

Susan Power

left to right: Susan Power, Louis Owens, filmmaker Jeff Barnaby, Philip Red Eagle, LeAnne Howe  
Susan Deer Cloud, Lance Henson, Ron Welburn, Stephanie Elliott, Sherman Alexie

ENG 328-01 (crn# 11367) [and -02 \(crn#11368\)](#)

FALL 2010

## *Contemporary Native American Literature*

*approved elective in the Multicultural and Ethnic Studies minor & major;  
satisfies U.S. Diversity Core*

**Section 1: MWF 11:30-12:20 in Parenzo Hall 109**

**Section 2: MWF 12:35-1:25 in Bates Hall 212**

Prof. Vanessa Holford Diana

Phone: 572-5687

E-mail: [vdiana@wsc.ma.edu](mailto:vdiana@wsc.ma.edu)

Office: B-213

Office Hours: MWF 1:35-2:35 & by appt.

**Required Texts (available at campus bookstore):**

Sherman Alexie (Spokane/Coeur d'Alene) *Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (2009)

Susan Deer Cloud (Mohawk/Blackfoot/Seneca), editor, *I Was Indian (before being Indian was cool): An Anthology of Native Literature Vol 1* (2009)

LeAnne Howe (Choctaw) *Miko Kings: An Indian Baseball Story* (2007)

Owens, Louis (Choctaw/Cherokee) *Nightland* (1996)

Susan Power (Sioux) *Roofwalker* short stories (2002)

Red Eagle, Philip H. (Dakota/Salish) *Red Earth: A Vietnam Warrior's Journey* (1997)

**Course Description:**

What is Native American literature? Critic Dorothea Susag explains that,

"Although some have tried, . . . the definition of Native American literature cannot be reduced to myth, mysticism, or historical artifact, evidence of 'the way Indians used to live.' In truth, traditional oral and contemporary written Indian literatures, in the plural, reflect the diversity of over five hundred tribal cultures, with a variety of literary traditions within each of those cultures. These literatures also demonstrate the influences and consequences of intertribal contact and European American cultural contact, expressing the individual lives that stem from these various cultural and historical experiences."

In this discussion-based course emphasizing contemporary fiction, as well as poetry, autobiography, and film, we will read texts by a range of Native American authors who represent just a small sampling of the tribal and geographic diversity and literary variety Susag describes. We will consider texts in their specific cultural contexts, and we will learn about some of the shared thematic concerns and literary strategies that characterize contemporary Native American literature. Each of you will contribute to facilitating class discussion by bringing in questions about our readings, and the papers you write will help you learn more about authors' backgrounds, their creative approaches, and the historical and cultural issues they address. For this reading-intensive class, students should expect to spend between 1-3 hours outside class to prepare for each class meeting. Because English 328 is an upper-division course, students should be able to draw on their work in English 102 to write clear, persuasive, and original essays about the literature we read and use general vocabulary related to literary analysis.

**Grading Criteria:** I do not grade on a curve. My grading standards are tough but fair, and I endeavor to communicate my expectations for each assignment clearly. Please take advantage of my office hours to clarify any questions about my grading standards or your standing in the course. When computing grades, letters and checks will correspond to the following numbers:

A = 95    B = 85    C = 75    D = 65  
A- = 92    B- = 82    C- = 72    F = 60 and below  
B+ = 87    C+ = 77    D+ = 67    Failure to hand in assignment = 0

**Extra Credit Policy:** Over the course of the semester, I will announce numerous on-campus events that count as extra credit for this class (lectures, films, etc.). Attending one outside event (either the Poetry Panel or Jeff Barnaby film screening) is also required for the Event Response Paper. If you attend an extra credit event and hand in an informal one-page written response describing what you learned from the event (within two weeks of the event's date), you will receive 30 extra credit points, which can be applied to quiz grades. Asking a question at either the poetry or Barnaby event counts as 10 extra credit points. Visits to the Reading and Writing Center to discuss paper drafts count for 15 extra credit points. *Maximum extra credit points = 210.*

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of another's words or ideas. Any outside sources used in essays must be properly credited and documented following MLA guidelines. Plagiarism of any type will result in an F for the assignment, possible failure of course at instructor's discretion, and more serious action by the college. Please see the WSC Bulletin for the College policy on academic honesty. Consult with me if you are unsure about what constitutes plagiarism.

**Assignments and Grade Breakdown:**

>**Reading Quizzes: (30%)** Unannounced quizzes to reward students for keeping up with the reading. Missed quizzes cannot be made up.  
>**Class Participation and Attendance: (10% plus possible deductions from final average)** Merely attending class but not participating is unsatisfactory. Thoughtful, active, and respectful participation in class discussion and group work is expected in this class. In addition, preparation for class discussion, through reading, note taking, and fulfillment of specific reading/writing homework assignments is included in this portion of your grade. Participation assessment:

You contribute thoughtfully to class discussion every day	A range
You contribute to class discussion many days	B range
You contribute occasionally and answer questions when asked	C range
You rarely contribute to class discussion	D range
You never contribute to class discussion and never answer questions	F

Any absences will reduce participation grade somewhat. Excessive absences will result in a reduction of OVERALL AVERAGE. *Students may miss 5 classes during the semester. Two lates = one absence. For each additional absence, I will deduct one point from the student's final overall course average.* Students who attend every class will have two points added to their final course average. Also remember that disruptive behavior such as using electronic devices (checking cell phones, **texting**, ipods), leaving class (except in emergency), doing work not related to class, and off-topic chatting with classmates will hurt participation grade. Cell phones should be turned off (not on vibrate) and put away during class. If you need to keep your phone on for an emergency, please let me know before class, and if you use a handheld device as an assignment planner, please let me know so I don't think you are texting; otherwise, I will assume you are not paying attention and are not participating in class.

>**Student Discussion Facilitators Assignment: (15%)** Periodically, students will bring to class discussion questions based on the day's assigned reading. Questions with answers and specific page / passage references will be turned in at beginning of class period and graded. See assignment sheet on page 10 for more details.

> **Paper #1: Documented Book Review (15%)** (4 pages double-spaced) Drawing on other book reviews and biographical research, your review of either *Absolutely True Diary* or *Miko Kings* will give readers a sense of the author's background, the novel's plot, themes, and style, and your assessment of the novel's successes and failures. See assignment sheet on page 11 for details.

>**Paper #2: Event Response: (10%)** (3 pages double-spaced) Requires you to attend and write about an evening campus event: either "Antidote to Columbus Poetry Reading" or Jeff Barnaby Film Screening and Discussion Your paper should draw a connection between that event and one or more class readings, linking details from presentation/event and details from one or more passages in our reading. See assignment sheet on p.12 for details. *Mark your calendars now for these events, which will take place on Tuesday evening(10/12) and Wednesday evening (10/27).* >**Paper #3: Critical Article Response (20%)** (6 pages double-spaced) A summary and response of a critical article about *Red Earth* or *Nightland* that draws on close reading of selected passages in the article and the novel it analyzes. See assignment sheet on page 13-14 for more details.

-

**Schedule of Assignments**

*(This schedule is subject to minor changes. Reading assignments are due on the day listed.)*

**Week 1**

**Friday, September 1:** Introduction to course and each other.

-  
**Week 2**

**Monday, September 6: Labor Day, no class meeting**

**Wednesday, September 8:** (Due today:) Read Sherman Alexie *Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* pages 1-104. [note one copy of this book is on reserve at circulation desk of Ely Library] Alexie's official website (<http://www.fallsapart.com/>) includes a reader's guide to *Diary*. You may wish to print this out or read it on line because we will discuss some of the questions found there in class.

**Friday, September 10:** (Due today: ) Read Alexie *Absolutely True Diary* 105-168.

**Week 3:**

**Monday, September 13:** Conclude Alexie *Absolutely True Diary* 169-230.

**Wednesday, September 15:** Discuss Alexie's bio and critical responses. Come to class with notes based on the below prompts:

- A. Go to Sherman Alexie's official website (<http://www.fallsapart.com/>) and read his biography. What are some of the parallels you note between the author's life and Junior's? What surprised you about Alexie's background?
- B. By clicking on "books" in left side bar, go to page for *Absolutely True Diary* and scroll down to the links for reviews. Choose one (note which one you read!), read it, and make note of one observation the reviewer makes that you found convincing.
- D. Further down on the Diary page is a list of interviews with Alexie. Choose one, listen to it (or read it), and note one comment Alexie makes about his work you find especially interesting.

**Friday, September 17:** Read LeAnne Howe *Miko Kings: An Indian Baseball Story* 7-24

-  
**Week 4:**

**Monday, September 20:** LeAnne Howe *Miko Kings* 25-81 Discussion Questions from Group A

**Wednesday, September 22:** Howe *Miko Kings* 83-124 Discussion Questions from Group B

**Friday, September 24:** LeAnne Howe *Miko Kings* 125-187 Discussion Questions from Group C

**Week 5:**

**Monday, September 27:** Conclude *Miko Kings* 188-221 Discussion Questions from Group D

**Wednesday, September 29:** Bring notes to class in preparation to discuss results of your reading about Howe's biographical background and reviews of *Miko Kings*. Go to LeAnne Howe's weblog titled "On the Prarie Diamond" and read/respond to the following:

A. From the page titled "LeAnne Howe" (<http://mikokings.wordpress.com/leanne-howe/>) scroll down to link for "The Official Biography" on bottom right; make note of some new insight about the author you gain there.

B. Then go to the "About Miko Kings" page on her weblog (<http://mikokings.wordpress.com/about-miko-kings/>) and read the third review from Yellow Medicine River Review. Make note of one comment from the reviewer you found interesting.

C. Scroll down further to the bottom of the "About Miko Kings" page to find list of interviews, and listen to the first (Focus 580 audio) interview: what was one new insight you gained into Howe's research on the origins of baseball in Native American tradition or her inspiration for the novel?

**Friday, October 1: Rough drafts of Paper 1 due for workshop.** (Reminder: 15 extra credit points for taking rough draft of paper to Reading and Writing Center for revision guidance.)

**Week 6:**

**Monday, October 4:** discuss poems from *I Was Indian*: (page numbers indicate start page for each assigned poem): introduction-9, 15, 17, 19, 24, 28, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37. Discussion Questions from Group A (please write your 3 questions about a range of poems)

**Wednesday, October 6: Paper #1 due.** Discuss poems from *I Was Indian*: 38, 39, 42, 44, 47, 50, 59, 62, 64, 65, 67, 68 Discussion Questions from Group B (please write your 3 questions about a range of poems)

**Friday, October 8:** All students: bring to class a question you would like to ask one or more of the poets speaking next week. In class: discuss poems from *I Was Indian*: 69, 72, 76, 77, 78, 79, 81, 83, 116, 117, 118 Discussion Questions from Group C (please write your 3 questions about a range of poems)

**Week 7:**

**Monday, October 11:** No Class: Columbus Day Observed

**Tuesday, October 12: Antidote to Columbus Poetry Reading 7pm Scanlon Living Room**  
(reminder 10 extra credit points if you ask a question during Q&A)

**Wednesday October 13:** Discuss Poetry panel; discuss poems from *I Was Indian*: 84, 85, 86, 92, 94, 97, 107, 114 Discussion Questions from Group D (please write your 3 questions about a range of poems)

**Friday, October 15:** Philip Red Eagle's novella "Red Earth" in collection *Red Earth: A Vietnam Warrior's Journey*: read dedication, foreword, preface, and pages 3-23. Discussion Questions from Group A

**Week 7:**

**Monday, October 18:** conclude "Red Earth" 24-69 Discussion Questions from Group B

**Wednesday, October 20:** Philip Red Eagle's novella "Bois de Sioux" in collection *Red Earth: A Vietnam Warrior's Journey* pages 73-113 Discussion Questions from Group C

**Friday, October 22:** "Bois de Sioux" in collection *Red Earth: A Vietnam Warrior's Journey* pages 114-132. Also go on line to the website "Vietnam Powwow: The Vietnam War as Remembered by Native American Veterans" and read Steve Gano's Vietnam Narrative. Note comparisons with Red Eagle's stories. [http://anpa.ualr.edu/digital\\_library/narratives/sanviet.html#SanViet-div2-d0e374](http://anpa.ualr.edu/digital_library/narratives/sanviet.html#SanViet-div2-d0e374)  
Discussion Questions from Group D

**Week 8:**

**Monday, October 25:** Discuss critical article "Race, Feminine Power, and the Vietnam War in Philip Red Eagle's *Red Earth*" (provided in class). **Notes on article due today.** Introduction to Jeff Barnaby short films

**Wednesday October 27:** Notes on Jeff Barnaby readings and one question for the filmmaker due. Discuss Event Response Paper assignment. **Tonight! Jeff Barnaby Film Screening and Discussion 7pm Wilson Auditoriums A and B (reminder 10 extra credit points if you ask a question during Q&A)**

**Friday October 29:** Discuss Barnaby event.

**Week 9:**

**Monday November 1: Paper #2: Event Response Due today.** Expect quiz on Louis Owens, *Nightland* Chapters 1-5 (pages 1-51). Discussion Questions from Group A

**Wednesday, November 3:** *Nightland* Chapters 6-10 (pages 52-82) *Discussion Questions from Group B*

**Friday, November 5:** *Nightland* Chapters 11-19 (pages 83-125) *Discussion Questions from Group C*

**Week 10:**

**Monday, November 8:** *Nightland* Chapters 20-25 (pages 125-171) *Discussion Questions from Group D*

**Wednesday, November 10:** Louis Owens, *Nightland* Chapters 26-end 172-217

**Friday, November 12:** Discuss article "*Nightland* and the Mythic West" by Linda Helstern (provided in class); notes on critical article due today. Discuss Paper #2.

**Week 11:**

**Monday, November 15:** Rough Draft of Paper 3 for workshop. (Reminder: 15 extra credit points for taking rough draft of paper to Reading and Writing Center for revision guidance.)

**Wednesday, November 17:** film screening TBA

**Friday, November 19:** **Paper 3 DUE.** film screening TBA

**Week 12:**

**Monday, November 22:** film screening TBA

**Wednesday, November 17 and Friday, November 19: No class, Thanksgiving Break**

**Week 13:**

**Monday, November 29:** Short Stories from Susan Power *Roofwalker* *Discussion Questions from Group A*

**Wednesday, December 1:** Short Stories from Susan Power *Roofwalker* *Discussion Questions from Group B*

**Friday, December 3:** Short Stories from Susan Power *Roofwalker* *Discussion Questions from Group C*

**Week 13**

**Monday, December 6:** Short Stories from Susan Power *Roofwalker* *Discussion Questions from Group D*

**Wednesday, December 8:** Short Stories from Susan Power *Roofwalker* *Make-Up Round of Discussion Questions*

**Friday, December 10: Last class!** course reflections and evaluations.

### **Internet Resources on Native American literature**

<http://falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/natauth.htm>

[Internet School Library Media Center](#) Native American Author Page. You'll find biography, bibliography, lesson plans, online etexts and critical reviews of selected authors whose works are taught in the public schools or at the university level. Literature includes both adult and juvenile. [this page is outdated 2000, so a number of the links are dead. nonetheless a useful author list with critical / pedagogical material and e-texts]

[www.NativeWiki.org](http://www.NativeWiki.org)

A library of information about indigenous nations and peoples (past and present) of the world. Features major sections on Nations and Peoples, Documents and Materials, Geographic Regions and a Picture Gallery of selected images. *Includes special section on Native American Authors Online!* (with helpful links to bio, book reviews, etc.)

[http://www.nativewiki.org/Storytellers:\\_Native\\_American\\_Authors\\_Online](http://www.nativewiki.org/Storytellers:_Native_American_Authors_Online)

contains information on Native American poets and novelists. Toward this end, most of the sites residing here have been constructed with the collaboration of the authors. A useful and fairly current page. Listed by tribal membership. Great resource

<http://www.ipl.org/div/natam/>

Internet Public Library/ Native American Authors: This website provides information on Native North American authors with bibliographies of their published works, biographical information, and links to online resources including interviews, online texts and tribal websites. Currently the website primarily contains information on contemporary Native American authors, although some historical authors are represented.

<http://etext.virginia.edu/subjects/Native-American.html>

University of Virginia E-text Native American literature available on line--comprehensive collection of 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century texts on line.

[http://classclit.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?zi=1/XJ/Ya&sdn=classclit&cdn=education&tm=7187&gps=518\\_760\\_1020\\_619&f=00&amp;ptt=14&bt=0&bts=0&zu=http%3A//falcon.jmu.edu/%7Eramseyil/native.htm](http://classclit.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?zi=1/XJ/Ya&sdn=classclit&cdn=education&tm=7187&gps=518_760_1020_619&f=00&amp;ptt=14&bt=0&bts=0&zu=http%3A//falcon.jmu.edu/%7Eramseyil/native.htm)

James Madison U: [Internet School Library Media Center](#) Native American page. You will find bibliographies, directories to pages of individual tribes, history and historical documents, periodicals and general links. The ISLMC is a preview site for teachers, librarians, students and parents. You can [search](#) this site, use an [index](#) or [sitemap](#).

[http://www.anpa.ualr.edu/digital\\_library/narratives/SanViet.html](http://www.anpa.ualr.edu/digital_library/narratives/SanViet.html)

Vietnam Powwow: The Vietnam War as Remembered by Native American Veterans [a machine-readable transcription]

[http://www.anpa.ualr.edu/digital\\_library/digital\\_library.htm](http://www.anpa.ualr.edu/digital_library/digital_library.htm)

The Native Writers Digital Text Project brings the works of Native poets and writers of fiction and other prose to readers world wide. Featuring out-of-print literary efforts of American Indians, Alaska Natives, and First Nations people of Canada, the project seeks to broaden the definition of "Native Writing" not only by focusing on writers who are not ordinarily anthologized, but also by publishing works which originally appeared in "ephemeral" sources and the periodical press, especially in those publications edited and produced by Natives.

Index of Native American Resources on the Internet [www.hanksville.org/Naresources](http://www.hanksville.org/Naresources)

"This extensive index provides links to a wide array of resources on Native American history, literature, art, articles on Native American history, language, movies, and other topics. Of particular interest is the collection of electronic texts that includes primary historical documents as well as books, stories, and articles written by Native authors in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries" (Goebel from Reading Native American Literature a Teachers Guide).

Native American History and Culture--Smithsonian Institution

[http://www.si.edu/Encyclopedia\\_SI/History\\_and\\_Culture/AmericanIndian\\_History.htm](http://www.si.edu/Encyclopedia_SI/History_and_Culture/AmericanIndian_History.htm)

"This site offers information on a variety of Native American resources, particularly those provided by museums and universities. It also presents a number of selected exhibitions, such as a gallery of Native American portraits and an activity that explains how to read a buffalo hide painting. This site concludes with links to a variety of bibliographies that focus on Native American tribes or issues". (Goebel from Reading Native American Literature a Teachers Guide).

NativeWeb-- Resources for Indigenous Cultures around the World

[www.nativeweb.org/](http://www.nativeweb.org/)

"This is an issues-oriented news and information site targeted at a Native audience. It includes articles on topics ranging from current events to sports and music and provides links to thousands of sites of concern to indigenous peoples. Particularly useful is the link to specific U.S. tribal websites". (Goebel from Reading Native American Literature a Teachers Guide).

<http://iportal.usask.ca/>

The Indigenous Studies Portal (iPortal) connects faculty, students, researchers and members of the community with electronic resources: books, articles, theses, documents, photographs, archival resources, maps, etc. The vision of the Indigenous Studies Portal is to provide one place to look to find resources for Indigenous studies. This is a major undertaking and we have only just begun. The Indigenous Studies Portal is an initiative of the University of Saskatchewan Library. As of March, 2010, the iPortal has more than 21,000 records, including the Our Legacy archival records recently harvested. This includes photos, anthropological field notes, diaries, correspondence and other textual documents.

ENGL 328 / Diana

Fall 2010

**Student Discussion Facilitators Assignment**

Your assigned group is (circle one): A B C D

Worth a combined **15%** of your final average, this assignment asks you, periodically, to prepare discussion questions based on the day's assigned reading. The purpose of the assignment is to promote active reading and engagement with the text and to be sure that all students contribute to our class discussions. You will be assigned a group (A, B, C, or D), and the syllabus indicates the days on which your group will be responsible for bringing in questions. **You will see on our daily schedule that each group is assigned to bring questions in five times over the course of the semester. At the end of the semester, you will have an opportunity for one make-up round of questions.** Your job on those days will be to reflect on the reading and formulate thoughtful questions that help the class notice patterns, recurring themes, aspects of characterization, stylistic devices or connections to other texts you believe will enhance our understanding of the reading. You will hand in a copy of your questions to me at the *beginning* of class, and I will expect you to pose *at least* one of your questions in class that day. If you are absent on the day your group's discussion leader questions are due, you will not receive credit for that round of questions. The guidelines below specify requirements for this assignment. When I grade your discussion questions, I will use these guidelines as **evaluation criteria**:

1. You should formulate **THREE** questions for each discussion leader day. After each question, you should write a brief **ANSWER** (2-5 sentences) to

which you can refer in discussion once classmates have had a chance to respond to your questions.

2. Please include page numbers next to each of your three questions indicating the passage(s) to which your question refers. Your questions must refer to specific passages from the pages assigned for that day's class (this way, your questions will demonstrate that you have kept up with the reading). Questions may point back to earlier passages for the purpose of comparison or tracing a pattern, but they must zoom in on a passage from the day's assigned reading in order to receive credit.

3. On each day your group has been assigned discussion leader responsibilities, you should bring in your own individual questions (this is not a group work assignment). Often it is possible to find discussion questions for some readings on line, and I encourage you to consult these, but your questions should be original, reflecting your own work. If you choose to consult any outside source (which is NOT a requirement of this assignment), you must cite that source.

4. To receive credit, questions must be turned in at beginning of class period. Therefore, you should print two copies, one to turn in to me and one to use as reference during class discussion. This requirement prevents students from writing questions in class. Late questions--including those submitted during or at the end of class period--will not be accepted.

5. Questions should be open-ended, not answerable with yes/no response.

6. You should contribute to class discussion on your assigned discussion leader days by raising at least one of the questions you formulated. In some cases, I may review your questions quickly and ask you to pose one to the class. At other times, I will ask you to choose your favorite question but to avoid duplicating classmates' questions. Please do NOT immediately read your own answer to the question you've posed. The goal is that your question will spark discussion among your classmates.

\*For some good models of open-ended discussion questions, see the reader's guide to Alexie's *Absolutely True Diary*, available on Alexie's official website.

Diana / English 328: Native American Literature

Fall 2010

### **Paper #1: Documented Book Review Assignment Description**

Worth **15%** of your overall average, this assignment asks you to write a review of either *Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* or *Miko Kings* to give readers a more precise understanding of the author's background, the novel's themes and style, and your assessment of the novel's successes and failures. Your review will draw on other book reviews, interviews, and biographical essays on the author and will add to the conversation surrounding the novel by discussing a detail of the novel *not* covered in those other materials.

#### **Questions your review should answer:**

- >What are some of the most important issues this novel tackles?
- >What biographical background on the author do readers need to know in order to understand better the novel's themes, plot, and style?
- >What have reviewers praised about the novel?
- >What do you consider the novel's successes? Its failures?
- > What has the author said about her/his goals in writing the novel? About the writing process?
- > What new insight has the supplemental reading you've done given you into the novel? How has your supplemental reading changed your understanding of one aspect of the text NOT discussed by reviewers or the author him/herself?
- >How do the details of *specific passages from the novel* demonstrate your answers to the above questions?

#### **Guidelines and Requirements:**

- >Your review should be 4 full pages long, double-spaced, in Times New Roman 12pt. font. No extra spaces between paragraphs.
- >Your review should have an original *title* that hints at the topics you'll discuss.
- >Your review should directly quote *at least once* from each of the following:
  - a. the author's biography;
  - b. a book review on the novel
  - c. an interview with the author.
- >Your review should zoom in on specific examples from the novel (using direct quotes) to illustrate the points you make.
- >Unlike some of the book reviews you've read, your review is intended for readers who HAVE already read the novel, so you do not need to summarize the plot.
- >Your review should follow MLA style guidelines for in-text citation of quoted and paraphrased material and for a Works Cited page that lists the novel and secondary sources used.

#### **Grading Criteria:**

I will assess how clearly your review answers the above questions, the degree to which you meet the above requirements, and the review's overall clarity, organization, and readability. Late papers will lose one letter grade per day late. Missing peer review workshop on Friday 10/1 or not providing peers with thoughtful feedback will deduct points from grade on this assignment.

**Due Dates: Fri 10/1 Rough draft for workshop; Wed 10/6: Paper #1 due.**

English 328: Native American Literature / Diana

Fall 2010

### **Paper #2: Event Response Paper Assignment Description**

This semester, Westfield State will host two Native American speaker events whose presentations are directly tied to our course: poets who contributed to the collection *I Was Indian* (before being Indian was cool), one of our assigned texts, will give an "Antidote to Columbus Poetry Reading" on Tuesday evening 10/12 and Canadian Mi'gmaq filmmaker Jeff Barnaby will offer a screening and discussion of his latest short film in the horror/suspense genre, "File Under Miscellaneous," just in time for Halloween, Wednesday evening 10/27. Mark your calendars now for these events: you are **required to attend at least one** (the second can count as extra credit). Worth **10%** of your final average, your Event Response Paper will reflect on one of these presentations, drawing connections between the speaker's comments and details from one of our class readings. Your job is to attend the event, take good notes, and then demonstrate what new insights into Native American studies and one of our class readings you've gained as a result of the event.

**Questions your event response paper should answer:**

- >What biographical background on the speaker(s) help you understand their artistic work?
- > What did the speaker say about her/his artistic goals and process?
- >What are some of the most important details you took away from this presentation?
- >What were your impressions of the artist's work?
- >What new insights have you reached about Native American studies as a result of the event?  
How do specific details *from the presentation* demonstrate these insights?
- >What new insights have you reached about **one** text we've read in class as a result of the event? How do the details of *specific passages from that text* demonstrate these insights?

**Guidelines and Requirements:**

- >Your event response should be 3 full pages long, double-spaced, in Times New Roman 12pt. font. No extra spaces between paragraphs.
- >Your response should have an original *title* that hints at the topics you'll discuss.
- >Your response should be illustrated with numerous specific details from the presentation (direct quotes or close, accurate paraphrases)and *at least two* examples from the class text to support your discussion. Use MLA format for in-text citation of quotes.
- >As with any paper that quotes from outside sources, this response will include a Works Cited page with entries for both the class text and the lecture discussed. To cite a lecture in your Works Cited, follow this format:

Last name, first name. Title of Lecture. Guest Lecture Series. Westfield State University. Building location. Day month year.

**Grading Criteria:**

I will assess how clearly and thoroughly your event response paper answers the above questions and meets the above requirements, as well as the review's overall clarity, organization, and readability. Event Response Paper is due in class on **Monday 11/1**. Late papers will lose one letter grade per day late.

Diana/ English 328: Native American Literature Fall 2010

**Paper #3: Critical Article Response Assignment Description**

Critics write articles about literary texts to help other readers see the work from a new perspective. By writing and publishing their analyses of literature, critics contribute to a public critical dialogue about a particular author's craft and the cultural, historical, and artistic context in which the author writes. The purpose of this assignment is to introduce you to one critical approach to Native American literature, to develop your skills in reading and understanding literary analysis, and to help you refine your own interpretation of the novel you select as you enter into a critical dialogue with the author of the article. This assignment asks you to choose the critical article on either Philip Red Eagle's *Red Earth* or Louis Owens' *Nightland* and to write a letter to the critic in which you summarize, analyze, and respond to that article. Paper #3 is worth 20% of your course average.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Step One: Read and Understand the Article**

Literary criticism involves complex, multifaceted arguments and often uses jargon that can be unfamiliar to student readers. Therefore, reading your article a few times, taking notes, and looking up new vocabulary will be necessary for full understanding. These questions are a guide to prepare your initial notes for your essay. These questions are *not* intended to serve as an outline for your final draft.

What does the **title** tell you about the focus and point of the article?

What is the **approach, focus, and point** of this essay? What kinds of questions does the critic ask about the text and what answers does the article provide? In what kinds of contexts does it place this literary work? What does it care about?

What is the **thesis (the author's main argument)**? Is it stated in a sentence--a paragraph?? Is it broken into parts? Remember that a critical article might make a series of related claims about a novel, so you may identify multiple parts to a thesis.

What **kinds of evidence** does the article use to prove its thesis (textual analysis? historical materials--if so what kind? theoretical ideas? materia from other critics or novels? other things?)? Is this evidence persuasive, interesting, and well-used?

What aspects of the novel does this essay emphasize? What does it ignore? What specific scenes from the novel or autobiography seem related the topic of the critical article you chose but don't get mentioned as examples in the article?

Do you find this writer's interpretation convincing, or do you take issue with her/him?

