

**Title: Indigenous Literature and/as Film: Adaptation, Marketing,
and the Consumption of Native Images**

COURSE POLICIES & SYLLABUS

Over the past decade, literary works by indigenous writers - American Indian, Aboriginal Australian, Canadian First Nations, New Zealand Maori - have been adapted into feature-length films for the North American, European, and international markets. In this course we will explore a number of these adaptations in order to investigate several key issues in indigenous literary and film studies and in adaptation theory.

Required Texts

- Course Packet
- Other short readings on Electronic Reserve
- Alexie, *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* (Atlantic Monthly Books)
- Alexie, *Smoke Signals: The Screenplay* (Hyperion)
- Duff, *Once Were Warriors* (University of Hawai'i Press)
- Ihimaera, *The Whale Rider* (Harcourt)
- Pilkington, *Rabbit-Proof Fence* (Hyperion)

Films to be Viewed in Class

- *Smoke Signals* (Miramax)
- *Once Were Warriors* (Fine Line)
- *Whale Rider* (Newmarket)
- *Rabbit-Proof Fence* (Miramax)

Recommended Indigenous Films

- The Fast Runner* (Inuit)
- Medicine River* (First Nations/American Indian)
- Skins* (American Indian)
- The Business of Fancy Dancing* (American Indian)
- Naturally Native* (American Indian)
- The Doe Boy* (American Indian)
- Ngati* (Maori)
- Te Rua* (Maori)

Books on Reserve

- Berkhofer, *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (1978)
- Braudy and Cohen, ed., *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, 5th ed. (1999)
 - * includes assigned essay by Chatman
- Cartmell and Whelehan, ed., *Adaptations: From Text to Screen, Screen to Text* (1999)
- Goldie, *Fear and Temptation: The Image of the Indigene in Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand Literatures* (1989)
- Kilpatrick, *Celluloid Indians: Native Americans and Film* (1999)
- McFarlane, *Novel To Film: An Introduction to the Theory of Adaptation* (1996)
- Naremore, ed., *Film Adaptation* (2000)
 - * includes assigned essays by Andrew and Stam
- Singer, *Wiping the War Paint off the Lens: Native American Film and Video* (2001)
 - * includes assigned Forward by Robert Warrior

Assignments

1. **Class Participation. 20%**
Students will be rewarded for actively contributing to class discussions and for listening attentively, as well as for coming to class on time, well prepared, and with a positive attitude. In addition, the participation grade will include in-class writing assignments.
2. **Discussion Teams. 30%**
Each student will sign up to be part of a Discussion Team for one class period. Discussion Teams are responsible for 1) Meeting outside of class to coordinate their research efforts and to discuss their plans for leading class discussion; 2) Conducting relevant research on the text or texts they are responsible for, including book and film

reviews, articles or web sites that provide background information about the authors, filmmakers, cast members, and/or characters depicted in the books and films, as well as any other relevant scholarship from books, articles, or web sites; 3) Presenting relevant information to the class; 4) Preparing a prompt for a brief in-class writing assignment on the assigned text(s) to help set up class discussion; 5) Directing the class's attention to specific passages or scenes in the assigned texts and posing useful questions for class discussion. In addition, 1) each Team should prepare a 1 - 2 page handout to give to the class that includes a bibliography of relevant sources and the Team's major observations, arguments, and/or questions about the text or texts, and 2) each Team member should turn in a 1 page account of her or his participation in the Discussion Team. Discussion Teams should plan enough material and questions to cover about an hour or so of class time. Team members will be graded individually.

3. Final Project Proposal. 1 page. 10%

4. Final Project. 5 - 7 pages. 40%

Option A: Based on the primary and secondary texts we have read and viewed for class, as well as your own research, develop a theory for adapting indigenous literary texts into film. Provide a full list of Works Cited that follows MLA style guidelines.

Option B: Choose one of the literary/film pairings assigned for class and analyze the effectiveness of the adaptation. Make sure you define what you mean by an "effective" adaptation. Support your analysis and argument with close readings as well as relevant research, and provide a full list of Works Cited that follows MLA style guidelines.

Option C: Compare two of the adaptations we read and viewed for class. Which adaptation do you think is more effective, and why? Make sure you define what you mean by an "effective" adaptation. Support your analysis and argument with close readings as well as relevant research, and provide a full list of Works Cited that follows MLA style guidelines.

Option D: Create your own final project that is relevant to our readings, viewings, and class discussions. Include a full list of Works Cited that follows MLA style guidelines. You must have the instructor's approval to take this option.

Daily Syllabus

Week 1

Tues Introduction to course policies and syllabus.
In-class screening of film trailers.

1. Theorizing Adaptation

Thurs Read Chatman, "What Novels Can Do That Films Can't (And Vice Versa)" (course pack), and handout on film terms.
Turn in list of top five choices for Discussion Teams.

Week 2

Tues Read Andrew, "Adaptation" (course pack), Stam, "Beyond Fidelity: The Dialogics of Adaptation" (course pack), and handout on Gerald Vizenor's concept of the "postindian."
Mini-lecture: Introduction to Native America and American Indian cultures.

2. Postindians in the U.S.A.: Alexie's *Smoke Signals*

Thurs Read Alexie, *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven*.

Week 3

Tues Read Warrior, "Forward" (course pack), and reviews of *Smoke Signals* (course pack).
Web assignment: visit Alexie's web site at www.fallsapart.com.
In-class screening of *Smoke Signals*.

Thurs Read Alexie, *Smoke Signals: A Screenplay*.
Discussion of *Smoke Signals*.

3. Warriors and Whale Riders in Aotearoa/New Zealand

Week 4

Tues Read Taylor, "Sad Joke on a Marae" (electronic reserve), and Hulme, "Silence on Another Marae" (electronic reserve).

Thurs Mini-lecture: Introduction to Aotearoa/New Zealand and Maori culture.
Read Duff, *Once Were Warriors*.
Discussion Team #1: _____

Week 5

Tues In-class screening of *Once Were Warriors*.

Thurs Discussion of *Once Were Warriors*.
Discussion Team #2: _____

Week 6

Tues Read Ihimaera, "The Whale" (electronic reserve) and *The Whale Rider*.
Discussion Team #3: _____

Thurs In-class screening of *Whale Rider*.
Final Project Proposal due in class.

Week 7

Tues Discussion of *Whale Rider*.
Discussion Team #4: _____

Thurs Comparative discussion: *Once Were Warriors* and *Whale Rider*.
Discussion Team #5: _____

4. Aborigines Go Hollywood: *Rabbit-Proof Fence*

Week 8

Tues Read Walker, "We Are Going" (electronic reserve), and Frankland, "Who Took the Children Away?" (electronic reserve).
Mini-lecture: Introduction to Australia and Aboriginal cultures.

Thurs Read Pilkington, *Rabbit-Proof Fence*.
Discussion Team #6: _____

Week 9

Tues In-class screening of *Rabbit-Proof Fence*.

Thurs Discussion of *Rabbit-Proof Fence*.
Discussion Team #7: _____

Week 10

Tues Comparative discussion: *Smoke Signals*, *Once Were Warriors*, *Whale Rider*, *Rabbit-Proof Fence*.
Discussion Team #8: _____

Thurs **Final projects due in class.**
Final class discussion.