



From Short Story to Series: The Early North Dakota Saga Novels

Love (and Hate) Medicine [focus - 1934 - 1984 ]	9/15
Reading: <i>Love Medicine</i> (1984; 1993 ); (A): "Family" (77-82); "Does Power Travel" (83-87); ""Identity" (170-74)	
The Off-Rez Sagas, First Episodes (focus - 1948 - 1972)	9/22
Reading: <i>The Beet Queen</i> (1986); (A): "Reading" (175-82), "Gender" (1983-90) [For other major episodes, see <i>Antelope Wife</i> (1998) and <i>The Master Butchers     Singing Club</i> (2003).]	
Take-Home Exam Questions Distributed	9/22
<b>Turn in Exam</b> / Reading <i>Tracks</i> / Initial Ideas on Paper [no class]	<b>9/29</b>
Tracking Historical Origins (focus 1912 - 1924)	10/6
Reading: <i>Tracks</i> (1988); (A): "Doubling" (158-69); "Tracing" (58-67); Peterson, "History" (CP)	

Contemporary Life On and Off the Rez

Gambling the Real (Estate/Heritage/Vision) (focus - early 1990s)	10/ 13
Reading: <i>Bingo Palace</i> (1994); (A): "This Ain't Real Estate" (201-09)	
Women Talk, Men (and women) Change (sometimes)	10/20
(focus - June 1994 - Aug. 1995, esp. Dec. 31- Jan. 5, with flashbacks to the 1960s)	
Reading: <i>Tales of Burning Love</i> (1996); (A): "Tracking" 118-29)	
Distribute Take-Home Exam	10/20
<b>Turn in Exam</b> / Concentrated Work on Paper [no class]	<b>10/27</b>
<b>Required Conferences on Papers, with Prospectus</b>	<b>11/3</b>

Backtracking: Revisiting the Origins

A Report that Can Never be Last (focus 1910-1996)	11/10
Reading: <i>Last Report</i> (2001); (A): "Gender" (140-46)	
Cross-Cultural Revenge and Healing (focus - mid-1920s)	11/17
Reading: <i>Four Souls</i> (2004); (A): "Tracking Fleur" (66-76)	
Thanksgiving	11/24
<b>Research Paper Due</b>	<b>12/1</b>
Review for Final / Study Sheet Distributed	12/1
<b>Third Examination</b>	<b>12/8</b>

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Examinations

I will draw the take-home and final essay questions from the readings, lectures and discussions. My primary criteria for the essay questions are: (1) Does the essay directly address the questions? (It's often useful to use variations of the question to construct topic and thesis sentences.) (2) Is every claim supported convincingly with significant and relevant examples from Erdrich's novels, and, if relevant, examples and ideas from the criticism? The in-class final, which focuses on material after the second take-home, will be open book; I encourage students to prepare outlines for possible questions. All exams are graded anonymously; I use a numbering system.

## Research Paper

Length: approximately 3,500-4,000 words (approximately 14-16 pages; plus works cited; MLA format); due date: December 1, 2005. The paper should demonstrate your ability: (1) to select a focus and argument that you can justify as being significant to readers; (2) to integrate your own ideas and the ideas of scholars and critics (at least six); i.e., enter the critical conversation about the text(s); (3) to support arguments adequately and to organize them in logical and convincing ways; (4) to master basic mechanics of writing (grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc.). The focus should be strongly influenced by the length requirement. Too broad a focus will invite a superficial paper; focusing too narrowly can lead to repetition. Students may wish to concentrate on one text or to do a comparative study. The comparisons can be between or among Erdrich's novels or involve comparisons with other authors (e.g., McWilliam's excellent essay in *Approaches*). The methodological approach is open; for example, New Critical detailed readings, cultural, feminist, biographical, ethnic, postcolonial, or historical studies are all acceptable.

For the conference on November 3, I require students to bring a short prospectus that I can examine. Although the prospectus will be graded, it should not be perceived as a straight jacket. Major changes are appropriate if they will improve the quality of the paper. The prospectus (approximately 1 - 3 pages typed) must include:

1. A one-to-four sentence statement of the thesis that defines the primary question(s) addressed and the focus of the paper.
2. A one-to-four sentence statement of the significance of the thesis/question.
3. A one-to-five sentence statement of the anticipated method(s) used (e.g., biographical, feminist, ethnic studies, New Critical) and why the method(s) are appropriate.
4. A one-to-five sentence initial and tentative description of the organization of the paper.
5. A brief, short-title list that indicates the major critical sources (indicate any problems anticipated obtaining these sources).

Critical sources on Erdrich's fiction are abundant. Pages 17-20 of *Approaches* list many important examples (books, journals, essays, interviews, audiovisual materials); the editors complement these lists with the Works Cited section (245-58). The bibliographic sections of the Beidler and Rainwater essays in the Course Packet are also useful, as is the bibliography in Beidler and Barton's *A Reader's Guide to the Novels of Louise Erdrich*. Students interested in writing about *Last Report* and *Four Souls* will have some difficulty finding critical sources because both books are so new, especially *Four Souls*. But numerous reviews are available. Furthermore many of the issues and characters significant to these two recent novels are discussed in articles and chapters about the earlier novels (e.g., the implications of the "unrealistic" events or magical realism, narrative structure, narrative voice, the impact of tragic historic events, the import of family and community, survival issues, the powers of love, Nanapush, Fleur, Sister Leopolda, etc.).

The MultiCultural Collection on the second floor of the Central Library is an excellent place to search for written and Internet sources. One excellent general source is the Web site for the Association for the Study of American Indian Literatures (ASAIL): <<http://oncampus.richmond.edu/faculty/asail>>. Another useful initial site is <<http://nativeauthor.com>>.

Under normal circumstances, I do not accept late papers.

## Approximate Grading Weights

First Take-Home	20%
Second Take-Home	20%
Third Exam	20%
Research Paper	40% [of which 5% is the prospectus]

## Warnings

Professors cannot drop students for excessive absences. If you plan to withdraw, you must follow Universities procedures; otherwise the computer will give you an F. Sept. 30 is the last day to drop with an automatic W. Thereafter the grade will be W or F for students withdrawing depending on their performance and attendance. Excessive absences will affect semester grades; each three unexcused absences lowers the semester grad by a half grade. In the past I have had few problems with plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. For excellent guidelines on plagiarism, see chapter 2 of the MLA Handbook. I have little tolerance for plagiarism; University policies will be followed.

## Encouragement

Consistent and constructive class participation and improvement can elevate semester grades significantly. Also I am very willing to work with students who have disabilities. At the beginning of the semester, these students should provide me with documentation authorized by the appropriate University office. Students seeking academic, personal, and social counseling should contact the Graduate Advisor and/or the Office of Student Success (817-272-6107).