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Syllabus for Anthropology 333: Native American Literatures

Summer session I
Cabell 319, MTWThF 1:00-3:15

How is Native American Literature defined, and what part should American Indian languages and live verbal performances have to play in this definition? Are our own cultural assumptions that accompany the distinction between contemporary literature and oral tradition warranted, or do these need to be rethought? These are some of the questions addressed in this class. We will read novellas, short stories and poetries. Our reading will be interwoven with experiences of films, poetry-slams, audio-recordings, and Web publications. We will compare the written work of contemporary Native American authors with examples of oral performances by persons living in Native American communities, including performances recorded by local artists, educators, anthropologists, linguists and folklorists.

Classes will be divided into short lectures, audio/video experiences, participatory readings, and discussion. Students will write three 3-page essays addressed to the readings and complete a short ethnopoetic analysis of a Native American language oral narrative of their choosing from a list of available online resources. **Student grades will be based upon:**

- three 3-page essays 20% each
- ethnopoetic analysis 20%
- student participation/reading response 20%

Required Reading--Available at the University Bookstore:

Rodney Frey, *Stories that Make the World: Oral Literatures of the Indian Peoples of the Inland Northwest*. University of Oklahoma Press 1995.

Sherman Alexie, *Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven*. Harper Collins 1994.

Larry Evers and Felipe S. Molina, *Yaqui Deer Songs/Maso Bwikam: A Native American Poetry* University of Arizona Press Sun Tracks, Vol. 14.

Luci Tapahonso. *Saanii Dahataal: The Women Are Singing*. University of Arizona Press 1993.

Hymes, Dell. *Reading Takelma Texts*. Bloomington, IN: Trickster Press 1998.

Recommended

Basso, Keith. *Wisdom Sits in Places*. University of New Mexico Press. 1996.

Schedule

Week I: Contemporary artist: Sherman Alexie's short stories, poetry, film, and music

Tuesday, June 11

In class: Introduction

video: *2001 World Heavyweight Championship Poetry Bout: Sherman Alexie vs. Saul Williams*

Read selections from *Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven*, pp. 1-36, 43-54.

Wednesday, June 12

In class: Listen to Alexie reading "[Dear John Wayne](#)"

Read selections from *Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven*, pp. 59-75, 83-103.

Thursday, June 13

In class: Watch the motion picture: *Smoke Signals*

Class will meet in Clemons media room 322A.

Essay assignment handed out

Read selections from *Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven*, pp. 104-110, 130-153

Friday, June 14

In class discuss the film, readings, prepare for essays.

Read selections from *Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven*, pp. 171-223.

first paper will be due on Monday, June 17th

Week II: Storytelling Traditions as Oral Literatures

Monday, June 17

Paper due

In class: Introduction to Oral literature and storytelling

Read *Stories that Make the World: Oral Literatures of the Indian Peoples of the Inland Northwest*, "Introduction"

Tuesday, June 18

In class: videos of storytelling performances:

Iisaw, Hopi Coyote Stories, with Helen Sekequaptewa

The Origin of the Crown Dance: An Apache Narrative and Ba'ts'oosee: An Apache Trickster Cycle with Rudolph Kane

Class will meet in Clemons media room 322A.

Read *Stories that Make the World: Oral Literatures of the Indian Peoples of the Inland Northwest*, "The Text: See from the Inside Looking Out"

Wednesday, June 19

In class: Storytelling techniques and themes

Read: *Stories that Make the World: Oral Literatures of the Indian Peoples of the Inland Northwest*, "The Texture 'Feel it'"

Thursday, June 20

In class: Prepare for papers (assignment handed out) and storytelling experiences

Read: *Stories that Make the World: Oral Literatures of the Indian Peoples of the Inland Northwest*, "The Context: 'You Gotta Go Inside'"

Friday, June 21

In class: Student storytelling groups: performances and interpretations.

view video: *Running on the Edge of the Rainbow: Laguna Stories and Poems*, with Leslie Marmon Silko.

second paper will be due on Monday, June 24th

recommended

Keith Basso, "Stalking with Stories". In *Wisdom Sits in Places*

Week III. Poetry: "Contemporary" and "Traditional"

Monday, June 24

Paper Due

In class: Definitions of Contemporary Poetry

Listen to Luci Tapahonso reading "Hills Brothers Coffee" and other poems and songs

Read: selections from Tapahonso's *Saanii Dahataal: The Women Are Singing*

Tuesday, June 25

In class: a "Traditional" poetry

Watch *Seyewailo: The Flower World*

Class will meet in Clemons media room 322A.

Read: *Yaqui Deer Songs/Maso Bwikam: A Native American Poetry*, "Yopo Nooki: Enchanted Talk"

Wednesday, June 26

In Class: Cultural Context and Poetic Art

Read: *Yaqui Deer Songs/Maso Bwikam: A Native American Poetry*, "Yeu A Weepo: Where it Comes Out"

Thursday, June 27

In class: Prepare for papers (assignment handed out)

Read: *Yaqui Deer Songs/Maso Bwikam: A Native American Poetry*, "Senu Tukaria Bwikam: One Night of Songs"

Friday, June 28

In class: Drawing comparisons and contrasts

Listen to Deer song recording

Read: *Yaqui Deer Songs/Maso Bwikam: A Native American Poetry*, "Maso Me'ewa: Killing the Deer"

second paper will be due on Monday, July 1st

recommended

video: *Songs of My Hunter Heart: Laguna Songs and Poems*, with Harold Littlebird

Week IV. Poetics of Oral Narrative

Monday, July 1

Paper Due

In class: Text collections in the Americanist tradition

Introduction to Ethnopoetics

Introduction to using [Harry Hoijer's *Chiricahua and Mescalero Apache Texts*](#)

Read: Hymes, Dell. *Reading Takelma Texts*, pp. 1-22.

Tuesday, July 2

In Class: Listen to Audiorecording: "Coyote and Mescal", "He Became an Eagle", Paul Ethelbah.

Class will meet in Clemons media room 322A.

Recognizing lines, stanzas and larger units

Using: selected material from Harry Hoijer, *Chiricahua and Mescalero Apache Texts*, (originally published 1938)

Read: Hymes, Dell. *Reading Takelma Texts*, pp. 23-52.

Wednesday, July 3

In Class: Finding Measured Verse and preparing for ethnopoetic exercise (final assignment given)

Using: selected material from Harry Hoijer, *Chiricahua and Mescalero Apache Texts*, (originally published 1938)

Read: Hymes, Dell. *Reading Takelma Texts*, pp. 53-69.

Thursday, July 4

Holiday--no class

Friday, July 5

In class: Student exercise workshop

Read: working paper: An Ethnopoetic analysis of Paul Ethelbah's "He became an Eagle", Eleanor Nevins

Student's ethnopoetic projects will be due on Tuesday, July 9th

Tuesday, July 9

ethnopoetic analysis due

Films an Video's on reserve for this class at Clemons Media Center

2001 World Heavyweight Championship Poetry Bout: Sherman Alexie vs. Saul Williams, VHS12480.

Smoke Signals, DVD02490

Iisaw, Hopi Coyote Stories, with Helen Sekaquaptewa, VHS10103

The Origin of the Crown Dance: An Apache Narrative and Ba'ts'oosee: An Apache Trickster Cycle with Rudolph Kane, VHS10102.

Running on the Edge of the Rainbow: Laguna Stories and Poems, with Leslie Marmon Silko, VHS10105.

Seyewailo: The Flower World, VHS10101

Songs of My Hunter Heart: Laguna Songs and Poems, with Harold Littlebird, VHS10106.