

## Representations of Gender and Sexuality in Native American Literature

Class Meets: Tues/Thurs 8:30-9:45am in Carlos Hall 212

Professor: Dr. Mandy Suhr-Sytsma, [msuhrsy@emory.edu](mailto:msuhrsy@emory.edu), 404-727-6407

Office: Callaway N213, Office Hours: Tues 1-3, Wed 10-12, Thurs 10-12, & by appointment

**Course Description:** This course will focus on themes related to gender & sexuality. We will read texts by a variety of American Indian writers including Louise Erdrich, Deborah Miranda, Joy Harjo, Craig Womack, and others. Texts will include fiction, poetry, and non-fiction. We'll focus on work published in recent decades but will read some earlier texts as well. Requirements include reading, participation in class discussion, informal writing assignments, contributions to a collaborative digital mapping project, a group presentation, two formal papers, and a midterm and final exam.

### Required Texts

1. *Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir* by Deborah Miranda. Heyday, 2013.
2. *Drowning in Fire* by Craig Womack. U of Arizona P, 2001.
3. *The Round House* by Louise Erdrich. Harper, 2012.
4. *Sovereign Erotics: A Collection of Two-Spirit Literature*. Ed. Qwo-Li Driskill, Daniel Heath Justice, Deborah Miranda, and Lisa Tatonetti. U of Arizona P, 2011.
5. *Queer Indigenous Studies: Critical Interventions in Theory, Politics, and Literature*. Ed. Qwo-Li Driskill, Chris Finley, Brian Joseph Gilley, and Scott Lauria Morgensen. U of Arizona P, 2011.
6. Additional texts distributed in class and/or through the course website or Blackboard site.

### Course Goals

By the end of this course, you should be able to

1. Demonstrate a familiarity with a variety of Native American literary texts representing a range of genres, time periods, and Native communities.
2. Analyze a range of theoretical and practical issues related to gender/sexuality, and explain the significance of these issues for Indigenous peoples and literatures. As part of this work, identify ways in which Native American literature imagines Indigenous sovereignty as well as ways it represents, responds to, and resists colonialism and heteropatriarchy.
3. Situate Native American literary texts in specific geographic, cultural, and political contexts. As part of this situating work, closely read specific passages from Native American literary texts to advance your understanding of those texts as well as these related contexts.
4. Find, follow, and thoughtfully engage Native news media sources. Demonstrate a growing familiarity with current events and issues of concern in Indian country as represented in these sources, and relate your knowledge of these events/issues to Indigenous literary texts.
5. Critically engage scholarship from Indigenous studies in relation to literary texts.

### Course Requirements and Grading

#### Components of Course with Proportion of Total Grade:

|   |     |     |
|---|-----|-----|
| Attendance/Participation:                 | 10% |     |
| Weekly Facebook Posts                     | 10% |     |
| Midterm Exam                              |     | 10% |
| Final Exam                                | 15% |     |
| Group Presentations (Including Map Notes) | 10% |     |
| Paper 1 and Related Map Note              |     | 20% |
| Paper 2                                   |     | 25% |

#### Grades and their numerical values:

|           |           |           |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| A: 93-100 | B-: 80-82 | D+: 67-69 |
| A-: 90-92 | C+: 77-79 | D: 63-66  |
| B+: 87-89 | C: 73-76  | D-: 60-62 |
| B: 83-86  | C-: 70-72 | F: 0-59   |

In accordance with university guidelines, "A" work is *superior*, not very good or above average. It meets assignment requirements and far exceeds expectations. "B" work is *above average*. It meets requirements and shows excellence in some aspects. "C" work is *satisfactory*. It meets all basic requirements. "D" work does not fully meet basic requirements. "F" work falls short of basic requirements in several ways.

#### Components of Course with Descriptions:

##### **Attendance/Participation**

Attendance and participation are worth 10% of your total course grade. If you have three or more unexcused absences, you will not be able to get higher than a C for your attendance/participation grade. In order to get an A, you need to regularly come to class on time and prepared. You also need to participate attentively during lecture, discussion, group work, activities, and peer presentations. Participating attentively includes taking notes, listening, and at least occasionally contributing to the conversation. Your performance on pop quizzes (if we have any) will also affect this grade. I will let you know how you are doing with attendance/participation at midterm and whenever you ask.

If you must miss a class, you need to talk to me in advance to get the absence excused or as soon as possible after the absence if you are gone because of a sudden illness or emergency. You can get full participation credit for an excused absence and partial participation credit for an unexcused absence if you do an appropriate make-up assignment within one week of the class period you miss. If you miss lecture or discussion, you can complete an appropriate make-up assignment by getting the notes from a classmate, talking with a classmate about what you missed, and writing a 1-2 page reflection essay on how 2-3 specific elements of the lecture/discussion affect your interpretation of course texts and/or your approach to a course assignment. If you miss an activity, you should talk with a classmate about what you missed, complete a modified version of the activity, and submit written evidence of your completion of the activity.

In addition to comprising a distinct 10% of your course grade, attendance/participation will have a major impact on other aspects of your grade because your exams will test you on material from class lecture/discussion and because you will need to use skills we practice in

class to succeed in your papers and presentations. Plus, you have unique contributions to make, and we want to hear them!

### **Weekly Facebook Posts**

Weekly Facebook posts are worth 10% of your total course grade. You need to post at least one comment every week by 5pm Thursday. You need to comment on at least one of your classmates' posts every week by 5pm Friday. Posts should be short (2-5 sentences) and should relate to the course texts/activities for that week. In your posts, you can comment on a passage from a course text, comment on something said during class, ask a question about a course text, draw a connection between two course texts, and/or share a link to an article/blog/website that relates to something from one of the course texts. In your comments on classmates' posts, you can respond to their comments/questions, respond to material from a link they share, or share an additional related link. If you consistently follow all of these guidelines, you'll earn an A for this component. If you don't, you won't. I'll let you know how you're doing with the posts at midterm and whenever you ask.

### **Midterm Exam and Final Exam**

The midterm exam is worth 10% of your total course grade. The final exam is worth 15% of your total course grade. The format for both exams will be short and long essay prompts drawn from course texts along with class lectures, discussions, activities, and presentations. You will be required to demonstrate that you have read all of the required course texts carefully. Since the exam questions will be drawn, in part, from class lectures, discussions, activities, and presentations, you will also need to attend class, take notes, and participate attentively in order to succeed on the exams. The midterm exam will take place on February 27<sup>th</sup>. The final exam will take place on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. The final exam will be cumulative. Attendance at both exams is mandatory. Make-up exams will only be offered in the event of severe illness or emergency.

### **Group Presentations (Including Map Notes): Mapping Native News**

Your contribution to a group presentation is worth 10% of your total course grade. Your presentation will be based on your group's research into a topic currently being address in the Native news media that somehow relates to the gender/sexuality issues we are addressing in this course. You will find 3-5 news media sources that address the topic, identify some key issues, questions, or debates reflected in those sources, and situate the topic in relation to at least one geographic location. As part of the presentation, you will write and then present a brief map note on the Native American Studies digital map that our class is creating in collaboration with a class at Kennesaw State University. We will practice creating map notes during class prior to this assignment. You will receive additional detailed guidelines for the group presentation soon.

### **Paper 1 and Related Map Note: Situating Native Poetry**

Your first paper and a related map note are, together, worth 20% of your total course grade. The paper will be 4-6 pages. The map note will be one short paragraph. For both the paper and the map note, you will situate one of the poems from the *Sovereign Erotics* anthology in a particular location. The location could be the Indigenous nation (or one of the Indigenous nations) the writer belongs to, another community the writer belongs to that has a specific geographic location (many contributors to the anthology belong to the two-spirit community of San Francisco, for example, which has a specific geographic location whereas the community of Native American academics does not), or another place of significance in the poem. You will consult 1-4 sources about the location in which you are situating the poem. All of the following may be relevant (and therefore acceptable) sources, depending on your chosen location: the official website of a tribal nation or Indigenous organization, a blog, an article from the Native news media, or a scholarly article or book chapter. In the paper itself, you need to carefully read passages from the poem as well as your source/s in order to explain how situating the poem in the location helps us to better understand/analyze/engage/raise questions about the both the poem and the location. You will soon receive additional detailed guidelines and example topics for this paper assignment.

### **Paper 2: Making Native Lit Speak to the News, and Vice Versa**

Your second paper is worth 25% of your total course grade. It will be 5-7 pages long. To research and write the paper, you will draw on the news media sources that you consult for your group presentations and, possibly, additional sources that you read as assigned course texts or that find on your own (you are welcome, but *not* required, to use additional sources). In the paper itself, you will make an inquiry-based, argument-driven analysis that draws connections between one of the major literary texts from the course--*Drowning in Fire*, *Bad Indians*, or *The Round House*--and the topic you research for your group presentation (or a sub-topic or related topic). You need to substantially reference at least two other sources in addition to the literary text. You should carefully engage specific passages from the literary text as well as your other sources in order to pursue a specific line of inquiry/argument that somehow addresses these larger questions: How can we better understand both the topic and the literary text by reading them in relation to one another?; And how can the work you are doing with the texts incite further research and/or activism? You will receive detailed guidelines for this paper assignment later in the semester.

### **Course Policies**

#### **Academic Integrity**

Emory College has provided the following statement to be included in syllabi across the college:

The honor code is in effect throughout the semester. By taking this course, you affirm that it is a violation of the code to cheat on exams, to plagiarize, to deviate from the teacher's instructions about collaboration on work that is submitted for grades, to give false information to a faculty member, and to undertake any other form of academic misconduct. You agree that the teacher is entitled to move you to another seat during examinations, without explanation. You also affirm that if you witness others violating the code you have a duty to report them to the honor council.

See the full Honor Code at: [http://catalog.college.emory.edu/academic/policy/honor\\_code.html](http://catalog.college.emory.edu/academic/policy/honor_code.html). I highly recommend reviewing the appendix on the use of sources before completing any major assignments for this course. I am happy to address any questions you have related to using sources and avoiding plagiarism. Most students plagiarize because they panic. Once you understand the rules, you'll best avoid plagiarism by staying on top of your work and in communication with me.

#### **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

Emory University complies with the regulations of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and offers accommodations to students with disabilities. If you are in need of a classroom accommodation, please make an appointment with me to discuss this as soon as possible. All information will be held in the strictest confidence. If you prefer, you can ask the Office of Disability Services to notify me of the accommodations you require. They will explain what accommodations are required but will not reveal the reasons for the accommodation. I then may need to speak with you further to clarify how to proceed with specific accommodations. For more

information, please visit the Office of Disability Services website at <http://www.ods.emory.edu/> or contact the office by phone at (404) 727-9877 [voice] or (404) 712-2049 [TDD].

### **Attendance and Make-up Work**

See the Attendance/Participation entry in the Course Requirements part of the syllabus.

### **Email**

Please check your university email at least once daily, Mon-Fri. I generally respond to email at least once daily excepting for Sundays and holidays. You can therefore generally expect an answer to email within 24 hours. Email me to make appointments, ask brief questions, or let me know you'll be absent due to illness or emergency. Please include your full name in all emails, and keep them professional and appropriate. I will not discuss grades, plagiarism cases, whether or not an absence will be excused, or complex questions about your writing over email. Come by my office hours or make an appointment to discuss such matters in person. I prefer to meet in person whenever possible since talking face-to-face is usually more efficient and effective than via e-mail.

### **Late Work**

Late assignments will be docked a full letter grade as soon as they are late, on the day that they are due (even if they are just a few minutes late). They will be docked an additional letter grade the following day and every day thereafter until they are turned in. This applies to Facebook posts and other short assignments as well as major paper assignments. The two big papers for the course include multiple components (proposal, first draft, and final draft.) If *any* of these components is late, the total grade for the entire project will be docked. Completing your assignments on time is important not only for your individual success but also for the entire class's productivity as you will often work collaboratively. Therefore, exceptions to this late work policy will be rare, limited to cases of documented disability, serious illness, or emergency.

### **Respect**

We will discuss some complicated and controversial topics this term, and you will make yourselves vulnerable by sharing your ideas and writing with one another. I will do my part to create a safe space in which all students can learn. I ask that you do the same, treating one another with patience, honesty, and respect both in person and online. Like the authors we study, we will at times disagree; it would make for a boring class if we didn't! We ought to respect one another even when we deeply disagree and listen to one another carefully, remaining open to the possibility of actually having our own minds changed sometimes.

### **Saving your Work**

You should save hard and electronic copies of all of your work (including notes and informal assignments) for the duration of the course. Save everything electronically often (every few minutes as you are working) and in at least two places (such as on a memory stick and emailed to yourself). Losing your work because of computer failure, a power outage, etc. will not be an acceptable excuse for turning it in late since this can be easily prevented by saving often and in multiple locations.

### **Additional Support**

#### **Emory Writing Center**

The Emory Writing Center offers 45-minute individual conferences to Emory College and Laney Graduate School students. Our discussion- and workshop-based approach enables writers of all levels to see their writing with fresh eyes and to practice a variety of strategies for writing, revising, and editing. The EWC is a great place to bring any project--from traditional papers to websites--at any stage in your composing process. EWC tutors can talk with you about your purpose, organization, audience, design choices, or use of sources. They can also work with you on sentence-level concerns (including grammar and word choice), but they won't proofread for you. Instead, they'll discuss strategies and resources you can use to become a better editor of your own work.

The EWC is located in Callaway N-212. We encourage writers to schedule appointments in advance as we can take walk-ins on a limited basis only. We require hard copies of traditional paper drafts and encourage you to bring a laptop if you're working on a digital or multi-modal text. Please bring a copy of your assignment instructions, too. In addition to our regular conferences in Callaway, we host Studio Hours every Tuesday from 7-9 pm in Woodruff Library 214. Studio Hours provide a supportive, focused workspace and are open to all students. EWC tutors circulate to encourage writers, provide resources, and address questions. For more information about the EWC, or to make an appointment, visit <http://writingcenter.emory.edu>.

#### **Tutoring for Multilingual Students**

If you are a multilingual student and English is not your first language, you may benefit from working with trained ESL Tutors. These tutors are undergraduates who will support the development of both your English language and writing skills. Like Writing Center tutors, ESL tutors will not proofread your work. Language is best learned through interactive dialogue, so come to an ESL tutoring session ready to collaborate! ESL tutors will meet with you in designated locations on campus for 1-hour appointments, and they will help you at any stage of the process of developing your written work or presentation. You may bring your work on a laptop or on paper.

In Spring 2014, a new scheduling system called ASST will replace TutorTrac for ESL tutoring appointments. Visit <http://college.emory.edu/home/academic/learning/esl/tutoring/index.html> to schedule an appointment and view appointment policies. If you do not have a scheduled appointment, you may use the Academic ESL Skills Lab, located in Room 422 of Woodruff Library (next to the Language Center). Here, you may have less time with a tutor if other students are waiting, but you can find drop-in support just when you need it. View hours at: <http://college.emory.edu/home/academic/learning/esl/lab.html>. Go to:

<http://college.emory.edu/home/academic/learning/esl/index.html> for information about other ESL services. You can also contact Jane O'Connor, Director of ESL Services ([jcoconn@emory.edu](mailto:jcoconn@emory.edu)) or Denise Dolan, Assistant Director of ESL Services ([denise.dolan@emory.edu](mailto:denise.dolan@emory.edu)).

### **A Final Word: Talk to Me!**

Talk to me! I'm happy to talk with you individually at any point in the semester about your ideas, your writing, or your progress in the

course. In addition to office hours, you can email me to set up an alternative time to talk in person or by phone. I love discussing Native American literature, and I love teaching. I look forward to hearing your ideas about the course texts as well as about how we can make this class a rich experience for everyone; it's why I'm here!

## Schedule

### Intro: Why Gender/Sexuality Matters in American Indian History, Literature, & Sovereignty

- Week One: Tues 1/14 Course Introduction: Watch/discuss clips from *Pocahontas* and *Twilight*; Read/discuss Course Syllabus & Paula Gunn Allen's "Some Like Indians Endure" (SE 21-24)
- Thurs 1/16 Reading: Vine Deloria Jr.'s Ch. 1 of *Custer Died for Your Sins*: "Indians Today, The Real and The Unreal" (Blackboard, 27 pp); Mark Rifkin's Intro (only pp. 1-13) to *The Erotics of Sovereignty* (Blackboard); Kim Shuck's "Warrior" (SE 25); Malea Powell's "A meditation" (SE 84-85); Michael Koby's "Santa Claus, Indiana" (SE 48)  
Optional: *Custer Died* Ch. 2: "Laws and Treaties" (Blackboard); The Rest of the Intro (pp. 13-44) to *The Erotics of Sovereignty* (Blackboard)  
\*Don't forget Facebook posts due this & every week by Thurs & Fri.
- Week Two: Tues 1/21 Reading: Andrea Smith's "Heteropatriarchy and the Three Pillars of White Supremacy: Rethinking Women of Color Organizing" (Blackboard, 8 pp); Chris Finley's "Decolonizing the Queer Native Body (and Recovering the Native Bull-Dyke)" (QIS 31-42); and Thomas King's "'You'll Never Believe What Happened' is Always a Great Way to Start" (Blackboard, 29 pp)
- Thurs 1/23 Reading: Joel Water's "Kid Icarus" (SE 28-29); D. M. O'Brien's "Living Memory" (SE 51-52); William Raymond Taylor's "Gathering of Nations" (SE 53); Qwo-Li Driskill's "Love Poem, After Arizona" (SE 86); start *Drowning in Fire* (or you'll be swamped next week!)  
Class Activity: Brainstorm for Paper 1

### Unit 1: Recovering Two-Spirit Stories, "Reimagining Nation"

- Week Three: Tues 1/28 Reading: Qwo-Li Driskill's "D4Y DCβ (Asegi Ayetl: Cherokee Two-Spirit People Reimagining Nation)" (QIS 97-112); Craig Womack's *Drowning in Fire* 1-79  
Major Assignment Due: Proposal for Paper 1
- Thurs 1/30 Reading: *Drowning in Fire* 80-133; Womack's Ch. 1 of *Red on Red*: "The Creek Nation" (Blackboard, 24 pp)  
Optional: *Red on Red* Intro (overview of Womack's landmark project) and Ch. 3 "In the Storyway" (includes amazing close reading of a traditional Creek story about a turtle who looks up women's dresses)  
Class Activity: *Drowning in Fire* Map Notes
- Week Four: Tues 2/4 Reading: *Drowning in Fire* 134-247
- Thurs 2/6 Reading: *Drowning in Fire* 248-294; Mark Rifkin's "Native Nationality and the Contemporary Queer: Tradition, Sexuality, and History in *Drowning in Fire*" (Blackboard, 22 pp)  
Class Activity: Live Conversation with Craig Womack

### Unit 2: Colonial/Sexual/Gendered Violence: Justified, Internalized, Resisted

- Week Five: Tues 2/11 Reading: Janice Gould's "Indian Mascot, 1959" (SE 55-56) & "We Could Not Forget" (SE 101-102); Qwo-Li Driskill's "(Auto)biography of Mad" (SE 107-09); William Raymond Taylor's "Something Wants To Be Said" (SE 83)  
Major Assignment Due: First Draft of Paper 1  
Class Activity: Peer Feedback
- Thurs 2/13 Reading: Selected poems and prose by Joy Harjo (Blackboard)  
Class Activity: Joy Harjo Map Notes
- Week Six: Tues 2/18 Reading: Selected poems by Joy Harjo (Blackboard)  
Major Assignment Due: Final Draft of Paper 1 & Related Map Note
- Thurs 2/20 Reading: Deborah Miranda's *Bad Indians* 1-36, 213-215, & inside jacket cover art; Andrea Smith's *Queer Theory and Native Studies: The Heteronormativity of Settler Colonialism* (QIS 43-65)
- Week Seven: Tues 2/25 Reading: *Bad Indians* 37-74; Excerpt from Robert Tilton's *Pocahontas: The Evolution of an American Narrative* (Blackboard)  
Class Activity: Review for Midterm Exam
- Thurs 2/27 **Midterm Exam**
- Week Eight: Tues 3/4 Reading: Miranda's *Bad Indians* 75-136

Class Activity: Form Presentation Groups

Thurs 3/6 Miranda's *Bad Indians* 137-208  
Class Activity: Skype Conversation with Deborah Miranda

\*Tues 3/11 and Thurs 3/13: **No Class Spring Break**

### Unit 3: Dividing Lines

- Week Nine Tues 3/18 Reading: Louise Erdrich's *The Round House* 1-83 & 319-21  
Optional Reading: Shari M. Huhndorf and Cheryl Suzack's Intro to *Indigenous Women and Feminism: Politics, Activism, Culture*: "Indigenous Feminism: Theorizing the Issues" (Blackboard, 13 pp)  
Class Activity: Form Presentation Groups
- Thurs 3/20 Reading: *The Round House* 84-148  
Class Activity: Presentation Group Meetings
- Week Ten Tues 3/25 Reading: *The Round House* 149-199
- Thurs 3/27 **No Regular Class.** Professor will be presenting at the International Native American Literature Symposium.  
\*Read Erdrich and meet with your presentation groups.
- Week Eleven Tues 4/1 Reading: *The Round House* 200-317
- Thurs 4/3 Class Activity: Presentation Group Meetings
- Week Twelve Tues 4/8 Presentations and Related Map Notes
- Thurs 4/10 Presentations and Related Map Notes
- Week Thirteen Tues 4/15 Reading: Re-read Qwo-Li Driskill's "(Auto)biography of Mad" (*SE* 107-09)  
Major Assignment Due: Tentative Thesis for Paper 2  
Class Activity: Thesis Workshop
- Thurs 4/17 Class Activity: Begin Viewing *Club Native*
- Week Fourteen Tues 4/22 Class Activity: Finish Viewing *Club Native*  
Major Assignment Due: First Draft of Paper 2
- Thurs 4/24 Reading: Qwo-Li Driskill, Chris Finley, Brian Joseph Gilley, and Scott Lauria Morgensen's "The Revolution is for Everyone: Imagining an Emancipatory Future through Queer Indigenous Critical Theories" (*QIS* 211-21); Malea Powell's "real Indians" (*SE* 57-58); Sarah Tsigeyu Sharp's "Rebirth" (*SE* 198-99); Qwo-Li Driskill's "Pedagogy" (*SE* 182-84)  
Class Activity: Review for Final Exam
- Mon 4/28 Final Draft of Paper 2 Due at 5pm on Blackboard
- Final Exam Fri 5/2 The final exam is Fri, May 2<sup>nd</sup> from 3-5:30 pm in our classroom.  
Attendance is required.

### Changes to Schedule

This schedule is subject to change. Changes will be announced in class and delivered in writing via Blackboard and/or email.