

Oral Traditions through Contemporary Literatures Traditional Oral Literatures

10:00-11:40 McClintok 122 TR

Hedge Coke

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Texts:

- *The Sacred Tree*. Judy Bopp, Michael Bopp, Lee Brown, Phil Lane, et al. Twin Lakes: Lotus Life Publications, 1989. ISBN: 0-941524-58-2. Required.
- *Lies to Live By*. Lois Beardslee. Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2003. ISBN: 0870136631. Required.
- *Voices from the Four Directions*. Brian Swann, Editor. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004. ISBN: 0-8032-9310-0. Required.
- *American Indian Trickster Tales*. Richard Erdoes and Alfonso Ortiz. New York: Penguin, 1999. ISBN: 0-14-02.7771-4. Required.
- *The World Turned Upside Down*. Colin Calloway, Editor. New York: Bedford St. Martins, 1994. ISBN: 0-312-8350-5. Required.
- *The Lakota Way*. Joseph Marshall III. Penguin (Non-Classics), 2002. ISBN: 0142196096

Films, handouts and guest presentations are anticipated as supplements to the texts listed above.

Traditional Oral Literatures: Selected Native American Cultures, 4 cr.

Satisfies the foundations of humanities requirement.

Satisfies the upper division liberal studies requirement.

Satisfies the world cultures requirement.

Prerequisites: EN 211, completion of communication requirement and sophomore standing.

Investigation of Native American Oratory and traditional story. Development and influences will be considered. Guest traditional practitioners to supplement as available. Emphasis on Eastern Woodlands/Great Lakes Anishinaabe works. Preparatory for contemporary Native literatures.

This course provides a discussion of Native American traditional teaching stories from several cultures, with additional emphasis on the traditions of the Eastern Woodlands and Great Lakes Anishinaabe people, and offers useful background for studies in modern literature written by Native Americans. The course presents poetry, stories and songs that have been transcribed and/or translated from oral tradition, as well as possible guest teachings by elders and spiritual leaders of the Great Lakes Ojibwa communities, and by elders of other Native cultures when feasible.

Objectives:

- 1) To familiarize students with Indigenous oratory and oral tradition and their place, purpose and relativity in American Indian literatures.
- 2) To familiarize students with the great and vast cultures, cultural value of Native peoples, and to gain some understanding of the sense of purpose and place in the world realized by Anishinaabe and Eastern Woodlands peoples in this local area and region of North America today.
- 3) To enable students to begin to discern differences in philosophical approach, intent and method in Indigenous oral and written literatures and that of such literatures from the Euro-American traditions.
- 4) To develop respect, appreciation and understanding of Native American literatures and oral traditions.
- 5) To gain enough familiarity and understanding of these genres to allow students to participate in thoughtful discussion and making a case for preservation of these literatures.
- 6) To develop understanding of impact of story on culture and culture on story.
- 7) To gain understanding of impact of story on society and society on story.

Copies:

If you need bring in print copies of papers, for any reason, the following will apply:

Copies should be legible, black on white, letter-sized, and single-sided. Prose should be double-spaced to allow for annotations.

Copies must be bound and collated.

Copies must have author's name and contact information (address/phone/email), suitable margins on every side, and come in 12 point Times New Roman or New York font.

Do not, under any circumstances, give the instructor, or a peer the only copy of your original work during this course. Keep a back-up. If you are allowed to email something, bring a hard copy to the next class as well.

Quizzes:

May consist of set questions and/or critical essays demonstrating knowledge of subject matter as assigned. There will be at least six during course. May be take-home or in-class. 1.5 to 2 pages in length (average).

Midterm project

Take-home 4-5 page essay exam. Contribution of personal interpretation is required.

Journal:

Journals will be kept to record responses to the readings we do as a class and groups presenting. In the latter portion of the semester, the journal will also assist in accumulating information regarding student research into Indigenous literatures, stories, songs, oratory, and other works considered in the search for familiarity with the work and for the purpose of writing a research paper for this class.

A midterm report should be written detailing what journal holds by this time in the semester and regarding student understanding of the value of collecting information.

A final report should be submitted with research paper indicating same as above.

Journals will also be used for film screenings and group work. Questions may be emailed to class to respond to additionally.

Event Attendance:

Attendance will be required at outside (perhaps still on-campus) events/excursions. Class time has been stipulated for such attendance though attendance will occur during event times as agreed to by the class after discussion of such. These events are intended to broaden the experience of in-class time work and participation will count for credit. Short response papers submitted following events will count as 1% extra credit on your final grade.

Research Paper:

A minimum 6 page-length research paper will be required of each student. This paper should be an in-depth view into a single piece of work (story, song, short personal narrative); or a selection from a longer work (Native American autobiography/memoir, collection of stories). The primary source used should be the entry into a greater research including cultural relativity to tribal, or historical information; political implications; personal interviews; literary criticisms; and/or comparative works.

Group Presentations:

Will be required and graded as collaborative effort. All members of groups must participate equally in group assignments and presentations. Presentations will consist of lessons regarding various Indigenous and oratory related experience and strategies and may include: tribal government, stories, culture, tribal entities, representational artistic works, cultural approach, historical and current events as assigned. Visual aides, handouts, interactive lessons, photographs, maps, and other materials are appreciated and recommended. Such information should enlighten the class in areas that may be less than clear in an oral presentation; to supplement, rather than suffice in place of such.

Note:

The approach of this course is tribal oratory-related and strategy exercises in group work will occur consistently throughout the course. The course will be presented in a style that most students are unfamiliar with, yet is essential to learning the fundamentals of the dynamics of story in oral traditions and Indigenous societies. Sociology majors may note the relativity of that discipline to our approach.

One set of small group work will lead toward presentations on specific arenas and/or regions of study of oratory.

A second set of small group work will establish the role and importance of story in Indigenous societies as well as the impact of story on culture and of culture on story.

Final project:

TBA.

Grading:

Assignments are graded as follows:

93-100=A
90-92=A-
88-89=B+
83-87=B
80-82=B-
78-79=C+
73-77=C
70-72=C-

Final 100% Grade (or portion thereof) is earned in percentages following:

Participation in presentations, exercises and events 25%

Quizzes 15%
Midterm 15%
Journal 10%
Paper(s) 15%
Final 20%

Missed Assignments:

Missed assignments and late assignments will present a major problem. You are expected to make deadlines on all assignments and be present for class. Expect at least a 2% loss on final grade for missing assignments and a letter grade drop for late assignments (on that particular assignment piece) unless there are extenuating and previously excused emergency circumstances (if so, no penalty will be accrued). Extensions on writing assignments and makeup work will not be given unless there is a case of adequately documented illness or emergency. In that case, two page papers will be assigned as make-up work for each missed session.

Missed group work will also present major issues. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to confer with classmates to discuss what you have missed, particularly with corresponding group members.

Further Expectations:

You are expected to be present in each class during the semester. If you intend to miss class, let me know as soon as you do. Three late arrivals will be recorded as one absence. You will be dropped from class if you accumulate three absences. You must participate fully in exercises (in-class) experiencing oratory and presentations thereof. Please not points for participation above. Reading assignments are required and are expected to be done in a timely matter pertinent to discussion and presentations. Please regularly check your email for updates, or class announcements.

Items on the syllabus are subject to change depending upon creative needs of the class and unexpected available resources. Studious creativity thrives on the force of improvisational spirit. Adaptation and flux during process are to be expected, rather than disputed. Generally speaking, these changes will be discussed with the class upon occurrence.

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty are serious matters. Please refer to your student handbook.

Your work is the work I want to see. This is your time to demonstrate your understanding of the course materials and how you amass information. Your work is important to this class and to me as your instructor. Quote, cite, and note!

From the NMU Student Handbook:

"No students shall submit as their own to an instructor any work which contains ideas or materials taken from another without full acknowledgement of the author and source." (Student Code, 2.2.3.02).

Alexander Lindey defined plagiarism as "the false assumption of authorship: the wrongful act of taking the product of another person's mind, and presenting it as one's own" (*Plagiarism and Originality* [New York: Harper, 1952]). Plagiarism, cheating and other dishonest behaviors directly related to academic performance are subject to penalty at NMU. Work submitted in this class is to be your own. If you plagiarize, you'll fail. To avoid any suspicion of such, always footnote properly and give where credit is due. Respect others' work, including written work. If you are quoting a webpage, quote the page. Do not submit under auspices that the quote is your own.

The greatest compliment is acknowledging the impact of someone else's work on your own.

ADA:

If you have a need for medically, or disability related special services, please inform the Coordinator of Disability Services. Reasonable and effective accommodations and services will be provided to students if requests are made in a timely manner, with appropriate documentation, in accordance with federal, state and university guidelines.

Statement:

My teaching goals (for this course) include inspiring thought and thoughtfulness, instilling responsibility for learning about Indigenous cultures, encouraging development of theoretical and philosophical arenas relating to such cultures, strengthening the ongoing search for analysis, furthering development in scholarly approach necessary to place value upon the works from Indigenous peoples we will regard in this course and encouraging future participation in gaining knowledge of Indigenous cultures and works thereof and the strategy of cultural oratory and its effect on society.

Syllabus

Week one:

- 1/17 Introduction of syllabus. Groups assigned for the semester. Discussion of groups; Course intro continues: Oratory, telling stories.
- 1/19 The Sacred Tree, discussion, journals, quiz notes. Group introductions noting histories, present experience, roles.

Week two:

- 1/24 The Sacred Tree quiz, discussion, journals. Group work. Stories of origin.
- 1/26 Group One: Ojibwe history, material culture, and migration story. The Lakota Way. (possible speaker)

Week three:

- 1/31 Oratory; purposeful tale. Lies to Live By, quiz, discussion. Group work. Principles/values. Adoption.
- 2/1 Doe Boy film presentation, journal writing.*

Week four:

- 2/7 Storytelling by local guest (Shirley Brozzo). The Lakota Way.*
- 2/9 Lies to Live By, discussion, journals. Group Two: Ojibwa traditions, songs, stories, beliefs, contemporary practices. Group work. Fears/taboo. Ostracization.

Week five:

- 2/14 Resonance. Group Three: Sub arctic, Yukon, Alaskan Natives. Group work. Approach/demeanor. Societal systems
- 2/16 Quiz, begin Voices, journals. Possible visit by regional Native historian/educator (possibly Pat LeBeau).

Week six:

- 2/21 Possible visit by local Language/Culture presenter (Don Chosa). The Lakota Way.*
- 2/23 Voices, North, discussion, journals. Group work. Cosmology. Belief system. Purpose. Dreaming. Prophecy.

Week seven:

- 2/28 Quiz, begin Voices, West, discussion. Group Four: US Northwest Coastal and California Native Peoples. Group work. Paternal/Matriarchal. Elders.
- 3/2 Journal reports written. Midterm project due to be dropped off. Quiz online. Journals become research tools. Midterm project due.

Week eight:

Spring Break

Week nine:

- 3/14 Voices, South, discussion, Group Five: US Southwestern Native Peoples.
- 3/16 Journals, Group Six: US Southeastern Native Peoples. Group work. Clans. Marriages. The Lakota Way.

Week ten

- 3/21 Beyond Columbus film presentation, journal writing. *
- 3/23 Voices, East, discussion. Group: Trickster Tales. Group work. Familial structure. Children.

Week eleven

- 3/28 American Indian Trickster Tales, quiz. Abstract for Research Paper is due.
- 3/30 Group Seven: US Northeastern Native Peoples. Group work. Symbolism. Future. Goals. The Lakota Way.

Week twelve

- 4/4 Journal, research debriefing. Group work. Forms of expression: arts, presentations, building, adornment.
- 4/6 American Indian Trickster Tales. Film TBA. *(?)

Week thirteen

- 4/11 Group: Early contact; Conferences begin. The World Turned Upside Down. The Lakota Way.
- 4/13 Research Paper due. Groups gather to discuss final oratory presentations.

Week fourteen

- 4/18 The World Turned Upside Down. Group work. Ceremonials. The Lakota Way.
- 4/20 The World Turned Upside Down. Group work. Celebrations, honorings.

Week fifteen

- 4/25 Presentations. Oratory final project TBA. Finals
- 4/27 Presentations. Oratory final project TBA.

Exam week

- Conferences.

*Texts subject to change. Most of these texts were selected by my great colleague Melissa Hearn prior to my recreating the course with a sociological approach. I intend to ensure students can use books already on hand, thus kept most of them for the time being.