

**First Nations Literatures:
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, and Two-Spirited Native Writers**

ENG6527F -- Fall 2003
Thursdays, 4-6 p.m.
First Nations House Lounge

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OFFICE HOURS
W 12-2; Th 2-4; and by appointment
First Nations House

Course Description/Goals

Drawing from a diverse range of Indigenous critical traditions, we will engage with selected works of Native Two-Spirited/Queer/LGBT writers (and relevant work of selected straight-identified writers) and examine discourses of sexuality and gender identity as sites of both cultural revitalization and conflict. Since the onset of Eurowestern Invasion in this hemisphere, the erotic and gender expressions of Indigenous peoples have been misunderstood, repressed, erased, or appropriated as part of the broader exercise of colonialism. As a partial corrective to such practices, we will apply Indigenous teachings to these discourses and texts in order to theorize about the meanings of race, sexuality, and gender in diverse communities. We will be particularly attentive to the cultural, historical, and political influences on these discourses and the communities from which they emerge, with an eye toward decolonization.

Note -- Copies of all final seminar projects will be made available to interested Native Two-Spirit groups, thus giving back to Indigenous people in the spirit of accountability and reciprocity. Seminar participants will have the opportunity to move their learning beyond the classroom and engage with local Queer/LGBT and Aboriginal communities through optional service learning projects.

Required Texts

Craig S. Womack (Muskogee/Cherokee), *Drowning in Fire*
Beth Brant (Mohawk), *Writing as Witness: Essay and Talk*
Chrystos (Menominee), *Fire Power*
Tomson Highway (Cree), *Kiss of the Fur Queen* **OR** *The Rez Sisters*
Joy Harjo (Mvskoke), *In Mad Love and War*
Gregory Sarris (Miwok/Pomo), *Watermelon Nights*
And at least two of the following books of poetry: Janice Gould (Maidu), *Earthquake Weather*; Gregory Scofield (Métis), *Love Medicine and One Song*; Qwo-Li Driskill (Cherokee/Osage/Lenape/Lumbee), *Burning Upward Flight*; Deborah A. Miranda (Esselen/Chumash), *Deer*
Assorted readings on reserve or distributed in class

Suggested Texts for Professionalization in English Studies

- Margery Fee and Janice McAlpine, *Guide to Canadian English Usage*
- Joseph Gibaldi, *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing*, 2nd ed. OR
- *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th ed.
- Goldsmith, Komlos, and Gold, *The Chicago Guide to Your Academic Career: A Portable Mentor for Scholars from Graduate School through Tenure*

Course Requirements

- Participation and attendance
- Critical analysis (1)
- Moderation of course discussion (once)
- Conference paper abstract
- Conference presentation
- Research essay OR service learning project

Participation: 20%

Your engaged, respectful participation and regular attendance are essential to both your own success in this course and that of your peers. If you find it necessary to miss a class, contact me as soon as possible. And, of course, it's your responsibility to make up any work you've missed. In all matters you'll be expected to abide by the U of T *Codes of Behaviour on Academic Matters* and *Student Conduct* (see 2003/2004 *SGS Handbook*, pp. 40-51). You have both rights and responsibilities as a student at the University, so familiarize yourself with the *Codes* if you haven't done so already. (Be aware, too, that scholars in different disciplines are generally held to certain professional codes of ethics not outlined in U of T policies. For guidance and more information, contact the primary organizations in your area.)

A critical analysis (3-5 pages) AND moderation of course discussion once during the term: 15% **[professionalization component]**

Analyses should engage that day's readings (and any relevant outside resources) by articulating a rhetorical and/or discursive analysis, or by making a particular argument about them in relation to other texts and/or historical issues/events. *Copies must be provided for all participants.* You will use this analysis to prompt that day's discussion, for which you will have primary responsibility. (This is your opportunity to develop your future professional skills in moderating class discussions.) You won't read your critical analysis directly; rather, it will be a springboard from which to expand on your ideas in dialogue with those of your classmates. This will require advance planning and outside reading -- recommended texts are a good place to start, but you should do research of your own, too -- and may require collaboration if more than person signs up for the same day.

Conference paper abstract and presentation: 25% **[professionalization component]**

Part of the mandate of graduate education is professional training. Toward this goal, we'll have a "mini" academic conference at the end of the

term that will allow you the opportunity to practice your public presentation/performance skills. This will be more than a literary studies conference; it will be an *Indigenous* conference, which has its own discursive processes and scholarly expectations that differ somewhat from other venues. You'll provide a 250-word abstract of your individual presentation and, with at least three others, organize a panel for the conference (complete with panel chair/moderator). I'll give guidance and detailed post-panel feedback, but you'll be responsible for the successful organization and execution of the conference panels. Each panel will be followed by a brief question-and-answer period. The success of each presentation will be determined by its ability to clearly articulate your scholarly argument in a compelling manner; keep in mind that this is a performance, so think of ways to enhance the efficacy of your presentation. We'll discuss the expectations of an abstract and paper presentation throughout the term, particularly on November 20th. This conference will be open to the university and general public, so treat this requirement seriously.

Research Essay OR Service Learning Project: 40%

The **research essay** of this course will combine textual analysis, research, and application of any relevant criticism to a particular author, issues(s), or text(s) emerging from the course; this will be the extended version of your conference presentation. This essay is your opportunity to engage with the field of Indigenous literary criticism; it will reflect familiarity with the literatures, scholarship, communities, and issues of the field, as well as thoughtful analysis and rigorous argument. It must be well-written and free of errors in style or substance (see below). The essay should be between 17 and 25 pages in length and follow either MLA or Chicago style guidelines. You should include along with your essay a separate page with a list of at least three journals to which you might consider submitting the piece (they needn't all be Native Studies journals) and a brief explanation of why you chose these particular publications.

Another option would be to work on the **service learning project**, which will emerge from volunteer service with an organization that serves the needs of the Toronto Aboriginal community, particularly Two-Spirited peoples. (The organization doesn't need to be exclusively Aboriginal in focus, but it must have as a substantial part of its mandate the service of some segment of the Native community.) As each service learning project will vary according to the organization's need and the student's interests, you'll need to meet with me individually to determine the nature and scope of this option. All service learning projects will include a written component (minimum 10 pages), with a minimum of twenty hours service with one or more organization(s). A copy of the final project must be made available to your service group/organization. *This option is available with professor approval only.* Speak to me early in the term for suggestions, guidelines, and service learning agreement form.

Grading and late penalties

All grades will be determined according to policies and instructions issued by the School of Graduate studies, on the A+ to FZ scale. (See *SGS Handbook*, pp. 34-35.)

All assignments are due on the date listed (or, in the case of critical analysis, the date of your discussion moderation) unless excused by emergency or unless we make other arrangements *prior to the due date*. Otherwise, I don't accept late work.

A note about academic writing . . .

With either choice of final project, the written component, like the best scholarly writing, should be clear, well-crafted, and free of gratuitous jargon and intentionally vague or muddled syntax. Our job as scholars and teachers is to communicate our ideas and arguments, not to befog our audience with arrogant, convoluted prose. Sometimes specialized jargon is necessary shorthand for complex ideas, but even then moderation is generally the best approach, especially if your audience is likely to include non-specialists. Good prose needn't be transparent or simplistic -- sometimes the most meaningful texts are the ones that we have to work hard to understand -- but it should at least be accessible to thoughtful people who are familiar with the conventions of the particular scholarly field.

And a few words about plagiarism . . .

Any form of academic fraud is a violation of both the spirit of the Academy and various laws and professional codes. Don't do it. If you think you've done it, fix it or, if published or submitted, send a correction with proper acknowledgment; if you're worried that you might unintentionally do it, talk to me or to an advisor at one of the numerous writing centres on campus. You could fail the course and be kicked out of U of T for a single instance of academic fraud -- which includes plagiarism, falsifying information, and using a purchased, borrowed, previously-written, or stolen essay in place of your own -- so avoid temptation, do your own work, and acknowledge sources. See the *SGS Handbook*, pp. 40-47, for more information.

Course Calendar

(all assignments and dates tentative and subject to change)

*=primary text of discussion

WEEK ONE, Thursday, Sept. 11th (at 7 KCC) -- Roots and Foundations

Introduction

Sign up for discussion moderation day

DISCUSS

Materials from 2-Spirit People of the First Nations

WEEK TWO, Sept. 18th -- Is Queer Spoken Here?: Readings in History, Anthropology, and Tradition

(MEET AT FIRST NATIONS HOUSE: PERMANENT LOCATION)

READ

*Maurice Kenney (Mohawk), "Tinselled Bucks: A Historical Study in Indian Homosexuality"

*Sue-Ellen Jacobs, "Is the 'North American Berdache' Merely a Phantom in the Imagination of Western Social Scientists?"

*Bruce Trigger, "The Past as Power: Anthropology and the North American Indian"

*Sabine Lang, "Various Kinds of Two-Spirit People: Gender Variance and Homosexuality in Native American Communities"

WEEK THREE, Sept. 25th

Daniel is gone to the Society for the Study of American Women Writers Conference. No class this week, but be ready for vigorous discussion on the 2nd!

WEEK FOUR, Oct. 2nd -- Two-Spirit Women: Race and Gender

DISCUSSION MODERATOR(S): _____

READ

*Beth Brant (Bay of Quinte Mohawk), *Writing as Witness: Essay and Talk*

*Chrystos (Menominee), "They're Always Telling Me I'm Too Angry"

Paula Gunn Allen (Laguna Pueblo/Sioux), " *Hwame, Koshkalaka*, and the Rest: Lesbians in American Indian Cultures"

Tara Prince-Hughes, "Contemporary Two-Spirit Identity in the Fiction of Paula Gunn Allen and Beth Brant" (available online at <http://oncampus.richmond.edu/faculty/ASAIL/SAIL2/104.html>)

[Also Recommended books by Brant: *Mohawk Trail*; *A Gathering of Spirit*, ed.]

WEEK FIVE, Oct. 9th -- Regarding the Indian Closet: Coming Out, Staying In, and the Transformative Possibilities of Desire

DISCUSSION MODERATOR(S): _____

READ

*Craig S. Womack (Muskogee Creek/Cherokee), *Drowning in Fire*

Womack, "Politicizing HIV Prevention in Indian Country"

Womack, "Lynn Riggs as Code Talker: Toward a Queer Oklahomo Theory and the Radicalization of Native American Studies"

[Also Recommended: "Howling at the Moon: The Queer But True Story of My Life as a Hank Williams Song"; *Red on Red: Native American Literary Separatism*]

WEEK SIX, Oct. 16th -- Queer by Nature or Circumstance?: Varied Voices

DISCUSSION MODERATOR(S): _____

READ

*Tomson Highway (Cree), *The Rez Sisters* OR *Kiss of the Fur Queen*

Sherman Alexie (Spokane/Coeur d'Alene), "The Toughest Indian in the World"

Terry Tafoya (Taos/Warm Springs Pueblo) and Douglas A. Wirth, "Native American Two-Spirit Men"

[Also Recommended: Highway, *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing*]

WEEK SEVEN, Oct. 23rd -- Braided Pain and Hope: Challenging Multiple Oppressions

DISCUSSION MODERATOR(S): _____

READ

*Chrystos (Menominee), *Fire Power*

Beverly Little Thunder (Standing Rock Lakota), "I Am a Lakota Womyn"

Beatrice Medicine (Standing Rock Lakota), "Changing Native American Roles in an Urban Context and Changing Native American Sex Roles in an Urban Context"

[Recommended: *Not Vanishing; In Her I Am*]

WEEK EIGHT, Oct. 30th -- Complicated Stories: Presenting All Parts of Ourselves

DISCUSSION MODERATOR(S): _____

READ

*Gregory Sarris (Miwok/Pomo), *Watermelon Nights*

[Recommended: *Keeping Slug Woman Alive: A Holistic Approach to American Indian Texts* ; *Grand Avenue*]

DISCUSSION

Conference paper abstracts

WEEK NINE, November 6th--Thriving, Not Just Surviving: The Next Step of Resistance

DISCUSSION MODERATOR(S): _____

READ

*Joy Harjo (Mvskoke), *In Mad Love and War*

Harjo and Gloria Bird (Spokane), eds., Introduction to *Reinventing the Enemy's Language*

[Recommended: *Map to the Next World* ; *She Had Some Horses*]

WEEK TEN, November 13th - - Words of Fire and Spirit: Native Poets Speak

DISCUSSION MODERATOR(S): _____

READ

Gould (Maidu), *Earthquake Weather*; AND/OR

Scofield (Métis), *Love Medicine and One Song* ; AND/OR

Driskill (Cherokee/Osage/Lenape/Lumbee), *Burning Upward Flight*; AND/OR

Miranda (Esselen/Chumash), *Deer*. [Choose at least two.]

►DUE: Conference paper abstracts

WEEK ELEVEN, November 20th

DISCUSSION

Academic conferences and other issues of professionalization; bring questions

WEEK TWELVE, November 27th

COURSE CONFERENCE, day 1

WEEK THIRTEEN, December 4th

COURSE CONFERENCE, day 2 (1st hour)

• Feast and final discussion

►DUE: Final paper/project

APPENDIX: SUGGESTED ABORIGINAL STUDIES BACKGROUND READING

Howard Adams (Métis), *Prison of Grass: Canada from a Native Point of View* (Saskatoon: Fifth House, 1989)

Taiaiake Alfred (Kahnawake Mohawk), *Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto* (Don Mills, ON: Oxford UP, 1999)

- Marie Battiste (Potlo'tek Mi'kmaq), ed., *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002)
- Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Vintage, 1979)
- Jack D. Forbes (Powhatan-Renápe/Delaware-Lenápe), "Nature and Culture: Problematic Concepts for Native Americans" (in *Ayaangwaamizin: The International Journal of Indigenous Philosophy*, 1.2 (1997), pp. 3-22.)
- Tom Holm (Cherokee/Creek), J. Diane Pearson, and Ben Chavis (Lumbee), "Peoplehood: A Model for the Extension of Sovereignty in American Indian Studies" (in *Wicazo Sa Review* (Spring 2003), pp. 7-24.
- M. Annette Jaimes (Juaneño/Yaqui), ed., *The State of Native America: Genocide, Colonization, and Resistance* (Boston: South End, 1992)
- Paul Robert Magocsi, ed., *Aboriginal Peoples of Canada: A Short Introduction* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2002)
- Dennis McPherson (Couchiching Ojibwa), "A Definition of Culture: Canada and First Nations" (in *Native American Religious Identity: Unforgotten Gods*, ed. Jace Weaver (Cherokee), Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1998)
- Devon Abbot Mihesuah (Choctaw), *Indigenous American Women: Decolonization, Empowerment, Activism* (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 2003)
- Roy Harvey Pearce, *Savagism and Civilization: A Study of the Indian and the American Mind* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1953)
- Dale Turner (Teme-Augama Anishnabai), "Vision: Towards an Understanding of Aboriginal Sovereignty" (in *Canadian Political Philosophy: Contemporary Reflections*, Ronald Beiner and Wayne Norman, eds. (Don Mills, ON: Oxford UP, 2000), pp. 318-331)