

## English 3156-001: Native North American Indian Literatures, an Introduction

Dr. Susan Gardner, Fall 2000

**American literature begins with the first human perception of the American landscape expressed and preserved in language.** (N. Scott Momaday, Kiowa, qtd in Ruoff 1)

**[T]he Indian is a product of literature, history, and art, and a product that, as an invention, often bears little resemblance to actual, living Native American people.** (Louis Owens, Cherokee/Choctaw novelist and critic)

**Since the original inhabitants of the Western Hemisphere neither called themselves by a single term nor understood themselves as a collectivity, the idea and the image of the Indian must be a White conception. Native Americans were and are real, but the *Indian* was a White invention and still remains largely a White image, if not stereotype.... The first residents of the Americas were...divided into at least two thousand cultures and more societies, practiced a multiplicity of customs and lifestyles, held an enormous variety of values and beliefs, spoke numerous languages mutually unintelligible...and did not conceive of themselves as a single people--if they knew about each other at all.... Whether as conception or as stereotype, however, the idea of the Indian has created a reality in its own image as a result of the power of the Whites and the response of Native Americans.** (Berkhofer 3)

**If only I were an Indian, suddenly alert, on a galloping horse, leaning against the wind** (Franz Kafka, 1883-1924)

Twelve years ago, when I first proposed teaching a course on American Indian literature at another university, the chair of the English department dismissed the notion as "Eccentric and irrelevant, of no interest to undergraduate teaching"! On the other hand, when I remember this incident, I'm equally amazed at my own naivete. For my brief is impossible, of course: in 15 weeks, to introduce you to forms of verbal art stemming in their oral form from at least 30,000 years ago, and written more recently in non-Native languages such as English, Spanish or French. Native American Indian stories are thus the first in the Western hemisphere, and they offer a unique viewpoint concerning human beings, their function on earth--"this island on turtle's back"--and their relationship to all the rest of creation.

The roots of all the world's literatures, of course, are in oral-aural story-telling, and oral traditions in Native America have not ceased, to be superseded in some "evolutionary" sense by the written word. (Reasons for the relatively late access of many Native North American Indians to literacy in English will be discussed in lecture). Indeed, orality and literacy can influence and feed into each other. For reasons of practicality, however, this course will focus on writings in English although aspects of oral traditions will be explained when integral to understanding the written text.

Should American Indian literature be confined to separate course offerings? (In this department, also including two graduate courses, one concerning Native American autobiography, the other contemporary fiction. In fall 1996 and 1997, I introduced American Studies courses focussing on (primarily) the Lakota Sioux in their roles as Hollywood "Indians", and I often teach ENGL 4002: Native North American Indian Women Writers, offered this semester in live televised format at two sites, here and at the Univ. of NC at Pembroke. I am team-teaching it with a Native American colleague at that university.) How does it "fit" (to anticipate my claim in class: it doesn't) into the conventional schema of "American" (mainly Euro-immigrant American) literature, starting in English on the colonial eastern seaboard and parceled into genres, time periods, and "major authors" within a "canon" (contested as it has been, with the inclusion of "minority" authors, most students can still readily reel off who is "great" and what is "important")? Is it the only truly "American" literature? Or should American Indian authors be "integrated" into any American literature courses (as, indeed, they can be)? Do they lend themselves to classification as "postcolonial" and/or "Third World" literatures? Whatever the classification, **our focus is Native North American Indians as authors and subjects of their own stories**, since:

The consciousness of other people cannot be perceived, analyzed, defined as objects or as things--one can only relate to them dialogically. To think about them means to talk with them: otherwise they immediately turn to us their objectivized side; they fall silent, close up, and congeal into finished, objectivized images. (Mikhail Bakhtin, qtd in Schultz 77).

My own (always evolving) preference is that, though American Indian literature bears likenesses to the last of the above, they are best understood comparatively. By this, in the context of other world indigenous literatures (e.g., various African; Maori; (Australian or Canadian) Aboriginal or "First Nations"; Inuit; Native Hawaiian and other native Pacific peoples, and indigenous Latin American). (NB: This is one reason why ENGL 3156 earns you three hours of the cross-cultural/international **X general education goal # 6**, which provides that students will come to "understand the commonalities, differences, and interdependence among and within societies of the world", 1999-2001 Catalog 37.) Despite invasion, conquest, settlement of their lands, and uneven absorption into or envelopment by the mainstream population, more than 250 million indigenous peoples survive worldwide. Four percent of the global population, living in over 70 countries (modern nation-states), they are sometimes said to constitute a "Fourth World." While varying enormously from each other and from "us" (for convenience, I understand "us" to mean those socialized predominantly in mainstream, largely Euro-immigrant culture, whatever our ethnicity), they share a common situation on humanitarian, cultural, and legal grounds. "[T]he 1990s [have been] a time when indigenous communities [have] demand[ed] that their lands be restored to them, that their cultures be protected and that their right to self-determination be recognized" (Burger 11):

[T]oday as in the past they are prey to stereotyping... By some they are idealized as the embodiment of spiritual values; by others they are denigrated as an obstacle impeding economic progress. But they are neither: they are people who cherish their own distinct cultures, are the victims of past and present-day colonialism, and are determined to survive. Some live according to their traditions, some receive welfare, others work in factories, offices, or the professions.... Where they have maintained a close living relationship to the land, there exists a co-operative attitude of give and take, a respect for the Earth

and the life it supports, and a perception that humanity is but one of many species. (15)

OK, from the global to the local (= this classroom). Please bring me, on **Monday Aug. 28th**, a **written learning contract** outlining/explaining the work you intend to do in this course. Just as I have a contract to teach (of which this syllabus is a part), you will have one to learn. In it state: (1) why you were interested in this course; (2) how you learned about it; (3) what your goals are in taking it; (4) how you intend to achieve these goals, including the concrete steps you will take. You may also include your expectations of me as a teacher. You may revise these goals as the course progresses; write the contract carefully, for it will be an important basis for your final assessment. Please include any other information, such as previous literature or other related courses you may have taken, what you like to read/view for pleasure, any experiences with Indian peoples... Submit your word-processed, spell-checked contract in a folder or sheet protector.

I will, when possible, invite guest speakers from the North Carolina Indian community and alert you to cultural events relevant to the course taking place on campus or in the Charlotte area. An advantage of teaching this course in the fall is that November is Indian Heritage Month in North Carolina, with a number of events (including powwows) occurring: when you attend and report in writing on these, you will receive **extra credit**. During the semester, UNC Charlotte's Native American Student Organization (NASO) sponsors a Native American Heritage week. And,

of course, both Columbus Day and Thanksgiving offer plenty of material for reflection! Just to give you an idea of some upcoming events:

Sept. 15-17: 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Guilford Native American Cultural Festival/Powwow, Greensboro, NC; contact Kathy Locklear, 336/273 8686; \*

Sept. 19-Oct. 1 Indian Trail's 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Powwow, Metrolina Native American Association; contact Letha Strickland, 704/522 6311

Oct. 3-7 88<sup>th</sup> Annual Cherokee Indian Fair, Ceremonial Grounds, Cherokee, NC \*

Nov. 5 Native American Cultural Arts Festival, Charlotte Museum of History, 1-5p.m.; contact Wanda Carter, 704/363 3997

Nov. 6 Indian Heritage Month Kick-Off, Metrolina Native American Association, Charlotte, NC; contact Letha Strickland, 704/522 6311

Nov. 25: Catawba Nation "Day of the Catawba" Cultural Festival, Catawba Indian Reservation, near Rock Hill, SC; contact Catawba Cultural Preservation Project, 803/328 2427 \*

\* Events that students have particularly enjoyed in past semesters.

All students need to use email in this course, whether through a private Internet service provider or through the university. **If you are not now on email, or unfamiliar with research on the worldwide web, your first step for this course should be to acquire an email account (for free) at the university.** Go to UNCC's home page ([www.uncc.edu](http://www.uncc.edu)) and click on "Library" for information on opening student e-mail accounts and access to computer labs. **Your Learning Contract should include your email address.** Moreover, there are now some excellent web sites concerning American Indian literature, and the tribes of the Carolinas. To refer to a few that you will want to explore (as of 8/12/00):

- Catawba Cultural Preservation Project (a tribal home page is presently under construction), <http://www.ccppcrafts.com/menu.html>
- Cherokee Indian Reservation Official Homepage, <http://www.cherokee-nc.com/main.htm> < BR >
- H-AMINDIAN, discussion, news and resources for anyone with a scholarly or professional interest in the indigenous peoples of North America. <http://www.asu.edu/clas/history/h-amindi an/>
- Lumbee Indian Tribal Links, <http://www.lumbee.org/tribal.htm>
- Metrolina Native American Association, <http://www.indiantrailonline.com/mnaa.htm>
- Native American Sites (Lisa Mitten), <http://info.pitt.edu/~lmitten/indians.html>
- NativeAuthors.com, specializing in work by American Indian poets, writers, historians, storytellers and performers, <http://nativeauthors.com/index.html>
- NativeWeb, resources for indigenous cultures around the world, <http://www.nativeweb.org>
- North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs, <http://www.doa.state.nc.us/doa/cia/indian.htm>
- Storytellers: Native American authors online, <http://www.hanksville.org/storytellers/>
- Wordcraft Circle of Native Writers and Storytellers, <http://www.wordcraftcircle.org/>

Your texts for this course are John L. Purdy and James Ruppert, ed., **Nothing But the Truth: An Anthology of Native American Literature**, and James J. Rawls, **Chief Red Fox Is Dead: A History of Native Americans since 1945**. I'm excited about both of them! The first is "hot off the press" (it was published on August 11<sup>th</sup>!). The second provides the type of background most of us wish we had



Thinking further, I remembered that traditional Native American Indian societies, in their oral storytelling (dating back at least 30,000 years), had little concept of what we call children's literature which, interestingly, is defined by its audience: the protected class of modern childhood in the Western world. Traditional Native American conceptions of "the self" locate its origins in ancestral time out of mind; children are the ancestors reborn; the notion of an "individual" attains significance as a function of kinship placement and membership in a prior and over-arching social whole, the People. Moreover, in the world's non-Western, traditional societies, it was assumed that understanding the stories grew with time; endings did not have to be happy. Nor were certain subjects taboo, and oral narrative/storytelling was the means by which cultures preserved their memory, history, knowledge, wisdom. As one elder has said, "We are Indian people because we tell each other Indian stories."

Yet modern Native writers have adopted the Euroamerican genre: do their stories for children and adolescents differ significantly from those told by writers from the mainstream culture? Or from American Indian literature written for adults? A further consideration in structuring the course was Native American children as audience: like all American children, they are exposed to the mainstream society's cultural offerings, including popular culture. But they walk in two worlds, or, as a Lumbee friend once expressed their reality, with a sneaker on one foot and a moccasin on the other. What kinds of stories would delight and instruct them, while addressing the mainstream culture's children at the same time?

There are further preliminary considerations. During the Treaty-making era, although treaties in international law are conducted between sovereign entities, federal law had already classified American Indians as "domestic dependent nations." A predictable rhetoric perceiving them as children or wards under the Great Father's protection ensued, particularly when land cessions became involved. No other American ethnic "minority" is paternally administered by a sub-cabinet agency, in this case the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the U.S. Dept. of the Interior.

In the later nineteenth and well into the twentieth centuries, when assimilation and forced deculturation within government and church-run boarding schools were federal policy after the confinement of Native Americans to reservations, an unforeseen effect of suppressing Native languages and cultural practices was the development of pan-Indian identities and a nascent literature in a new, shared language: English. One way to address a mainstream audience, nineteenth century Indian writers discovered, was via "children's literature." The entrance of American Indian-authored stories into the Euroamerican literary mainstream was thus by dint of their infantilization: (Salishan) Mourning Dove's *Coyote Stories* sanitized the great Trickster; (Dakota) Charles Eastman and his Euroamerican wife Elaine Eastman's *Wigwam Evenings* domesticated traditional narrative; one of (Mohawk) performing artist E. Pauline Johnson's audiences was mass-circulation magazines for children and their parents. The same applies to some of (Yankton Dakota) Zitkala-Sa's work, which we will be reading this semester.

During the same time period, English-born artist Ernest Thompson Seton started the Woodland Indian societies for Canadian and American white youth. In England, the Boy Scouts (founded in 1908) and the Girl Guides (1910) were negligibly influenced by Seton's model, but in North America *The Boy Scout Handbook* evolved from Seton's *The Birch-bark Roll of the Woodland Indians*. This imitative trend survives in YMCA summer camps where Euroamerican children acquire "Indian" names, clan affiliations, and survival skills. However honorable the values taught, Euroamerican children are only playing at being Indians, during "down" time. In the boarding schools, American Indian children were not playing at being white. They had no choice in the matter.

A heavily propagandistic literature took aim at graduates from boarding schools for American Indian children, to ensure that they would maintain the intended allegiance to white nationalism and Christian values. Novelist Leslie Marmon Silko (Laguna Pueblo), doyenne of American Indian women writers of the Southwest, recalls *Stiya: the Story of an Indian Girl*, published by the U.S. War Dept. in 1881 and written by a white woman, Marion Bergess (masquerading as "Tonka," a meaningless name). Bergess had been a teacher and dormitory matron at the notorious Indian Industrial School in Carlisle, PA, whose former military founder Richard Pratt's philosophy was "to kill the Indian to save the child." Silko's great-grandmother and her Aunt Susie had been educated there, and the novel "was the cause of the only big quarrel my great-grandmother ever had with her daughter-in-law, Aunt Susie" ("Books" 161):

The U.S. government had taken every precaution to sever the Indian students' ties with their families and tribes. Children were taken by force, if necessary, put on the train, and sent thousands of miles to the boarding school. The government did not allow the children to return home for visits in the summer. Instead [they] were hired out to Carlisle families for domestic and farm work. The government policymakers believed that if the Indian children were kept far enough away from their families and homeland long enough, the Indian School graduates might melt into the cities in the East to work as maids and farmhands.

[*Stiya*] was written from the point of view of a young Pueblo girl after she has returned home and struggles to maintain her new identity and 'civilized' ways despite growing hostility and pressure from her family and from the Pueblo community. Bergess projected all of her own fears and prejudices toward Pueblo life into her *Stiya* character. [She] has no affection for any family member; every aspect of Pueblo life is repugnant; vile odors and flies abound. *Stiya* is filled with self-loathing when she remembers she grew up in this place. (161-63)

Although, Silko comments, "[t]he old-time Pueblo people abhorred confrontations, especially with family members" (161), a battle royal erupted between the old lady and her daughter-in-law:



discretion. I don't differentiate between excused and unexcused absences. If needed, I will express my concern about absences to you **once**. Keep in mind that you may well get sick (last spring, my classes were devastated by flu and sounded like hospital wards), or have an unavoidable, important conflict at our class time, so please budget your absences for these possibilities. Please allow enough time for commuting and parking if you need to! **Lateness of more than five minutes will count as an absence.** After five minutes or so, entering the classroom simply disrupts it. I prefer instead that you contact me later (or beforehand, if possible). Please keep in mind, though, that my responsibility stops when I tell you what we covered and if you missed any assignments. For lecture notes, you will have to rely on your fellow/sister students. My least favorite questions are, "Did I miss anything important?" and "How many absences do I have?" I am expecting you to keep your own absence log, as **I want you to take responsibility for your own absences, and not always ask me if you have too many.**

**I do not accept any assignments after their due date, unless a genuine emergency or conflict occurs and if, at all possible, you notify me beforehand.**

If you have a disability documented in the Office of Disability Services which may affect your learning, please avail yourself of the resources available at that office. They will advise me as to how I can accommodate your needs.

**A written learning contract:** Just as I have a contract to teach (of which this syllabus is a part), you will have one to learn. I will collect these word-processed, spellchecked documents (submitted in a sheet protector or pocket/wallet folder) at the beginning of class on Weds. Jan. 21st. In it state:

- (1) why you were interested in this course (or, at least, why you wound up in it);
- (2) how you learned about it;
- (3) what your goals are in taking it (what skills or content do you hope to learn?);
- (4) how you intend to achieve these goals, including the concrete steps you will take to obtain the grade you want;
- (5) what rumors you've heard about it, from others or from websites such as RateMyProfessor.com! (One student wrote: "Dr. Gardner is fine, as long as you do your work. DUH!")
- (6) your expectations of me as a teacher;
- (7) your expectations of yourself: what will **you** do to help create a successful class?
- 8) your expectations of your peers;
- 9) your computer skills: Do you use social networking sites? Do you have a Second Life avatar? Games?

You will revise these goals at mid-term, when I will inform you of your progress so far, and again, at semester's end. With hard work, you and I should agree. Write the contract carefully, for it will be an important basis for your final assessment. Please include any other information, such as previous literature or other related courses you may have taken (as well as what critical reading or writing skills you learned in them), what you like to read/view for pleasure; anything else you think it would be helpful for me to know about you (including, if you have a job, how many hours/week and where; the distance you commute to the university). Feel free to approach this requirement creatively: some students have written theirs in "last will and testament" style! One student wrote hers in "Horton Hears a Who" format! The livelier the better!

**Grading** will be based on a 100-point scale: micro-themes (40%), contributions to our Blackboard Vista discussion board (20%), contributions to Dr. Reese's blog (15%) and your final, online project (25%). Each microtheme is worth 5 points, and you are required to answer all of them. Each contribution to the discussion thread is also worth 5 points, and you are required to answer all of them. The grading scale is: an A=90-100; a B=80-89; a C=70-79; a D=60-69. **Those of you enrolled in 5050 will also teach a class, which will involve formulating a microtheme topic and a discussion question deriving from the topic you choose to present.** At semester's end, you will have the opportunity to revise one microtheme and one discussion.

Micro-themes, a form of brief essay, may well be a new experience for you, as they initially were for me. I was impressed with the results! They make splendid preparation for discussion, whether in small groups or a whole class setting. Neither you nor I have to endure extensive reading journals, lengthy research or position papers, massive group projects, or what my former colleague Dr. Jacoby (from whom I borrowed and adapted this technique) called "knuckle-whitening oral presentations." Because they are written in a small space (5x8, and **only** 5x8, index cards I won't accept any other size, or hastily scribbled, last-minute themes on a ripped-out sheet of paper!) you become practiced in stating your ideas clearly and concisely. The themes may be typed, word-processed, hand-printed or hand-written (if legibly, and **only** in dark ink). You will probably use both sides of the card, but you may not write on more than one card. All microthemes must have your name and the microtheme number in their upper right hand corner. Although these are not formal papers therefore, you don't need to bother with introductions and conclusions they must be neatly presented, with correct spelling and grammar. I will collect them at the very beginning of class, another reason not to be late!

I'll be providing you with rubrics for writing microthemes and discussion posts, and posting to Dr. Reese's blog.

I'm also encouraging you to attend one public literary-cultural event, on campus or off: such events—very many of them free—take place at bookstores, community centers and other venues, including on campus (the English Dept.'s Creative Writing Reading Series at the Ritazza in Fretwell is quite popular). Of course, any events by or about American Indians would be most appropriate, and I will keep you posted about any that I know about. I'll award **5% extra credit** if you attend and describe one literary/cultural event, in a format that I call **report/relate/reflect**, which I will discuss further and make available on the course site on Blackboard. You will post your report to the whole class. Sometimes this extra 5% makes all the difference with borderline grades. Please do not wait until the end of the semester (I will not accept reports during the last two weeks of class). You are welcome to attend an event I'm unaware of, but check with me first.

Despite the draconian syllabus tone (what I call my **bitch/monster persona**—49%—the other persona, 51%, is an angel), I do encourage you to be in touch with me as often as you like. You may contact me at my office (Fretwell 290H), by voice mail (704/687 4208) or via e-mail (which I prefer): [sgardner@uncc.edu](mailto:sgardner@uncc.edu). If you call me, make sure to leave your phone number, and speak it slowly! I will announce my walk-in office hours soon; if these are not convenient, you may also make an appointment at another time (give me some alternative meeting times). Please do not hesitate to consult with me outside class at any mutually convenient time. You may also leave notes or coursework in my mailbox at the English Dept. main office (275 Fretwell). Take care that such materials go into my box, not Dr. Gargano's!

I know, from every course concerning American Indians that I've taught over the last eighteen years, that your interest was probably long-standing before you entered this classroom, and will endure long after you leave it. Thank you for your interest in this course, and I hope you will enjoy it as much as I do!

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English 4104/5104: American Indians and Children's Literature

### Research Project Suggestions

As I mentioned in the first week of classes, your research is to consist of a project that you can share with the rest of the members of the class, teachers, librarians/media specialists, and/or parents (if you are already teaching, of course!), with other students in future courses, or with your home community. The project will count as **30 %** of your final grade. The materials to be shared with the class may be presented orally (with appropriate supplementary materials to be distributed to everyone) or on COYOTE-L. (Let me say here that I'm not a great fan of oral presentations, tho' some of you may surprise me. People typically underestimate how much time they will need and the visual materials are sometimes ill-prepared and boring.) If you are more comfortable with the traditional research paper format, that is fine, but you will need to submit it electronically. You may also work together on a project. In short, we are all each other's audience; you are not just proving something to me, but sharing research with your peers. **Please do not hesitate to consult with me**, on e-mail or in person, as soon and as often as we both can! If you wish to work on a project different from those below, that is fine, but please "clear" it with me in advance, so that I can advise you as to whether or not it is "doable." Your project is due at the latest on Dec. . .

1. Many of you are planning to be teachers at specific grade levels, whether of literature or social studies. Prepare an annotated bibliography of sources by and about American Indians at those grade levels.
2. With the advent of resources on the Internet, a wealth of information is available on multi-cultural children's literature in general and Am. Indian children's literature in particular. Investigate one (or a combination) of these sites, which include the American Indian Librarians' Association, Oyate, The Greenfield Review Press and others mentioned on your syllabus. What kinds of information does the site provide? What are the credentials of its providers? What links does it provide to other sites?
3. With the new generation of American Indian writers for children, some of the older "classics," such as the novels of Scott O'Dell, are beginning to seem rather quaint or superficial, however significant they may have been at their original time of publication. Compare some of these with texts (at appropriate reading level) we read in this course or that you discover, and analyze how they differ (if they do). In some instances, it will be possible directly to compare works by a Native and a non-Native writer about the same event, such as the Navajos' Long Walk. You can include reviews or other assessments of the work at the time of first publication and now.
4. There has not been enough time to study traditional modes of American Indian child-rearing and pedagogy, but you might enjoy learning about one, or several cultures in that respect.  
I thought of this one because of the comments some of you made in prompts that one could not teach young children peaceable conflict resolution, yet many Am. Indian societies did live by a harmony ethic. See what you can find out about socialization of traditional Am. Indian children.
5. As you have become aware, many "teachers' favorites" of the recent past, such as **The Education of Little Tree**, **The Indian in the Cupboard** series, and **Brother Eagle, Sister Sky**, are now viewed negatively, particularly by Native reviewers in the fields of education and literature. In addition to these three, there are a number of others that have become regarded as undesirable. Review some more that are not on the "recommended" lists. This could also include books for children by New Age writers purporting to be about or by Indians—as you know, there is a lot of ethnic fraud out there!
6. For those of you with access to school libraries, review the books (and/or other materials, such as videos) that the institution holds. Are there any that you would recommend discarding? Prepare a list for future acquisitions, explaining why they would be of benefit to the school.
7. Most of the authors we are studying have published at least one other children's book (Bruchac has published several dozen!). Provide

an annotated bibliography of works by and about the author for use by another teacher/media specialist/parent. Or you may choose a writer we have not had the time to study: see me for recommendations if you need them.

8. Since most of you will be working in North or South Carolina, visit the web sites of the American Indian tribes located in the area (whether Federally-acknowledged or not) and evaluate the information there. Write an annotated "webography" and/or lesson plans based on what you have learned there. What activities might you find for children based upon visiting these sites?

9. One of the most interesting genres in American literary history is the **captivity narrative**, in which a Euramerican settler is captured by Indians. Colonial leaders such as Benjamin Franklin affected to be puzzled as to why European children often didn't wish to be returned to "civilization," whereas Indian children forced to live in the white settlements did their best to run away as soon as they could. Another variant of the captivity narrative is, of course, **the boarding school memoir**. See me for recommendations of both kinds of texts.

10. Many children's books about Indians are based, or purport to be based, on an "original" "myth" or "legend," and some of the writers explicitly list their sources. Read the sources that the authors consulted, and study how the original material is modified to suit the perceived demands of the modern, mainstream market for children's fiction (or history, or autobiography). This would work particularly well with **The Birchbark House**, and I can refer you to many of the sources that Erdrich consulted.

11. Many of us grew up on the **Little House on the Prairie** series (and its more modern spin-offs), or, in my case, **Caddie Woodlawn** by Carol Ryrie Brink and Conrad Richter's **The Light in the Forest** (which was Disneyfied into a movie with Fess Parker) and **A Country of Strangers**, both of them about white children captured by Indians who are forced to return to their original families during hostage exchanges. How would you evaluate any of these books now?

12. For the artistically gifted among you, study the illustrations in children's books both approved of and "not recommended" by an organization such as Oyate. Explain your evaluations to the rest of us. And why not attempt some illustrations on your own?

13. Another facet of the boarding school tale is the phenomenon referred to as "residential school syndrome," which designates the trauma suffered by the child at the school as well as by her or his descendants (referred to as "intergenerational trauma"). There is a growing body of research concerning this topic, and some Indians are suing the Federal government, religious denominations or the schools themselves for the "loss of childhood." Present some of these cases to us.

14. We have only been able to refer in passing to programs developed for mainstream children such as the Boy and Girl Scouts, the Campfire Girls, and various YW/YMCA summer activities. Using the template of criteria adopted in this course, explain the history/activities of such organizations and evaluate their usefulness. Those of you who were able to visit the Catawba reservation will remember that the bookstore there was selling Ernest Thompson Seton's **Two Little Savages**♦

15. I decided early on that you were all too mature for my toy collection (!), but a visit to Toys 'R Us and other stores, plus a survey of my marketing manuals and similar sources, would make an excellent topic! Develop a list of criteria for parents who wish to buy "Indian toys" or "costumes" for their children.

16. Study professional organizations--such as the National Indian Education Association--and journals--such as **The Journal of American Indian Education**, **Multi-Cultural Review**, **The Journal of Multi-Cultural Counselling**--that focus on the needs of Native American students. Present your findings to our class, and then write some recommendations that could be used by teachers and guidance counselors.

17. If you are interested in Native American perceptions of Thanksgiving, you could prepare an annotated bibliography of sources concerning the topic (including fiction for children, web sites, history texts) for class members, or formulate lesson plans or write a research paper based upon what you discovered.

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## NATIVE AMERICAN INDIAN WOMEN SPRING 2002

ENGL 4002/5002-NO1  
AMST 3000-NO1 (UNCC)  
WMST 4050-NO1  
Dr. Susan Gardner  
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**"A people is not defeated until the hearts of its women are on the ground."  
(Cheyenne saying)**

DESCRIPTION OF COURSE: Historically, in the study of tribal histories and cultures, the experiences of American Indian women have been omitted, distorted, or misrepresented. If there is inclusion, the image of the Indian woman is usually a stereotypical portrayal created by biased perceptions of outsiders, to the extent that Paula Gunn Allen (Laguna/Sioux) has asserted, "Image casting and image control constitute the central process American Indian women must come to terms with, for on that control rests our sense of self, our claim to a past and a future that we define and that we build.... Media images, literary images, and artistic images, particularly those embedded in popular culture, must be changed." In recent decades, however, there has been a concerted effort by a number of scholars,

Native and non-Native, to challenge these images through more thorough and more objective investigations into the traditional and contemporary lives of Indian women. This course will examine both early and recent historical, anthropological and literary writings by and/or about Native American Indian women, our objective being to provide you with views of their world from their perspectives.

Your instructors worked together on various projects throughout the 1990s, and the UNC system president's advocacy of distance learning encouraged us to combine our areas of expertise--literary criticism (Dr. Gardner) and history (Dr. Oxendine)--in this medium. In addition to enjoying this opportunity to teach together while located at different sites, we hope our students will equally enjoy the enhanced possibilities for interaction available through electronic technologies. You have our thanks for your interest in this interdisciplinary, multi-media adventure! Dr. Oxendine (Lumbee) is Chair of the American Indian Studies Department at UNC Pembroke. She earned her doctorate in American Studies at the University of Minnesota with a concentration in American Indian Studies, and has worked with several tribal, state and national agencies in this field. Dr. Gardner specializes in American Indian literatures and film, and has supplemented conventional scholarly research in these areas by attending the Oglala Lakota Tribal College's summer cultural institute at Pine Ridge reservation, as well as by spending time on the Crow Creek and Lower Brule reservations, all in South Dakota. Both Dr. Oxendine and Dr. Gardner, with their students, have collected oral histories from Indian people in Robeson Co. and Charlotte, NC. This is the second time we are teaching this course together, as we enjoyed our collaboration and our diverse mix of students so much in Fall 2000.

READINGS: Your textbooks are **Spider Woman's Granddaughters: Traditional Tales and Contemporary Writing by American Indian Women** by Paula Gunn Allen; **Waterlily** by Ella Cara Deloria (Dakota); **Sifters: Native American Women's Lives**, ed. Theda Purdue; and **Bead on an Anthill: A Lakota Childhood**, by Delphine Red Shirt (Lakota). Other readings will also be assigned.

#### COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- (1) Attendance is required; excessive absences of any sort (we do not differentiate between "excused" and "non-excused") will affect your grade. Please do not be tardy; this is very distracting on live, simultaneously broadcast TV!
- (2) Weekly micro-themes (see below), which will count for **50%** of your final grade;
- (3) A mid-term exam, which will be in take-home, short-essay format: **25%** of your final grade;
- (4) A retrospective final project: **25%** of your final grade.

All students must use email in this course, whether through a private Internet service provider or through your respective universities. As the course progresses, we expect lively conversations to take place with instructors and among students, and since our studio time is limited to twice per week, email is an indispensable means of providing more contact. Whatever your home institution, please feel free to contact either instructor. **If you are not now on email, your first step for this course should be to acquire an email account (for free) at your university.** Dr. Gardner will then set up a class listserve so that we can all communicate with each other.

GRADING: As noted above, at the discretion of the instructors, a pattern of repeated absences and tardiness will negatively affect your grade. Each instructor will grade the students at her own institution. The grading scale is:

90-100 = A  
80-89 = B  
70-79 = C  
60-69 = D  
Below 60 = F

We will award **extra credit up to 15%** (five points per event) if you attend an Indian-sponsored or -related event on campus or in the community. We will alert you to these, and you may well discover some more on your own. These points will be added to your mid-term and final grades.

HONOR CODE: Each student is bound by the UNCP and UNCC codes of student academic integrity. UNCC students are also governed by the English Dept.'s multi-cultural teaching policy.

#### ETIQUETTE IN THE STUDIO DURING TRANSMISSION:

Basically, we simply want you to relax and enjoy the possibilities for interaction provided by instruction at two sites! During transmission, however, conversations among yourselves, **even if whispered**, can be picked up by the mikes (and heard 112 miles away!), and you also need to be careful when consulting books or papers. **It will by far be best if you arrive slightly ahead of time, and have all your books and notebooks out before the class starts; similarly, before the end, please don't start stuffing backpacks, briefcases, totes or purses!** Cell phones or pagers must be turned off. Additionally, no food is allowed, and only drinks in non-drip sports containers are. **These are university regulations.** After a session or two, we hope that the technology will become "transparent," i.e., you should not be overly aware of it, and not inhibited by it.

Some of your assignments will be **micro-themes**, a form of brief essay, which may be a new experience for you. They make splendid preparation for lectures and discussion, whether in small groups or a whole class setting. Neither you nor we have to endure extensive reading journals, massive group projects, or "knuckle-whitening" oral presentations, and you regularly know how you stand in the course. Because they are written in a small space (5x8, and **only** 5x8, index cards--we won't accept any other size, or hastily scribbled, last-minute themes on a ripped-out sheet of paper!)--you become practiced in stating your ideas clearly and concisely. The themes may be typed, word-processed, hand-printed or hand-written (if legibly, and **only** in dark ink). You may use both sides of the card, but you may not write on more than one card. All micro-themes must have your name and the micro-theme number in their upper right hand corner. Although these are not formal papers--therefore, you don't need introductions and conclusions--they must be neatly presented, with correct spelling and grammar. **Each microtheme must include several quotations from your assigned readings, including the page numbers.** We will assign a new one every Tuesday, and collect them at the very beginning of class the following Tuesday, a good reason not to be late! Some examples of the forms a micro-theme could take are the following:

- offering and defending an informed opinion ("Do you think Paula Gunn Allen is correct in stating that all American Indian women have been in 'a state of war' since 1492?");
- recording, comparing, contrasting, analyzing and evaluating data ("Choosing any two of the modern selections we have read so far, explain how the theme of the lost or abducted child in oral traditions both appears and is modified in modern stories");
- applying newly learned concepts ("Why do we claim that Ella Deloria alone is not the 'author' of Waterlily?")
- constructing and defending an argument ("Red Shirt's versions of traditional Lakota religious practices cannot be as accurate as Deloria's, since her elders were not as conversant with the traditional beliefs").

#### COURSE OUTLINE:

##### **1. American Indian Women in Oral Traditions:**

"Oshkikwe's Baby," 43-47, and "American Horse," 48-61, in SWG;  
"The White Buffalo Woman" (handout)  
"The Woman Who Fell from the Sky," SWG 65-68, + Joy Harjo poem (handout)  
"Evil Kachina Steals Yellow Woman" and "Sun Steals Yellow Woman," SWG 210-217  
"Yellow Woman," SWG 228

##### **2. American Indian Women in Cultural Crisis: the Early American Colonial Period:**

"Pocahantas," 14-28; "Mary Musgrove," 29-47; "Molly Brant," 48-59, and "Sacagawea," 60-76 in Sifters

##### **3. Ella Deloria, Waterlily, and Fictionalized Ethnography: Pre-Reservation Life on the Northern Great Plains**

##### **4. American Indian Women Crossing Cultures: 19<sup>th</sup> Century Resistance and Cultural Mediation**