

**ENGL 6350: STUDIES IN NATIVE AMERICAN LITERATURE**  
**History and Oral History in Contemporary Literature**  
Spring 2004    Tues. 6:30-9:30

Dr. Ellen Arnold  
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Office hours: T 12:30-2, 3:30-6:30, Th 12:30-2

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This graduate seminar will examine fiction, poetry, autobiography and film by American Indians writing in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with a primary focus on Renaissance and post-Renaissance writers (from the 1970s to the present). Our studies will be interdisciplinary, including not only literary historical/theoretical approaches and controversies, but also cultural, historical, and political contexts. In particular, we will explore:

- o The role of storytelling and orality in contemporary Native American literatures
- o The role of language as creative force in Native American spoken and written literatures
- o The literary techniques Native American writers use to translate oral narratives, storytelling modes, and oral consciousness into print
- o The cultural and historical contexts in which oral and written texts are embedded
- o The centrality of storytelling and oral narratives to individual and national identity and sovereignty

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

N. Scott Momaday, [The Way to Rainy Mountain](#)  
Leslie Marmon Silko, [Storyteller](#)  
Louise Erdrich, [Tracks](#)  
Gerald Vizenor, [Dead Voices](#)  
Luci Tapahonso, [Blue Horses Rush In](#)  
Ervin Morris, [From the Glittering World](#)  
Sherman Alexie, [The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven](#)  
Barbara Wallis, [Two Old Women](#)  
Barbara Duncan, [Living Stories of the Cherokee](#)  
Selected critical essays on reserve, e-reserve, and Blackboard

**RECOMMENDED TEXTS (available in the bookstore):**

A. LaVonne Ruoff, [American Indian Literatures](#) (also in the Reference section at Joyner)  
Marilou Awiakta, [Abiding Appalachia](#)  
Linda Hogan, [Mean Spirit](#)  
Carter Revard, [An Eagle Nation](#)

**RECOMMENDED RESOURCES (On Reserve at Joyner Library):**

Allen, Paula Gunn, [The Sacred Hoop](#)  
Arnold, Ellen, ed., [Conversations with Leslie Marmon Silko](#)  
Jaimes, M. Annette, [The State of Native America](#) (essays on contemporary issues)  
Gibaldi, Joseph, and Phyllis Franklin, [MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers](#) (6<sup>th</sup> Ed.)  
Krupat, Arnold, [Ethnocriticism](#)  
---, ed., [New Voices in Native American Literary Criticism](#)  
---, [The Turn to the Native](#)  
---, [Red Matters](#)  
---, and Brian Swann, eds., [Here First: Autobiographical Essays by Native American Writers](#)  
Owens, Louis, [Other Destinies](#)  
Purdy, John, and James Ruppert, eds., [Nothing But the Truth](#)  
Swann, Brian, ed., [Smoothing the Ground: Essays on Native American Oral Literature](#)  
---, ed., [Coming to Light: Contemporary Translations of the Native Literatures of North America](#)  
---, and Arnold Krupat, [I Tell You Now](#) (autobiographical essays)  
Womack, Craig, [Red on Red](#)  
Internet links and other resources available on Blackboard

**ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION:** Regular attendance and active participation are essential to this class. One absence is permitted;

additional absences will impact your grade. Participation includes: arriving on time and staying the full class period; coming to class fully prepared with all required materials and assignments and a list of questions or points you would like to bring up in class discussion; responding with appropriate feedback to the written work, presentations, and comments and questions of other class members; providing input and feedback to the instructor regarding the structure and goals of the class; active, respectful listening and questioning. **Please come to every class prepared to do the Close Reading or Key Term Analyses described below.**

**JOURNAL:** You will keep a reading journal for making notes and recording your personal reflections on course materials. The journal is for your private use; I will not take them up or read them, but you will be required to draw on your journal responses for class discussion and formal papers. You may also be asked to write short responses or quizzes in class, for which you may use the notes in your journals; therefore, you will want to be sure to bring your journal to every class period. For maximum effectiveness, coordinate your journal with active reading of the texts by underlining key words and phrases, making notes in the margins, and noting page numbers of key quotes and references in your journal.

**PAPERS:** Short in-class papers should be handwritten (or printed if your handwriting is difficult to read) in ink on lined paper that is not torn out of a spiral notebook. Therefore, you should come to class every day with an ink pen and unlined loose notebook paper, in addition to your syllabus, a notebook for taking notes in class, your journal, and the assigned reading material.

All papers written outside of class should be typed on a computer, double spaced, with standard 1 inch margins, normal 12 point font, and using **MLA format**. (If you do not have a copy of the **most recent edition of the MLA Handbook**, you should purchase one now and use it at every stage of your writing process.) All written assignments should be titled, each page numbered with a running head that includes your last name, and stapled. Please proofread and edit your papers carefully; I encourage you to exchange papers with your classmates for proofing and editing assistance.

**Reaction Papers:** You will write four short (3 page) reaction papers, each comparing two primary texts. In these papers, you will trace your personal responses to the books, their associated critical/contextual essays, class lectures, and discussions. Reaction papers should be written in the first person (using the word "I!"), but should be polished essays centered on a specific theme. A good reaction paper will balance personal opinion and reflection with critical analysis. See the attached handout for suggestions; look at this sheet each time you complete a reading assignment to help stimulate responses for your reading journal.

**Critical/Research Paper:** You will write one longer (8-10 pages) critical paper on a novel or poetry collection of your choice that we did not read in class, using at least five critical sources. You may choose another work by one of the authors we are studying, or something by a different writer altogether. These papers will focus on historical/cultural contexts and/or oral narratives that are important to understanding and interpretation of your chosen text.

**GROUP PRESENTATION:** Each class member will participate in a groups of 2 or 3 to prepare a 45-minute presentation on one of the texts we are studying. The presentations will provide historical and cultural contexts for each text and starting points for discussion. In particular, groups will focus on the oral narratives and ritual contexts that inform each work. Each class presentation should be accompanied by a **1 to 2 page** handout outlining key information and points and a **2-page annotated bibliography of five sources** (ethnographic sources, interviews, critical articles, cultural/historical background, etc.) that you found especially useful for interpreting the text. Copies of **both** should be provided for your colleagues. Do not exceed page limits!

**BLACKBOARD:** The course syllabus, handouts, internet resources, and some assigned essays will be found on Blackboard. (Go to the ECU Homepage, click on Blackboard Gateway, enter your ECU username and password, and click on this class.) I will be using Bb to communicate announcements and other information, so be sure to check your ECU email account and the Announcements page on a regular basis. Some online discussion may be required.

#### GRADING:

Attendance/participation/in-class responses	20%
Group presentation	20%
Reaction papers	30%
Final Paper	30%

#### PROJECTED CALENDAR:

- 1/13 First Class: Syllabus Review, Introductory Lecture  
Video: [Ishi](#); Whorf, "An American Indian Universe" (handout)
- 1/20 **Due:** Journal Summary (see assignment below)  
Ruoff, "Oral Literatures" (5-47); "Life History and Autobiography" (52-62)  
Momaday, [The Way to Rainy Mountain](#), "The Man Made of Words" (e-reserve)
- 1/27 Trafzer, "Grandmother, Grandfather, and the First History of the Americas" (e-reserve)  
Silko, [Storyteller](#)
- 2/3 Silko, [Storyteller](#)  
Krupat, "Native American Autobiography. and the Synecdochic Self" (pp. 201-231 in [Ethnocriticism](#), on reserve)  
**Group I:** Silko; Laguna Pueblo  
**Due (2/5):** Reaction Paper I (Momaday and Silko)

- 2/10 Ruoff, "History of Written Literature" (62-115)  
Erdrich, Tracks
- 2/17 Erdrich, Tracks  
**Group II:** Erdrich; Anishnabeg (Ojibwa)
- 2/24 Vizenor, Dead Voices  
**Due** (2/26): Reaction Paper II (Erdrich and Vizenor)
- 3/2 Tapahonso, Blue Horses Rush In  
**Group III:** Tapahonso; Din, (Navajo)
- 3/9 Womack, "Introduction," Red on Red (e-reserve)  
Morris, From the Glittering World
- 3/16 SPRING BREAK
- 3/18-20 **Conference:** "New Directions in American Indian Studies," UNC Chapel Hill  
(Conference website: <http://gradschool.unc.edu/natam/index.html>)
- 3/23 Morris, From the Glittering World  
**Due:** Progress Report on Critical Paper  
**Due** (3/25): Reaction Paper III (Tapahonso and Morris)
- 3/27 **ECNAO Powwow**
- 3/30 Alexie, The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven  
**Group IV:** Alexie; Coeur d'Alene
- 4/6 The Lone Ranger  
Smoke Signals
- 4/13 Wallis, Two Old Women  
Rachel Ramsey, "Salvage Ethnography and Gender Politics in Two Old Women"  
(Online at <http://oncampus.richmon d.edu/faculty/ASAIL/SAIL2/113.html>)  
**Due** (4/15): Reaction Paper IV (Alexie and Wallis)
- 4/15-18 **Conference:** Native American Literature Symposium, Mystic Lake, MN  
(Conference website: <http://www.english.mnsu.edu/griffin/n ativelit.htm>)
- 4/20 Last Class  
Duncan, Living Stories of the Cherokee (xi-73, 143-187)  
**Due:** In class response paper
- 4/28 **Due:** Critical Paper
- 5/4 FINAL EXAM; Individual Presentations on Critical Papers

**Note:** All items on this syllabus are subject to revision, depending on the needs and interests of the class and the professor.

**Inclement Weather:** Check [www.ecu.edu/alert/](http://www.ecu.edu/alert/) or 328-0062.

**Contacting the Professor:** You will get a quicker response from me if you contact me by email rather than by phone. Please be sure to provide a readily identifiable subject line (e.g. ENGL 6350).

#### FIRST JOURNAL ASSIGNMENT (Summary Due 1/20)

In your personal journal, situate yourself in relationship to the literature we will be studying this semester. Freewrite several pages of reflection on the knowledge, preconceptions, opinions, and emotions regarding American Indians and Native American literature that you bring to this class. Please be informal and do not censor yourself. Then summarize your reflections in a paragraph or two to be turned in to me on 1/20.

What do you know about American Indians?

What events, stories, educational experiences, media have shaped your ideas about Indians?

How have your early ideas been reinforced or changed by more recent experiences?

What do you hope to get from this class?

## CLOSE READING EXERCISE:

Choose a passage from the text (1 or 2 sentences to a paragraph) that you think is particularly significant for understanding the meaning of the text as a whole. Describe the passage: what is it about?; whom does it involve?; what does it accomplish in the text?; what does it set up or resolve?; what is its relationship to the text as a whole? Situate the passage in the context of the text in which it is embedded. Is it typical or paradigmatic of the text as a whole, or does it provide some kind of rupture or shift? Why did you choose this passage? What does it mean to you?

## KEY TERM ANALYSIS

Choose a word or short phrase from the text (it may be contained in the passage you selected or elsewhere; it may be obvious or marginal) that you think is critical to an understanding of the novel, poem, or story as a whole. Explain the term and its importance to the text. How is the meaning of the term developed within the text, and how does it help build the meaning of the text as a whole?

## READING JOURNALS/RESPONSE PAPERS

Have your journal available each time you read any material for the course. Jot down responses as you read, and when you are done, reflect more broadly on the text as a whole. Link your responses to specific illustrations and passages in the text (don't forget page references!). Use your journal responses to generate questions or points you wish to bring to class for discussion and to generate ideas for your reaction papers. The following are some questions you can consider:

### **Content/Analysis**

Who are the main characters? What are their relationships to each other? Their roles in their communities and in the text itself?  
What recurring images and symbols help tie the text together? How do they contribute to the development of what you consider to be the primary themes?  
What historical or cultural forces do you see at work in the texts, both overt and implied?  
What cultural and social values are expressed in the text? How are they similar to or different from the social and cultural values that are familiar to you?

When comparing each text to others, what commonalities of theme, method, and style did you observe among the readings?  
Differences?  
How do you explain the similarities and differences among the texts?  
What questions occurred to you in the course of reading the assignments that were not answered? What was extra or didn't seem to fit?  
What kind of explanations might account for these omissions or inclusions?

### **Personal**

Did you like or dislike the material?  
What exactly did you like or dislike and WHY? Give specific examples (with dates and page numbers for future reference).  
How did you feel while you were reading/participating in class?  
What images, associations, or memories came to mind?  
What surprised, shocked, or disturbed you? Disappointed you or made you angry? Enlightened or inspired you?  
What internal conflicts did you experience? (Try writing a conversation or debate between two parts of yourself about conflicting ideas or feelings.)  
What bored you? Can you explain WHY you were not engaged?  
What experiences or expectations (relating to your life history, your education, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, or religion) do you bring to the reading that might help you understand your reactions?  
What did you learn of personal significance to you that has either challenged or confirmed your thinking?

## SELECTED INTERNET RESOURCES

### NATIVE AMERICAN LITERATURE

[http://oncampus.richmond.edu/faculty/AS\\_AIL](http://oncampus.richmond.edu/faculty/AS_AIL)

homepage for the Association for the study of American Indian Literature, with links to Native American Studies programs in the US and Canada, announcements, subscription information, and full texts of most journal issues

[www.hanksville.org/storytellers](http://www.hanksville.org/storytellers) Virtual Library of American Indians: Native American Authors Online, including links to information on traditional storytelling, contemporary authors, and selected texts

[www.hanksville.org/NAresources/indices/NAbooks.html](http://www.hanksville.org/NAresources/indices/NAbooks.html) Index of Native American Book Resources on the Internet

[www.hanksville.org/NAresources/indices/NAetext.html](http://www.hanksville.org/NAresources/indices/NAetext.html) Index of Native American Electronic Text Resources on the Internet

[www.nativeculture.com/lisamitten/ail\\_a.html](http://www.nativeculture.com/lisamitten/ail_a.html) American Indian Library Association Homepage; scroll all the way to the bottom of this page for links to native library and literature organizations and resources

<http://www.library.arizona.edu/library/teams/fah/subpathpages/natamlit/natamlit.shtml>  
American Indian Literature Web Resources (University of Arizona)

[www.ipl.org/ref/native/](http://www.ipl.org/ref/native/) native American Authors site, with bibliographies, biographical information, and links to other resources

[www.oyate.org/main.html](http://www.oyate.org/main.html) Oyate, an organization begun by Native women, helps teachers evaluate resources and teaching materials by and about Native peoples

## CULTURE, HISTORY, CURRENT ISSUES/EVENTS

[www.hanksville.org/NAresources/](http://www.hanksville.org/NAresources/) Virtual Library of American Indians: Index of Native American Resources on the Internet, including links to information on tribes, culture, language, religion, law, art, media, music, etc.

[www.nativeweb.org](http://www.nativeweb.org) NativeWeb, resources for indigenous cultures around the world

<http://www.nativeculture.com> An extensive collections of resources and links regarding history, literature, services, current issues, etc.; see especially Lisa Mitten's Links (librarian for the American Indian Library Association)

<http://www.asu.edu/clas/history/h-amindian/index.html> A joint project between Arizona State University and H-NET, H-AmIndian includes a discussion list for scholars and Native peoples to consider the history, culture, ideas and events relating to indigenous peoples from the North Pole to Mexico (includes an extensive list of links)

[www.indiancircle.com](http://www.indiancircle.com) Indian Circle Webring, maintained by the Seminole Tribe of Florida, lists the more than 550 federally recognized Indian tribes of the continental USA and Alaska, with links to 100 active tribal homepages

[www.ncai.org](http://www.ncai.org) National Congress of American Indians (NCAI)

[www.doi.gov/bureau-indian-affairs.html](http://www.doi.gov/bureau-indian-affairs.html) Dept. of the Interior/Bureau of Indian Affairs website (BIA site temporarily closed due to Cobell Litigation; see [www.indiantrust.com](http://www.indiantrust.com))

[www.artnatam.com](http://www.artnatam.com) Native American Artists Home Page )List of federally recognized tribes in the contiguous 48 states at [www.artnatam.com/tribes.html](http://www.artnatam.com/tribes.html))

[www.indiancountry.com](http://www.indiancountry.com) online version of Indian Country Today, the most widely circulated Indian newspaper in the U.S., offering news, archives, editorial features, and more

[www.lib.ecu.edu/erdb/ethnic.html](http://www.lib.ecu.edu/erdb/ethnic.html) Ethnic NewsWatch, a database of news items relating to ethnic peoples of the Americas; also available through the Joyner Library homepage (click Electronic Resources, then Newspapers)

[www.dickshovel.com](http://www.dickshovel.com) First Nations Issue of Consequence, an index of internet Native American resources; offers links to information about political issues (this is an individual's website and must be used with a critical eye)

[www.powwows.com](http://www.powwows.com) Information about powwows across the U.S.

## INDIANS IN NORTH CAROLINA AND THE SOUTHEAST

### WEBSITES:

[www.doa.state.nc.us/cia/indian.htm](http://www.doa.state.nc.us/cia/indian.htm) North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs

[www.occaneechi-saponi.org](http://www.occaneechi-saponi.org) Occaneechi Band (Saponi Nation) Homepage

[www.cherokee-nc.com](http://www.cherokee-nc.com) Eastern Band Cherokee Homepage

[www.lumbee.org](http://www.lumbee.org) Lumbee Homepage

<http://lumbeebibliography.net>

Annotated bibliography of information related to the Lumbee Indians of Eastern North Carolina; an update (since 1994) to the book The Lumbee Indians: An Annotated Bibliography, by Glenn Ellen Starr (Stilling).

MUSEUMS:

**Frisco Native American Museum** (252-995-4440), PO 399, Frisco, NC 27936

**Museum of the Cherokee Indian** (828-497-3481), PO Box 1599, Cherokee NC 28719

**Guilford Native American Art Museum and Gallery** (336-273-6605)

200 North Davie St., Greensboro, NC 27401

**Museum of the Native American Resource Center** (910-521-6282)

Old Main Building, University of North Carolina at Pembroke, Pembroke, NC 28372

**North Carolina Indian Culture Center and Henry Berry Lowrie House** (910-521-2433)

(Site of annual Lumbee Powwow), PO Box 2410, Pembroke, NC 28372

**University of North Carolina at Pembroke** (910-521-6249)

PO Box 1510, Pembroke, NC 28372-1510

BOOKS AND MAGAZINES

Gaillard, Frye. Photographs by Carolyn DeMeritt. As Long As the Waters Flow: Native Americans in the South and East. Winston-Salem: John Blair, 1998.

"Indian Country: N.C.'s Native People." Our State: North Carolina 68.6 (2000). 44-72.

Moore, Marijo, ed. Feeding the Ancient Fires: A Collection of Writings by North Carolina American Indians. Crossroads Press, A Project of the North Carolina Humanities Council. 1999. (ISBN 0-9672180-0-4)