

Spring term, 2009  
ENG 130.01  
TT 10:30-11:45 BR 222  
English Dept. 677-2490

Professor Susan Brill de Ramirez  
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Office hours: TT 4:15-5:00 p.m.;  
and by appt.

## INTRODUCTION TO NATIVE AMERICAN LITERATURES

What is the relationship between human persons and stories? What is the relationship between oral storytelling and written literature? Why do we read literatures and tell and listen to stories? This semester, we will be looking at our relationships to stories (oral, written, lived) through the lens of contemporary Native American literatures.

In our investigations into Native American literatures, we will explore issues of great relevance to the problems, struggles, and achievements of peoples around the world. We cannot begin to understand Native literatures without addressing the painful histories of colonization, European and Euro-American empire building, racism, and Manifest Destiny, along with the attendant themes of survivance, endurance, indigenous sovereignty, and the re-indigenization of North America.

The assigned readings address many of the issues crucial to Native peoples today: education, health care, alcoholism, diabetes, economic self-sufficiency, tribal sovereignty, tribal history, representations of American Indians in the media, Indian mascots and athletic team names, and NAGPRA (Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act).

### Texts for the class:

Alexie, Sherman. *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*. New York: Little, Brown and Co., 2007.  
Conley, Robert J. *Mountain Windsong: A Novel of the Trail of Tears*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992.  
Ortiz, Simon J. *Woven Stone*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1992.  
Silko, Leslie Marmon. *Ceremony*. New York: Penguin, 1981.  
Van Camp, Richard. *The Lesser Blessed*. Vancouver, BC: Douglas & McIntyre, 1996.  
Wallis, Velma. *Two Old Women: An Alaskan Legend of Betrayal, Courage and Survival*. New York: HarperPerennial, 1994.  
Epicenter Press, 1993.

### Course Requirements and Grading:

Midterm exam	25%	<i>Attendance portion of grade:</i>
Final exam	25%	no absences=A+; 1 = A-;
Group presentations	25%	2 absences = B+; 3 = C+;
Attendance/participation	25%	4 absences = F (2 wks missed)
Quizzes	10%	

### Spring Term Schedule of Readings

Jan 22	Introduction to course; preview <i>Smoke Signals</i>
Jan 27	Complete viewing of the film <i>Smoke Signals</i>
Jan 29	<i>Mountain Windsong</i> (1-84)
Feb 3	<i>Mountain Windsong</i> (85-174)
Feb 5	<i>Mountain Windsong</i> (175-218)
Feb 10	<i>Surviving Columbus</i> (part 1)
Feb 12	<i>Ceremony</i> (1-54)
Feb 17	<i>Ceremony</i> (55-102)
Feb 19	<i>Ceremony</i> (102-153)
Feb 24	<i>Ceremony</i> (153-213)
Feb 26	<i>Ceremony</i> (214-262)
Mar 3	<i>Ceremony</i> review; receive midterm exam study questions
Mar 5	Midterm exam review
Mar 10	<i>Surviving Columbus</i> (part 2)
Mar 12	Midterm exam
Mar 16-20	Spring Break
Mar 24	Film viewing of <i>Skins</i> (please try to arrive 15 minutes early)
Mar 26	<i>Woven Stone</i> (3-60)
Mar 31	<i>Woven Stone</i> (61-147)
Apr 2	<i>Woven Stone</i> (149-213)
Apr 7	<i>Woven Stone</i> (215-283)
Apr 9	<i>Woven Stone</i> (285-334)
Apr 14	<i>Woven Stone</i> review (335-365)
Apr 16	<i>Absolutely True Diary</i> (1-129)
Apr 21	<i>Absolutely True Diary</i> (130-230); introduction to <i>The Lesser Blessed</i>
Apr 23	<i>The Lesser Blessed</i>

Apr 28      Viewing of *The Return of Navajo Boy*  
Apr 30      *Two Old Women*

May 5      semester review, final exam preparation

Final Exam Period--viewing of *Naturally Native*

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### CLASS POLICIES: PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

1. This term, we will be creating a learning *community* in this class. This means that each student's active involvement is crucial to the success of everyone's learning. Accordingly, regular attendance and thoughtful participation are highly recommended.
2. Please understand that your active participation demonstrates to me your own learning and growth during the semester, and, more importantly, your participation deepens your own learning and assists others in their learning process, too. In this class, each student bears the fundamental responsibility for her or his own learning . . . and also for the more developed learning of every other student in the class.
3. Class attendance and participation is one-fourth of your grade; also note that I do not differentiate between excused or unexcused absences.
4. Reading and writing assignments are expected to be done on time. Late assignments must be approved by me ahead of time. Missed assignments cannot be made up later.
5. Being prepared for class is a crucial part of your participation. I will be reviewing each student's active participation during class periods. You can expect to be called on in class. I will expect that you are prepared for class--having done the assigned reading and having thought about the reading before coming to class. Most classes will begin with a short quiz on the assigned readings for that week.
6. There will be a midterm exam and the final take-home term paper. Your semester grade will be based on the midterm, final term paper, in-class group presentations, and class attendance and participation. Each of these four grades will be weighted in your final overall course grade, as noted on the first page of your syllabus. Note that since the quizzes are optional, your averaged quiz grade will count as extra credit.
7. You will have the opportunity to work in groups to help deepen your learning and class discussion. Twice during the term, your group will have assigned in-class presentations. One of your guided class presentations will be focused on *Woven Stone*, the other on either *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, *The Lesser Blessed* or *Two Old Women*. For this assignment, each group will craft 3-4 questions for class discussion and will present a short interpretive response to the assigned reading. At a group meeting, at least 24 hours prior to the presentation due date, your interpretive response and discussion questions are to be submitted to your professor for review.
8. Please note that if your grade is on the border between two grades at the end of the semester, I will evaluate your work throughout the semester (written and oral; in-class and out-of-class work) to decide which grade level is appropriate for your overall semester grade.