that tell how the world became the place it is today, on the one hand, and newer stories that happened in more recent times to people who could be traced, to the storyteller wanted to take the time, to ancestors of contemporary listeners, on the other."

"Genres Across Cultures"
in *Alaska Native Writers, Storytellers & Orators*, ed by Ronald Spatz

Myths, legends, and folktales are passed on in a variety of ways including oral storytelling as well as the written word. Oral storytelling usually occurs at special times and places. There are certain tales and legends that can only be told at specific times and places. For example, winter tales may be told only at night in the lodge or men's or women's house. However, while there are specific times and places set aside in the culture of a people for storytelling, there are also stories that occur on the spur-of-the-moment when the occasion arises. For example, a child might be acting up and a Raven story would be told to indicate to the child that their behavior is inappropriate because that's the way Raven acts and look what happened to him in the story. Sometimes ceremonial spots may be the only place that a ritual or dramatic story occurs. And landmarks may be the only place and time that a particular story is told. It would be useless to tell why, when, and how a landmark was made if the person couldn't see the landmark itself.

Sometimes stories and songs are repeated word for word. Usually, these are sacred selections which are told only at certain times and in specific places. These stories are meant to actually recreate an event. They are not symbolic but, rather, the storyteller and the audience believe that when the words are uttered, the event is actually happening again. Extreme care is taken to ensure that the stories are always told in exactly the same words and at the given time and place. If these rules were not followed, then the whole makeup of the Universe might be altered. The concept of a cyclical view of time instead of a linear view is significant in understanding this belief.

MODULE TWO: Two Old Women by Velma Wallis

1. *Why you might be interested:*

Velma Wallis is a local interior Alaska writer from Fort Yukon. Her two books *Two Old Women* and *Bird Girl and the Man Who Followed the Sun* are some of the best-known contemporary Alaska Native literature. *Two Old Women* is based on stories that she heard from her mother which had been passed on through innumerable generations -- a fine example of the oral literature process.

2. *What you will learn:*

- How to write a personal response/critical analysis essay
- How to identify clues which will help in the understanding of symbols, themes, and other items the writer thought important
- Connections between oral literature and written narratives

3. *How you will learn it:* **YOUR ASSIGNMENTS**

Lesson Three

a. Read the following and be ready to participate in an in-class discussion of your thoughts about and reactions to the assigned readings:

- 1) *Two Old Women*, all introductory material and Chapters 1 & 2.

b. Consider the following questions and be prepared to discuss in class.

- 1) This story is based on an oral traditional story common in the Gwich'in area. Have you heard a variation of this story?
- 2) What picture do you start to develop about the two old women, Gh'idzigaak and Sa' and about their people?
 - a) When this story was first published, Velma and others were very concerned that the story might be misunderstood. What is there in the story that might have prompted this concern?
 - b) Why would Velma be concerned about what her "community" thought about this story? How does that relate to the story?

c. Read the section entitled "Critical Analysis Response Papers" in this course booklet.

- 1) In a critical analysis response paper you will be required to analyze some aspect of your reading, to decide on a topic and a

point you want to make about that topic, and to write a 500-600 word (2-3 pages) paper about that topic. The paper may deal with the writer's focus, use of language, symbolism, treatment of reality or any subelement of reality, use of pre-existing myths, etc. and your response to these techniques and strategies. Topics are wide open but must be confirmed with your instructor prior to your starting to write.

2) Be prepared to participate in an in-class discussion involving the following:

- a) Where can ideas and topics come from?
- b) How can I write about a topic when I don't have a library around here?
- c) Where can I go for help?
- d) How long does this thing have to be?
- e) But does what I think about these readings matter?

Lesson Four.

a. Read the following and be ready to participate in an in-class discussion of your thoughts about and reactions to the assigned readings.

- 1) *Two Old Women* chapters 3 & 4.
- 2) Any leftovers from last class's readings and discussions.

Lesson Five

a. Read the following and be ready to participate in an in-class discussion of your thoughts about and reactions to the assigned readings.

- 1) *Two Old Women*, chapters 5 & 6
- 2) Be prepared to participate in an in-class discussion involving the following:
 - a) Has your view of *Two Old Women* changed as a result of your reading so far? Why?
 - b) What view of the world do you receive from *Two Old Women*?
 - c) What is the relationship between man and nature, between man and man, and between man and animal which you see developed in Wallis's writing?

Lesson Six

a. Read the following and be ready to participate in an in-class discussion of your thoughts about and reactions to the assigned readings.

b. *Two Old Women*, chapters 7&8

c. Be prepared to participate in an in-class discussion involving the following:

- 1) What makes the chief change his mind and allow the two old women to return to the community?
- 2) &nbs p; This story is very old, perhaps thousands of years old. Why do you think it has endured?
- 3) &nbs p; What indications are there that this story has changed over the years?
- 4) Do you think this story has relevance today? Be prepared to support your position.

4. Writing Assignment

Write a critical analysis response paper focusing on *Two Old Women*. Your paper may look at characterization, theme, relationship to the oral tradition, moral, or any element of your response to this story. **This paper will be due postmarked by 14 February 2009.**

Critical Analysis Response Papers

The Basic Steps in Writing about Literature

- Read the literary work carefully and thoughtfully, marking any passages that relate to significant actions, dialogue, or narrated

details and instances of repetition.

- Remember that literary analysis focuses on a single aspect of a work; it does not retell the story in plot-summary fashion.
- Formulate a thesis stating what you intend to illustrate and prove about the literary work in the body of your essay.
- Plan your essay in three parts: introduction, body, and conclusion. Make an outline -- even a scratch one will do -- to organize your main points, considering chronological or order of importance as possible options.
- Select adequate evidence in the form of quotes from the work to thoroughly support your thesis. Consider the reader's need for proof that supports your generalizations.
- In the body paragraphs, use the literary analysis pattern of generalization, introduction to a quote, the quotation, and analysis (explanation of how the quotation supports your generalization) to work your evidence smoothly into the text.
- Use transitions as you move from one point to another in the body of your essay.
- Allow time to review and revise your writing.
- Remember that editing and proofreading are not optional steps in the writing process. After all, you are what you write.

Writing About Literature Topics and Formats

Character Analysis

Writing about a character in any form of literature involves noting and analyzing the methods of characterization as the author employs them. They will enable you to characterize the people in a fictional work or the speaker in a poem.

1. Choose a character who, for any reason, interests you, one whose personality you would like to explore in greater depth.
2. To formulate a thesis, choose one of the following organizational approaches:
 - a. the traits that the character exhibits throughout the work;
 - b. the causes of a character's actions, choices, or thoughts and feelings;
 - c. the changes a character undergoes in the course of the work;
 - d. significant actions, speeches, choices, objects, or places that help to reveal a character's traits;
 - e. points of likeness or difference that exist between this character and another character in the work.
3. Locate specific pages and quotations in the short story/novel/poem that prove the thesis points you have chosen.
4. Try to find some logical order for the presentation of your thesis points.
5. Organize each thesis point into separate body paragraphs by using the pattern of topic sentence, introduction to a quote, quotation/detail, and analysis. Repeat this pattern as often as necessary within the paragraph to build your case.
6. Conclude your essay by restating the points you've proven about the character and by emphasizing the importance or the significance of the character in the work as a whole.

Theme Analysis

As readers, we infer the author's themes and examine his or her views on life, and then we evaluate them in relation to our own lives. If we accept them, they enlarge our own feelings and sensibilities; even if we reject them, they have still helped us clarify our personal views.

1. Choose a work that conveys a theme you can agree with, one that perhaps you have experience with in your own life.
2. Express your ideas about the theme in a sentence or two. This statement is the first part of the thesis; it tells the reader the major insights into life that you plan to explore in your essay.
3. Consider the possible ways that themes emerge in a work and choose the one that best suits your subject.
4. In the first part of the body, discuss the first aspect of the theme by beginning with a topic sentence which generalizes about the theme. The next few sentences provide background information for the supporting quotation which follows. The analysis should focus on how the theme is revealed and developed through the quote. Be sure to explore the ideas about life that the quote illustrates. Continue this pattern throughout the essay.

Setting Analysis

Try to observe the effects of setting, sometimes called landscape, and their implications as you read any work of literature. You will find that some writers rely heavily on setting to bring their work alive, while others include few details of setting. The difference has to do with the writer's overall purpose, with what he or she is trying to achieve in the work.

1. Reread the work and carefully mark the details of setting that the narrator has described.
2. Try and relate the details of setting to one of the four effects of setting: increasing the probability of certain events occurring in the work, producing an appropriate mood or background for the action of the plot, revealing a character's personality and values, and communicating the theme in the work.
3. In writing the body paragraphs, remember that the analysis of the quotes related to setting is the most important part of your essay. Start with the first effect of setting, lead into a quote, provide the quote, and then analyze the quote in relation to the effect of setting you are proving. Continue this pattern as often as necessary to thoroughly discuss the first effect of setting and then move to the next effect of setting and continue the pattern.
4. In your conclusion, emphasizing the importance of setting and the significant effects of setting that you have analyzed will effectively and successfully restate your thesis, unifying your essay and bringing your reader full circle.

Symbolism Analysis

Not every work of literature has a symbolic level, so try to choose a work which appears to have more than just a literal level of meaning. Clues to this type of work might be a sense of strangeness or a feeling that there is more to the work than the obvious interpretation. If something is operating as a symbol, the author may emphasize its importance in different ways, perhaps through detailed description, repetition, word choice, or even direct statement.

1. Try to pick out the characters, the objects, the actions, the places, or the colors which seem especially important in the work. It is not necessary to analyze or interpret every symbol that you can identify.
2. Identify the types of symbols you plan to analyze in your essay in the introduction as the first part of the thesis statement. The second part of the thesis is a statement of the theme to which the symbols relate.
3. Each type of symbol is interpreted and explained in a separate body paragraph. The topic sentence names the symbolic type and lists the specific symbols to be analyzed. Each symbol is then interpreted by using the literary analysis pattern shown in the previous sections.

Critical Analysis Response Format

Title

Introductory Paragraph:

Opening lead

Author

Title of the work

Brief plot summary and narrowing of focus

Thesis statement -- what you intend to prove in the essay, with some suggestion of the organization to be followed in the body of the essay.

Body Paragraphs:

Development of sequential parts of the thesis statement in separate paragraphs

Overall pattern for each body paragraph:

Topic sentence

Introductory information for the evidence and supporting details which follow

Quotations and details from the work to prove the topic sentence

Analysis: explanation of the relevance, significance, and meaning of the quoted details

Transition to additional support

Introductory information to lead into a second supporting quotation

Quotation(s) to support the topic sentence

Analysis to show how and why the quotation proves the topic sentence

Concluding Paragraph:

Signal word

Summary of the thesis

Significance of the ideas that have been analyzed

"Speed" or tempo change to create a sense of finality

MODULE THREE: AQR

Alaska Native Writers, Storytellers & Orators

1. *Why you might be interested:*

Who are some of the contemporary writers in Alaska? This collection includes many of the contemporary Alaska Native writers some of whom might be familiar to you.

2. *What you will learn:*

- * The breadth and range of Alaska Native writing
- * Some of the topics and themes of Alaska Native writers
- * How to understand the connection between contemporary themes and the oral traditions

3. *How you will learn it:* **YOUR ASSIGNMENTS**

Lesson 7

- a. Read Alaska Native Writers, Storytellers & Orators, Introduction pp xi-xx, pp 165-181, review pp 274-291 and be ready to participate in an in-class discussion of your thoughts about and reactions to the assigned readings.
- b. Consider the following questions and be prepared to discuss in class.
 - 1) What picture do you get about Alaska Native literature from the introduction and the first readings of this book?
 - 2) What are some of the similarities and differences between Alaska Native literature and other Western literatures?
 - 3) In both Davis and Dauenhauer traditional stories play a part. What elements of these traditional stories can you identify?

Lesson 8

- a. Read Alaska Native Writers pp 182-197 and be ready to participate in an in-class discussion of your thoughts about and reactions to the assigned readings.
- b. John Active uses a story of a little blackfish as a teaching tool. What is the lesson? How does that relate to fishing issues today?
- c. What are some of the images that you get when reading Sister Goodwin's poems?
- d. If you know any of these writers personally or know about them, please share your information with the others in the class.

Lesson 9

- a. Read Alaska Native Writers pp 198-210 and be ready to participate in an in-class discussion of your thoughts about and reactions to the assigned readings.
- b. What do you learn about the writers and the way they view themselves and the world around them through these readings?
- c. What images of people do you get from Glen Simpson's writing?

Lesson 10

- a. Read Alaska Native Writers, pp 211-225 and be ready to participate in an in-class discussion of your thoughts about and reactions to these assigned readings.
- b. Consider the following questions and be prepared to discuss in class.
 - 1) Whose stories are missing from these readings?
 - 2) What do you know about these missing stories that you might share with the class?
 - 3) Do you have any local insight or added information regarding these stories that we have been reading?

Lesson 11

- a. Read Alaska Native Writers, pp 226-240 and be ready to participate in an in-class discussion of your thoughts about and reactions to these assigned readings.
- b. Many of the stories and poems deal with memories. What sense do you receive of how life is from these stories and poems?
- c. Fred Bigjim makes some comment on cultural influences in his writing. What is his point?

Lesson 12

- a. Read Alaska Native Writers, pp 241-267 and be ready to participate in an in-class discussion of your thoughts about and reactions to these assigned readings.

4) Journal Writing

Continue to write in your journal each week. Here are some additional ideas for your journal:

- a. Pick one or more of the questions in the assignments and address it in your journal.
- b. Explore what you know about any single Alaska Native writer

5) Writing Assignment

Write a critical analysis response paper using any single work, single writer, or combination of works or writers which we have discussed in this section of readings. **This paper will be due postmarked by 6 March 2009.**

MODULE FOUR: A Lagoon is in My Backyard

1. Why you might be interested:

Sister Goodwin, originally from Kotzebue, is a popular writer who has influenced writers and politicians both.

2. What you will learn:

- * How individual writers attempt to influence their readers
- * How oral and written literature are related
- * How to identify irony in creative writing

3. How you will learn it: YOUR ASSIGNMENTS

Lesson 13

- a. Read the following and be ready to participate in an in-class discussion of your thoughts about and reactions to the assignment:

- 1) Read *A Lagoon is in My Backyard* pp 1-20.

- b. Consider the following questions and be prepared to discuss in class.

- 1) Sister Goodwin integrates many oral traditions into her work. Are you familiar with any of the stories she refers to?
- 2) Do any of the pictures developed in these poems relate to your own experiences?
- 3) If Sister Goodwin includes material from the old oral traditions, what is there that is new as well?

Lesson 14

- a. Continue reading from *A Lagoon is in My Backyard*, pp 21-41.
- b. In "Ichikaan samma", Goodwin refers to "handstring stories". Do you know anything about what these are?
- c. In "first time thunder" Goodwin reflects on a child's first experience with thunder -- an uncommon occurrence here in Alaska. Do you have any stories of similar experiences? Goodwin took this experience and developed it into a poem.

Lesson 15

- a Continue your reading in *A Lagoon is in My Backyard*, pp 42-62.
- b Some of Goodwin's poetry reflects history and historical events like "qunniq igliqtuq". Have you seen this in other writers as well?
- c This section contains the title poem. What picture do you get from this poem and how do you think it relates to the book in entirety?

Lesson 16

- a Finish up your reading in *A Lagoon is in My Backyard*, pp 63-82.
- b "an eye for an eye" was written prior to 1984. Do you see any relevance today?
- c "beachcombing" contains much irony. Can you track some of it down?

4. Journal Writing

Continue writing in your journal each week. Here are some additional ideas for your journal.

- a. What did I learn about the relationship between oral traditions and contemporary writings?
- b. What picture of Alaska Native writing do I get from these readings?
- c. Does this picture relate to my reality?

5. Writing Assignment

Write a critical analysis response paper using any single work, or combination of works which we have discussed in this section. **This paper will be due postmarked by 27March 2009.**

MODULE FIVE: A Quick Brush of Wings

1. Why you might be interested:

Mary TallMountain was removed from her family and taken to live in the lower-48 when she was quite young. It wasn't until she was in her 50s that she was able to return to Alaska. Yet her poems and stories have some of the most powerful images of interior Alaska in any writing. She has also been called a survivor and living on the edge of an apocalypse. She is now one of Alaska's best known writers.

2. What you will learn:

- * Other ways of viewing and appreciating the world
- * Alaskan Native writers are joining a tradition of written literature which has been entered into and adapted by Native writers from Canada and the lower-48
- * How to read and interpret writings when the writers viewpoint may be different from your own.

3. How you will learn it: YOUR ASSIGNMENTS

Lesson 17

- a. From *A Quick Brush of Wings* read pp 5-21 and be ready to participate in an in-class discussion of your thoughts about and reactions to the assigned readings
- b. Consider the following questions and be prepared to discuss in class.
 - 1) What pictures do you get about Alaskan life in the interior and life on the Yukon river?
 - 2) Owls can have many meanings in different cultures. What does the owl represent here? What does the owl represent in your culture?

Lesson 18

- a. Read pp 22-41 and be ready to participate in an in-class discussion of your thoughts about and reactions to the assigned readings.
 - 1) What are pippins?

- 2) In a place where most of the time must be devoted to preparing for survival, there is still time for wonder and the unexplained. What are some examples from the readings? What are some examples you have seen?

Lesson 19

- a. Read pp 42-59 and be ready to participate in an in-class discussion of your thoughts about and reactions to the assigned readings.
- b. Consider the following questions and be prepared to discuss in class.
 - 1) Mary uses many different natural elements as symbols in her writing. What are some of these elements that you have found?
 - 2) What does Mary mean in "Epigraph"?

4. Writing Assignment

Write a critical analysis response paper using any single work, or combination of works which we have discussed in this section. **This paper will be due postmarked by 8 April 2009.**

LESSON FIVE: Raven's Stories

1. Why you might be interested:

Contemporary Alaskan Native writers tell us stories continuing the old tradition; however, it is only relatively recently (basically since the 1960s) that many of these stories have been written down. In *Raven Tells Stories* we have a collection of both new and established writers presented to us.

2. What you will learn:

- * Alaskan Native writers are joining a tradition of written literature which has been entered into and adapted by Native writers from Canada, the lower-48, and Central and South America.
- * How to read and interpret writings when the writers viewpoint may be different from your own.
- * How to understand writings which rely on ancient traditions, contemporary events, and personal experiences.

3. How you will learn it: YOUR ASSIGNMENTS

Lesson 20

- a. Read the following and be ready to participate in an in-class discussion of your thoughts about and reactions to the assigned readings:
 - 1) Raven Tells Stories: An Anthology of Alaskan Native Writing, Ruppert's Introduction, Benson, Bigjim, pp ix-29.
- b. Consider the following questions and be prepared to discuss in class.
 - 1) What picture do you get about Alaska from the introduction and the first few writers in this book?
 - 2) & nbs p; How does this picture relate to your own experiences with Alaska?
 - 3) & nbs p; How do these writings compare to the previous writings in this course?

Lesson 21

- a. Read the following and be ready to participate in an in-class discussion of your thoughts about and reactions to the assigned readings.
 - 1) Raven Tells Stories, Dauenhauer and Davis, , pp 30-65.

Lesson 22

- a. Read the following and be ready to participate in an in-class discussion of your thoughts about and reactions to the assigned readings.
 - 1) Raven Tells Stories, Fields, Fosdick, Henry, and Hope, pp 66-87.

b. Consider the following questions and be prepared to discuss in class.

- 1) What view of the world do you receive from the readings for today?
- 2) These writers seem to have some issues which they present in their writing. What are some of these issues?

Lesson 23

a. Read the following and be ready to participate in an in-class discussion of your thoughts about and reactions to the assigned readings.

- 1) Raven Tells Stories, Anawrok, Lockwood, and McGlashan, pp 88-122.

b. Consider the following questions and be prepared to discuss in class.

- 1) Do you have any local insight or added information regarding these writers and their stories?
- 2) What are some of the things you have learned about these writers and their lives as a result of your readings in this book?

Lesson 24

a. Read the following and be ready to participate in an in-class discussion of your thoughts about and reactions to the assigned readings.

- 1) Raven Tells Stories, Malavansky, Matthew, Mozee, and Mulluk, pp 123-147.

b. Consider the following questions and be prepared to discuss in class.

- 1) Sometimes it is the everyday events which are important and worth writing about. What has happened to you that might be important as well?
- 4) p; What do you know of the "great death" that struck Alaska Natives particularly hard?

Lesson 25

a. Read the following and be ready to participate in an in-class discussion of your thoughts about and reactions to the assigned readings.

- 1) Raven Tells Stories, Paul, and Schoppert, and Simpson, pp 148-179.

- 5) p; Consider the following questions and be prepared to discuss in class.
- 6) p; What do you know about the Alaska Native Brotherhood and the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act?
- 7) p; We have seen some of these writers before. What do you think about these writings in comparison with what you've already read?

Lesson 26

a. Read the following and be ready to participate in an in-class discussion of your thoughts about and reactions to the assigned readings.

- 1) Raven Tells Stories, Sumdum and TallMountain, pp 180-208.

Lesson 27

a. Read the following and be ready to participate in an in-class discussion of your thoughts about and reactions to the assigned readings.

- 1) Raven Tells Stories, Tritt, and Weyapuk, pp 209-224.

b. Consider the following questions and be prepared to discuss in class.

- d. Do you have any local insight or added information regarding these writers and their stories?
- e. What are some of the things you have learned about Alaska, Native writers and their writing?
- f. Where do you think Alaska Native writing is headed?

4. Writing Assignment

Write a critical analysis response paper using any single work, or combination of works which we have discussed in this section. **This paper will be due 1 May 2009.** Also, remember that your journals and your final project must be turned in by 14 December 2007.

APPENDIX A

University of Alaska Fairbanks, Class/Instructor Evaluation Form

ENGL 341 Contemporary Alaska Native Literature Sem: 091
Course # Course Title
Instructor Ronald D. Illingworth Location Audioconference

The purpose of this form is to provide a means of evaluation of the class/instruction by a candid and honest student response. The information given on this will in no way influence the grade you receive in the class. Each of the items below concerns the course content or the instructor for your class. Please indicate your response to each question by circling the appropriate number in the scale provided.

	Very much disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Very much agree
The texts and readings for this class were clearly written.	1	2	3	4
The class assignments were relevant to the reading material.	1	2	3	4
The class assignments were thought provoking.	1	2	3	4
The class presentations were well organized.	1	2	3	4
The class presentations were interesting and informative	1	2	3	4
The instructor was enthusiastic and creative.	1	2	3	4
The instructor was knowledgeable in this field.	1	2	3	4
The instructor encouraged questions and discussion.	1	2	3	4
The assignments were evaluated fairly.	1	2	3	4

Please use the back of this page for any additional comments regarding the class, the text/readings, or the instructor.