

ENGLISH 233

Tradition and Renewal in American Indian Literature

COURSE DESCRIPTION

English 233 is an introduction to North American Indian verbal art. This course is designed to satisfy the General Education literary studies ("FSLT") requirement. FSLT courses are supposed to concentrate on textual interpretation; they are supposed to prompt you to analyze how meaning is (or, at least, may be) constructed by verbal artists and their audiences. Such courses are also supposed to give significant attention to how texts are created and received, to the historical and cultural contexts in which they are created and received, and to the relationship of texts to one another.

In this course you will be doing all these things as you study both oral and written texts representative of emerging Native American literary tradition. You will be introduced to three interrelated kinds of "text": oral texts (in the form of videotapes of live traditional storytelling performances), ethnographic texts (in the form of transcriptions of the sorts of verbal artistry covered above), and "literary" texts (poetry and novels) written by Native Americans within the past 30 years that derive much of their authority from oral tradition.

The primary focus of the course will be on analyzing the ways that meaning gets constructed in these oral and print texts. Additionally, in order to remain consistent with the objectives of the FSLT requirement, you will be expected to pay attention to some other matters that these particular texts raise and/or illustrate. These other concerns include (a) the shaping influence of various cultural and historical contexts in which representative Native American works are embedded; (b) the various literary techniques Native American writers use to carry storyteller-audience intersubjectivity over into print texts; and (c) the role that language plays as a generative, reality-inducing force in Native American cultural traditions.

FSLT courses are also supposed to pay some attention to competing critical methodologies, that is, to the idea that *how* we see and think often influences, and sometimes even determines, *what* we see and think. In this course you will be encouraged to adopt an **emic** [i.e., "insider"] rather than **etic** [i.e., "outsider"] perspective when analyzing and interpreting Native American texts. To do this you will probably have to learn to identify, and set aside at least temporarily, many of the values and "truths" that you have perhaps been encouraged to take for granted until now, because many of the most common and ordinary Western assumptions and beliefs about the nature of culture and history (assumptions and beliefs which also undergird Western critical methodologies) are incompatible with those that inform much of Native American literature.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

The University requires me to state in writing my attendance policy for this course. It's simple enough: it is my policy to expect regular class attendance of everyone who expects to receive credit for having taken the course. As I see it, missing 10% or more of scheduled classes constitutes excessive absence; therefore, if you are absent from more than three classes then your final earned grade for the course will be reduced by .33 GP per additional absence. **Be forewarned:** "absent" means absent, regardless of whether one's reason(s) or motive(s) for being absent are good ones or bad ones and regardless of whether one has a dean's/coach's/doctor's explanation or not.

I'll be taking roll at the beginning of class; if you get to class late, you risk being counted absent, and it will be your responsibility to inform me at the end of that class of your presence.

PAPERS, EXAMS ETC.

Papers: You'll be writing two main essays (3-5 pp. each).

The first, due 2:00 Monday 25 February, will be devoted to explicating traditional Native American elements (structures, motifs, concepts, or whatever) in a poem of your choice. You may choose to write on one of the poems on the syllabus; equally, you may choose to write on some other poem in the anthology. Either way, you should have targeted a text for analysis prior to your scheduled office visit (see "**Office visits**" below).

The second, due by 2:00 Monday 8 April, will focus on some aspect of ceremonialism (recurring event structure, recurring motif, ritual re-happening, or whatever) in *Ceremony* or *House Made of Dawn*.

Note that these dates are absolute deadlines. Early submissions are most welcome; late papers will be penalized at the rate of one grade-point every 24 hours (or part thereof) after the time and day on which they are due.

Taken together, these two papers will account for 50% of your final grade. I encourage you (especially if your writing skills are not already strong) to have a **completed draft** finished in time to schedule an appointment with the Writing Center **several days** prior to these papers' due dates. I will announce the Writing Center's hours in class as soon as I know them.

Office visits: As part of your class participation and preparation, I expect you to schedule at least two office visits during this semester:

(1) Between M 4 Feb and Tu 12 Feb, 15-20 minutes to talk about your plans for your first paper.

(2) Between M 18 Mar and Th 28 Mar, 15-20 minutes to talk about your plans for your second paper.

I will bring a sign-up sheet for appointments to class, and will also leave one on the wall outside my office, so that you may schedule your appointments whenever you're prepared to.

Daily Qs: Whenever there is assigned reading for the day ("reading includes "text" as well as "supplemental reading"), I expect you to submit, at the beginning of class, between 2 and 4 good questions (or discussion-generating propositions) *per reading* to be covered during that class meeting. Taken together with other evidence of class preparation and participation, your performance on these will account for 20-25% of your final grade.

Exams: There will be a midterm exam and a final examination; the final exam will be comprehensive. Taken together they will account for 25-33% of your final grade.

Final grade: You'll notice that there is some slush in these numbers. This is to give me leeway to weight things in your favor. It also gives me leeway to raise your final grade a significant notch if your class participation has been especially good (or to lower the grade if participation has been especially poor).

PLEGDED WORK

I am also required by University policy to require you to pledge all written work submitted for credit in this course. I hereby require you to do so. I'll expect you to write out your pledge on all written work submitted for credit; I will not accept for credit any work that is not pledged; and I promise to be absolutely intolerant of cheating of any kind in this course.

COURSE OUTLINE

("c&t" = "key concepts and terms"; "sr" = "supplemental reading"; "re" = *The Remembered Earth*)

INTRODUCTION

W 9 - F 11 intros; *Diné, Lakota, Tsistsistas, Yoemem, Inuit* etc - being human and "tribal" identity; demographics since contact

I: Tradition

jan

W 16 **c&t:** genres of oral literary performance: oral narrative, oratory, lyric poetry, ritual poetry

text: Wiget, *Native American Literature* chapters 1-2

F 18 **secular oral narrative**

c&t: Hopi; coyote stories; age and authority; clan identity; performance cues

text: Helen Sekaquaptewa, "Iisaw" (videotape)

sr: Wiget, "A Performance Analysis" in Swann and Krupat, *Recovering the Word* 297-338.

W 23 **sacred narrative**

c&t: Apache; narrative/ritual poetry connection; story/event re-happening; transformation motif; *gaan*

text: Rudolph Kane, "Origin of the Crown Dance" (videotape)

sr: Tedlock, "The Spoken Word and the Work of Interpretation" in *Traditional Literatures of the American Indian: Texts and Interpretations* (ed. Karl Kroeber) 45-58; Toelken, "Life and Death in the Navajo Coyote Tales" in Swann and Krupat, *Recovering the Word* 388-401.

F 25 **ritual poetry**

c&t: Navajo; songchant; incremental repetition; *hataali*; *hozho*; *yei*; oral texture and textual translation

texts: Andrew Natonabah, "By This Song I Walk" (video); "By This Song I Walk" (xerox)

W 30 **tradition in print I:** salvage ethnography

texts: from Boas, *Keresan Texts*: "The Emergence" [9-11, told by Gyimi], "The Hummingbird" [11-13, told by Pedro Martin], "Pacayanyi" [13-16, told by Kotye], an emergence/Pacayanyi fragment [222-23, told by José], and a Hummingbird fragment [226, told by José] (xerox).

F 1 **tradition in print II:** renewal

text: from Silko, *Storyteller* (1981): "Up North" (xerox).

II: Renewal

A: (RE-)WRITING THE ORAL TRADITION AS POETRY

During these three weeks we will consider some representative Native American texts--mostly recent poems, but also some essays--to see how contemporary Native American writers work to transform oral texts, along with some of the more common conceptual **motifs** informing traditional oral texts, into written poetry.

FEB

the Emergence motif

c&t: Emergence motif; sipapu; World as series of "migrations"/evolutions; sipapu/emergence/ sunrise/ (re)birth complex; life as transition; Fifth World

sr: Bruchac, "The Many Roots of Song"; [Jaskoski and Apodaca, "Bird Songs of Southern California"](#); [Nelson, "Dawn / Is a Good Word"](#).

W 6 **texts:** Bruchac, "The Geysers" (RE 35); Hogan, "Celebration: Birth of a Colt" (RE 56)

F 8 **texts:** Arnett, "Early Song" (RE 130); Ortiz, "To Insure Survival" (RE 271)

identity with the Land

c&t: "Indian country"; *shiwanna* (Cloud People); transformation motif

sr: Allen, "IYANI: It Goes This Way" (RE 191-193); Harjo, "Oklahoma: Prairie of Words" (RE 43-45); [Nelson, "Place, Vision, and Identity"](#)

W 13 **texts:** Harjo, "3 AM," "Too Far into Arizona" (RE 109-110); Kerr, "Notes to Joanne LXIII" (RE 119-121)

F 15 **texts:** Ortiz, "Heyaashi Guutah" (RE 264-265); Bruchac, "Birdfoot's Grampa" (RE 34)

animal helpers

c&t: spirit allies; clan identity; embedded text

W 20 **texts:** Bruchac, "First Deer" (RE 33); Hobson, "Deer Hunting" (RE 96-97)

F 22 **texts:** Revard, "An Eagle Nation" (xerox); Conley, "The Rattlesnake Band" (RE 70)

W 27 **texts:** Silko, "Toe'osh: A Laguna Coyote Story" (xerox) and "Story From Bear Country" (RE 209)

F 1 - midterm exam -

- spring break -

B: (RE-)WRITING NATIVE EXPERIENCE AS NOVEL

PART 1: LESLIE SILKO, *CEREMONY*

During the next two weeks we will examine some of the ways Silko combines Anglo conventions of fiction (such as unity of plot, character, setting, and theme) with traditional Native American story elements (such as multiple voicing, "circular" or "spiral" rather than linear plotting, allusion to oral traditional pretexts, and precise location of events in Place as well as location of events within the context of cultural tradition) to produce a culturally multidimensional work of art.

You should have pre-read the whole novel *before* W 13, and you should be re-reading it carefully as we go along in class.

SR: Nelson, [chapter 1 \(on *Ceremony*\) in *Place and Vision*](#).

MAR

W 13 *Ceremony* pp. 1-105

F 15 *Ceremony* pp. 106-170

W 20 *Ceremony* pp. 170-215

F 22 *Ceremony* pp. 215-end

PART 2: N. SCOTT MOMADAY, *HOUSE MADE OF DAWN*

Though his protagonist is a (Jemez) Pueblo Indian, Scott Momaday's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel goes beyond tribal tradition to explore the possibilities of "pan-Indian" cultural identity in the post-WWII era. We'll be looking at how Momaday synthesizes Pueblo, Kiowa, and Navajo healing traditions and how he orchestrates a variety of cultural "voices" within the context of ceremonial vision.

This novel is a difficult read, and you'll need to read it at least twice before it begins to make sense. You should have pre-read the whole novel *before* W 27, and you should be re-reading it carefully as we go along in class.

SR: Evers, "Words and Place" in *Critical Essays on Native American Literature* (ed. Andrew Wiget); Nelson, [chapter 2 \(on *House Made of Dawn*\) in *Place and Vision*](#).

W 27 *HMOD* Book 1

F 29 *HMOD* Book 2

APR

W 3 *HMOD* Book 3

F 5 *HMOD* Book 4

C: SPIRIT REVIVAL

C&T: coercive assimilation; cultural dualism; sovereignty

SR: "Federal Policy Towards American Indians" in Spicer, *The American Indians* 176-203

W 10 *texts*: Durham, "Columbus Day" (xerox); Conley, "We Wait" (RE 72-73)

F 12 *text*: DeClue, "Voices" (xerox)

W 17 *text*: Revard, "Ponca War Dancers" (RE 135-39)

F 19 wrap-ups

ENGLISH 400-03

Topics in American Literature After 1900: Leslie Marmon Silko

Spring 2004 * R. M. Nelson * RyH303-K / 289-8311 / <rmelson@richmond.edu>

This seminar will be devoted to a study of the work of Laguna Pueblo writer/photographer Leslie Marmon Silko (1948-), with emphasis on her novels (*Ceremony*, *Almanac of the Dead*, and *Gardens in the Dunes*) but also with significant attention to her collection *Storyteller* and to her nonfiction production, including poetry (*Laguna Woman*), letters (*The Delicacy of Strength and Lace*), narrative photography (*Sacred Water*), and film (*Arrowboy and the Witches*).

Books by Silko:

Laguna Woman (Greenfield Review P, 1974; Flood Plain P, 1994)

Ceremony (Viking, 1977)

Storyteller (Viking, 1981)

(Anne Wright, ed.) *The Delicacy of Strength and Lace: Letters between Leslie Marmon Silko and James Wright* (Graywolf P, 1986)

Almanac of the Dead (Simon & Schuster, 1991)

Sacred Water (Flood Plain P, 1993)

Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit (Simon & Schuster, 1996)

(with Lee Marmon) *Rain* (Whitney Museum, 1996)

Gardens in the Dunes (Simon & Schuster, 1999)

Books about Silko:

Per Seyersted, *Leslie Marmon Silko* (Boise State U P, 1980).

Melody Graulich ed., "*Yellow Woman*," *Leslie Marmon Silko* (Rutgers U P, 1993).

Greg Salyer, *Leslie Marmon Silko* (Twayne, 1997).

Helen Jaskoski, *Leslie Marmon Silko: A Study of the Short Fiction* (Twayne, 1998).

Louise Barnett and James Thorson, eds., *Leslie Marmon Silko: A Collection of Critical Essays* (U New Mexico P, 1999).

Ellen Arnold, ed., *Conversations with Leslie Marmon Silko* (UP of Mississippi, 2000).

Alan Chavkin, ed., *Leslie Marmon Silko's Ceremony: A Casebook* (Oxford U P, 2002).

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

I'm required by University policy to state in writing my attendance policy for this course. Since I must state one, I also intend to abide by it quite strictly. Read and heed, then:

I'll expect you to attend classes regularly. If for any reason you miss 4 or more class meetings, your final grade will go down by .33 grade-point for the fourth absence and for every absence thereafter.

OUR MISSION

According to the English Department's own website,

All English majors take two versions of a course called English 400: Junior/Senior Seminar, and each course involves intensive, carefully supervised research into a selected topic and the production of a long research paper written over a period of several weeks. This project introduces students, in a particularly focused or intensive fashion, to the methods of research that characterize the field of literary studies.

Our collective topic is the collected writing of Leslie Silko; each seminar participant will work with the seminar director (me) to devise a course of "intensive, carefully supervised research," and each seminar participant will probably chose to pursue a different "selected topic."

For more on that "long research paper," see below. Our class time together will be used to talk about our collective topic, though of course all participants are also always welcome (in fact, encouraged) to bring their individual projects to the table, either to share research techniques and/or discoveries or to seek input from other participants (or both).

YOUR WRITING

(1) seminar paper

Because this is a seminar, your single most important project will be your seminar paper. This paper should demonstrate your research skills as well as your analytical acumen and intellectual mastery of your materials. I'm expecting the final product to be in the neighborhood of 15-20 pages.

I want to be available as much as I can to help you identify and narrow your research topic, and so I'm planning to set aside more than 20 hours a week for office conferences, both mornings and afternoons. I encourage you to drop in any time (the sooner the better, probably) to talk about your project or about anything else that might touch on your performance in this seminar.

(2) other writing

In addition to your seminar paper, you should plan to generate least 6 short (1♦ - 3 pp.) papers, spaced out through the semester. These may be much less formal than the "usual" paper; I invite short position papers, and/or "response essays," and/or focused exploratory (rather than authoritative) papers, and a given essay might deal with a primary text, or with a supplemental reading given in the syllabus, or on some essay/article/work you've stumbled across during yr own research, or (of course) on the relationship between two primary texts, or between two supplemental texts, or between a primary and a supplemental text. Plot summary or mere rehash of in-class discussion are, of course, to be eschewed.

At a minimum, you should plan to submit six of these short essays on the following schedule:

- (1) one during, and based on the materials in, the *Storyteller* unit;
- (2, 3) two during, and based on the materials in, the *Ceremony* unit (one during the first half, one during the second);
- (4, 5) two during, and based on the materials in, the *Almanac of the Dead* unit (one during the first half, one during the second);
and
- (6) one during, and based on the materials in, the *Gardens in the Dunes* unit.

Beyond these minima, you should feel perfectly free to submit as many additional short essays as you wish, as long as you don't dump several in my lap at the very end of the seminar (by then, I'll have your research paper to keep me busy) - the more you show me, the more certain I can be about what you're capable of (and willing to try).

Class schedule and readings (in addition to primary texts)

jan

13-15 contexts (Native American Renaissance; Indian > Pueblo > Laguna; orality and literacy, oral and written performance)

context readings:

Nelson, "Leslie Silko, Storyteller" (<<http://oncampus.richmond.edu/~rnelson/silko.cam.html>>).

Silko, "Introduction" (*Yellow Woman* 13-24); "Old and New Biographical Notes" (*Yellow Woman* 196-200); "An Old-Time Indian Attack Conducted in Two Parts" (1977)

Kenneth Lincoln, "Introduction: 'Sending a Voice,'" *Native American Renaissance* (U California P, 1983).

jan

20-22 *Storyteller*

27-29 *Storyteller*

Storyteller readings:

Silko, "Interior and Exterior Landscapes" (*Yellow Woman* 25-47); "Language and Literature from a Pueblo Indian Perspective" (*Yellow Woman* 48-59); "Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit" (*Yellow Woman* 60-72).

Linda Danielson, "Storyteller: Grandmother Spider's Web" (*Journal of the Southwest* 30.3 [Autumn 1988]: 325-55).

Peter Biedler, ed., "Silko's Originality in 'Yellow Woman'" (*SAIL* 8.2 [Summer 1996]: 61-84; online at <<http://oncampus.richmond.edu/faculty/ASAIL/SAIL2/82.html#61>>).

Helen Jaskoski, *Leslie Marmon Silko: A Study of the Short Fiction* (Twayne, 1998).

feb

3 "Running on the Edge of the Rainbow" (1982)

5 *Stolen Rain*: "Arrowboy and the Witches" (1980) (alternately entitled "Estoy-muut and the Gunnadeyah")

video readings:

Toby C.S. Langen, "Estoy-eh-muut and the Morphologists," *SAIL* 1.1 [Summer 1989]: 1-12).

Nelson, chapter 14 ("Arrowboy") of *Flesh and Bone*

feb

10-12 *Ceremony*

17-19 *Ceremony*

24-26 *Ceremony*

Ceremony readings:

Kenneth Roemer, "Silko's Arroyos as Mainstream" in Alan Chavkin, ed., *Leslie Marmon Silko's Ceremony: A Casebook* (Oxford U P, 2002), 223-40. [note: this casebook is **loaded** with seminal essays on *Ceremony*].

Nelson, "The Function of the Landscape of *Ceremony*" in Chavkin's *Casebook* 139-73; available online at <<http://oncampus.richmond.edu/~rnelson/PandV/ceremony.htm>>.

_____, "CORE *Ceremony*: Index of Some Local Resources" (online at <<http://oncampus.richmond.edu/~rnelson/mapping/index.html>>); *Flesh and Bone* stuff online

(<<http://oncampus.richmond.edu/~rnelson/>>).

Paula Gunn Allen, "Special Problems Teaching Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony*" in Alan Chavkin (ed.), *Leslie Marmon Silko's Ceremony: A Casebook*, 83-90.

mar

2-4 *Almanac of the Dead*

9-11 {Spring Break}

16-18 *Almanac of the Dead*

Tu 23 *Almanac of the Dead*

Almanac readings:

Silko, 13 *Almanac*-period essays in *Yellow Woman* (73-165).

Laura Coltelli, "Almanac of the Dead: An Interview with Leslie Marmon Silko" (1993; rpt. in Arnold, ed., *Conversations with Leslie Marmon Silko*, 119-45).

mar

Th 25 *Sacred Water*

Sacred Water readings:

Silko, 5 essays in *Yellow Woman* (166-95).

mar - apr

30-1 *Gardens in the Dunes*

7-9 *Gardens in the Dunes*

Gardens in the Dunes readings:

Silko, "Interior and Exterior Landscapes," *Yellow Woman* 25-47.

Ellen Arnold, "Listening to the Spirits: An Interview with Leslie Marmon Silko" (1998; rpt. in Arnold, ed., *Conversations with Leslie Marmon Silko*); available online at <<http://oncampus.richmond.edu/faculty/ASAIL/SAIL2/103.html#1>>).

apr

14-16 {t.b.a.}

21-23 {t.b.a.}

English 541

St/Am Lit: American Indian Prose and Poetry

Fall 2000

SCOPE OF THE SEMINAR

This course is about texts of prose fiction and poetry composed by Native Americans.

Until quite recently, there were plenty of texts about Native American life, ranging from obscure journal reports beginning in the 1500s up through the surrender speeches of the 18th and 19th centuries, the "as-told-to" personal narratives and ethnography being collected around the turn of the past century, and any number of other accounts, sympathetic and otherwise, of Native American life, presented either as fiction or as nonfiction. But these are all "etic" texts--texts written by non-Natives, "outsiders" looking "in"-- rather than "emic" texts, that is, works in which the representation of Native American identity is controlled by Indians themselves. Even such classic works as Neihardt's *Black Elk Speaks* and Cushing's *Zuñi Folk Tales* are, finally, works *about* Native American literary performances; but they are not Native American texts. Most of the readings for this course are emic Native American works (or critical analyses of such texts).

Most of the texts are also products of the second half of the twentieth century. This does not reflect any particular prejudice of mine towards contemporary literature, but rather reflects one of the interesting aspects of Native American literary traditions in general: only very recently have many Indian verbal artists begun to work in the medium of print. In 1985 critic Kenneth Lincoln popularized the term "Native American Renaissance" to label the remarkable outpouring of literature written by Native Americans during the last two and a half decades or so (c. 1968-present). When treated as a literary "movement" it is an interesting phenomenon: at least 300 Native American cultural traditions, including their literary traditions, have been extant for centuries, but only recently have significant numbers of the heirs to those traditions begun adapting traditional materials to the conventions and values of the Euro-American literary tradition. Why now? And why in such astonishing numbers?

Thanks to the peculiar history of US government policy with respect to American Indians from the 1870s onwards, English is the first or second language of all of these writers, and all these writers have been thoroughly exposed to the dominant culture's institutions and values. Consequently, the works featured in this course will probably strike most readers as recognizably works of American literature, in that they contend with themes and issues that can be said to characterize 20c American literature (and culture) generally. Here's the catch: part of the American cultural ethos is the idea that Native Americans are a distinct cultural and ethnic entity, and therefore this literature must have some characteristic "Indianness" (that is, some characteristic "un-Americanness") about it.

Going along with this fiction, we'll be looking first at Roy Harvey Pearce's study of how Euroamerican cultural tradition defined this Indianness, and in so doing created the historical, political, and ethnic context--an Anglo fiction of Indianness--that later writers would have to contend with. We'll then turn our attention to some important Native American writers who have shaped their dual cultural heritage into literary works addressing, among others, the question of Indian identity. Part of that identity is, of course, encoded in the various motifs, themes, and literary techniques that, taken together, have come to characterize a Native American literary tradition; I'll try to draw attention to these elements as we go.

COURSE MATERIALS

In any course that privileges an unfamiliar cultural milieu, there's always a temptation to emphasize cultural literacy over literary literacy. This is especially true of this course, because in the traditions of almost every Native American group I know of, fixed texts (like books,

movies, oil paintings) have until very recently played little or no part in the preservation, transformation, and transmission of collective or individual identity. Nevertheless, I've tried to design a syllabus that will keep us all grounded in the kinds of fixed texts most of us are used to encountering in English courses: works of prose fiction (novels), poetry, and a lot of "secondary" or "supplementary" works of literary criticism. At the same time, I've tried to select texts that (1) are generally considered to be some of the best work that has emerged in the Native American literary tradition during the past century or so and/or (2) have been written by the best writers contributing to that emerging tradition--"best" both by prevailing Anglo standards and by most Native American criteria. If there is any consensus "canon" of Native American literature, much of what you'll be reading in this course is already part of it.

I am also attaching a list of several major (or strongly up-and-coming) Native American poets. Each seminar participant will be presenting on one of these writers, so you'd do well to begin skimming through a good poetry anthology (Hobson's *The Remembered Earth* or Bruchac's *Songs From This Earth on Turtle's Back* are the current classics in the field) to see who sounds interesting or familiar.

Required texts:

Roy Harvey Pearce, *Savagism and Civilization*

D'Arcy McNickle, *The Surrounded*

Scott Momaday, *House Made of Dawn*

Leslie Silko, *Ceremony*

James Welch, *The Death of Jim Loney*

Louis Owens, *The Sharpest Sight*

Geary Hobson, *The Remembered Earth*

Strongly recommended secondary reading:

Paula Gunn Allen, *The Sacred Hoop*

Leslie Silko, *Storyteller*

Andrew Wiget, *Native American Literature*

Kenneth Lincoln, *Native American Renaissance*

Andrew Wiget, ed., *Critical Essays on Native American Literature*

Brian Swann and Arnold Krupat, eds., *Recovering the Word*

Vine Deloria, Jr., *Custer Died for Your Sins*

Edward H. Spicer, *The American Indians*

Robert M. Nelson, *Place and Vision*

Some important contemporary poets:

Sherman Alexie (Coeur d'Alene)

Joseph Bruchac (Abenaki)

Joy Harjo (Creek)

Linda Hogan (Chickasaw)

Carter Revard (Osage)

Luci Tapahonso (Navajo)

Carroll Arnett/Gogisgi (Cherokee)

Robert J. Conley (Cherokee)

Lance Henson (Cheyenne)

Simon Ortiz (Acoma)

Wendy Rose (Hopi-Miwok)

Ray Youngbear (Mesquaki)

Note: Published collections of interviews with selected Native American authors include Joseph Bruchac, ed., *Survival This Way*; Brian Swann, ed., *I Tell You Now*; Laura Coltelli, ed., *Winged Words*; and William Balassi et al., *This Is About Vision*.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND PRIVILEGED ISSUES

[Note: you'll notice the syllabus gets sketchier with each projected session. That's because I want to keep the seminar "flexible": I'd like to see it become a project of the evolving concerns of those taking it.]

30 Aug

intros; videotapes of oral performance (Rudolph Kane, "Origins of the Crown Dance" [Apache]; Helen Sekaquaptewa, "Isaw" [Hopi])

6 Sep

(a) **Pearce, *Savagism and Civilization***: Constructing "Indianness": types & stereotypes (literary and otherwise) of The Indian, contact-1930s: prevailing concepts of savagism (noble, vicious) and primitivism

(b) **Hobson, "The Rise of the White Shaman"** (RE 100-08); **Silko, "An Old-Time Indian Attack"** (RE 211-16): "Whose story is this?"--sounding the issues of cultural imperialism, cultural (mis-) appropriation, cultural exploitation, cultural genocide

For a good overview of how evolving stereotypes of Native America have played out historically as (generally genocidal) US history, see Spicer, "Federal Policy toward American Indians," *The American Indians* 176-203; a more slanted version of Spicer's story is Ward Churchill's *Fantasies of the Master Race* (fasten your seatbelt!).

13 Sep

(a) McNickle, *The Surrounded*: "Assimilate or die"; the Vanishing American motif

(b) Sanchez, "Conversations" (RE 240-43, 249-50); Conley, "We Wait" (RE 72-73); Durham, "Columbus Day" (xerox) towards a strategy of survival: cultural dualism, cultural separatism.

This would be a good time to read Vine Deloria's *Custer Died for Your Sins*, esp. the opening chapter.

20 Sep

Momaday, *House Made of Dawn*: Ambiguous survival; polyvocality; *hozhoojii*

Evers, "Words and Place" in Wiget, ed., *Critical Essays on Native American Literature* 211-29; Nelson, *Place and Vision* 41-89. For an intriguing analysis of several Navajo chantways (Blessingway, Beautyway, Mountainway) as they relate to *HMOD*, see Susan Scarberry-García's *Landmarks of Healing*.

27 Sep

writing oral tradition I: from ethnography to ethnopoetics

(a) Natonabah, "By This Song I Walk" (videotape); "By This Song I Walk" (xerox)

(b) pieces from Boaz, *Keresan Texts*; pieces from Silko, *Storyteller*

Some seminal works in the evolution of ethnopoetics include Hymes, "Introduction" to *In Vain I Tried to Tell You*; Mattina, "Editing Texts for the Printed Page" (*Recovering the Word* 129-48); Tedlock, "On the Translation of Style" (*Smoothing the Ground* 57-78) and "The Spoken Word and the Word of Interpretation" in Kroeber, ed., *Traditional Literatures of the American Indians* 45-58. Don't miss Karl Kroeber's intro to Kroeber, ed., *Traditional Literatures of the American Indians*, esp. his thumbnail intro to Alan Dundes' text/texture/context schema.

4 Oct

writing oral tradition II: e.g., Coyote stories

(a) Sekaquaptewa, "Iisaw" (video); Wiget, "Telling the Tale" (*Recovering the Word* 297-336)

(b) a Coyote sampler: Simon Ortiz, Leslie Silko, Peter Bluecloud (xerox)

For a pan-tribal sampling of Coyote (and other trickster) stories, see Barry Lopez, *Giving Birth to Thunder . . .* and/or Richard Erdoes and Alfonso Ortiz, *American Indian Trickster Tales*. On the Dark Side of all this, see Barry Toelken, "Life and Death in Navajo Coyote Tales" (*Recovering the Word* 388-401).

11 Oct

writing oral tradition III: some latter-day "traditional" poets and motifs

Tapahonso; sampler from *Remembered Earth*

18 Oct

Silko, *Ceremony*

(a) the pretexts; the "body" of Story

(b) the prose narrative

Boas, translated transcriptions from *Keresan Texts* (xerox); Nelson, *Words and Place* 11-39

25 Oct

poetry

1 Nov

Welch, *The Death of Jim Loney*: What does it take to be a "genuine" or "authentic" Indian?

8 Nov
poetry

15 Nov
Owens, *The Sharpest Sight*: Who sez an Injin can't be an English prof?

22 Nov [Thanksgiving break]

29 Nov
[Alexie flick? Guest lecturer?]

6 Dec
TBA

materials on (closed 2-hour) reserve (filed under "English 233"):

[starred items are collections of essays or interviews]

*Allen, Paula Gunn. *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions*.

Boas, Franz. "The Hummingbird," "P'acayanyi," and "Kaupata." *Keresan Texts*. (Xerox)

Bruchac, Joseph. "The Many Roots of Song." (Xerox)

----- "Notes of a Translator's Son." *I Tell You Now*. Swann and Krupat, eds. 197-205.

*----- *Survival This Way: Interviews with American Indian Poets*.

Evers, Larry. "Words and Place: A Reading of *House Made of Dawn*." *Critical Essays on Native American Literature*. Andrew Wiget, ed.

Jaskoski, Helen. "Bird Songs of Southern California: An Interview with Paul Apodaca." (Xerox)

*Kroeber, Karl, ed. *Traditional Literatures of the American Indian: Texts and Interpretations*.

*Lincoln, Kenneth. *Native American Renaissance*.

Nelson, Robert M. *Place and Vision: The Function of Landscape in Native American Fiction*.

----- "He Said / She Said: Writing Oral Tradition . . ." (Xerox)

Scarberry-García, Susan. *Landmarks of Healing: A Study of **House Made of Dawn***.

Spicer, Edward H. "Federal Policy Towards American Indians." *The American Indians*. 176-203.

*Swann, Brian, and Arnold Krupat, eds. *I Tell You Now: Autobiographical Essays by Native American Writers*.

*----- *Recovering the Word: Essays on Native American Literature*.

*----- *Smoothing the Ground: Essays on Native American Oral Literature*.

Tedlock, Dennis. "The Spoken Word and the Work of Interpretation in American Indian Religion." *Traditional Literatures of the American Indian*. Karl Kroeber, ed. 45-58.

----- "On the Translation of Style . . ." *Smoothing the Ground*. Swann and Krupat, eds. 57-78.

Toelken, Barre. "Life and Death in the Navajo Coyote Tales." *Recovering the Word*. Swann and Krupat, eds. 388-401.

Wiget, Andrew. *Native American Literature*.

-----, ed. *Critical Essays on Native American Literature*.

-----, "Telling the Tale: A Performance Analysis of a Hopi Coyote Story." *Recovering the Word*. Swann and Krupat, eds. 297-338.

Two of these books are full of interviews with many of the writers we'll be covering in the course: *Survival This Way* (ed. Joseph Bruchac) and *I Tell You Now* (ed. Swann and Krupat).

Kenneth Lincoln's *Native American Renaissance* and Paula Gunn Allen's *The Sacred Hoop* both contain excellent essays on recent Native American literature (including essays on *House Made of Dawn* and *Ceremony*).

Also on closed reserve for this course are three transcripts of recent videotapes (available from the LRC) of "traditional" oral performances:

"Isaw: Hopi Coyote Stories"

"By This Song I Walk: Navajo Song"

"The Origin of the Crown Dance: An Apache Narrative"

ENGLISH 431, Fall 1999

Topics in American Literature After 1900: Poetry of the Native American Renaissance

Scope of the course: The Native American Renaissance (a coin termed by critic Kenneth Lincoln in 1985) refers to the remarkable outpouring of literature written by Native Americans during the twenty-odd years between the publication of Scott Momaday's monumental novel *House Made of Dawn* (1968) and the Columbus Quincentennial (1992). When treated as a "movement" in American letters, it is an interesting phenomenon: though at least 300 Native American cultural traditions, including their literary traditions, have been extant for centuries, only recently have significant numbers of the heirs to those traditions begun adapting traditional materials to the conventions and values of the Euro-American literary tradition. Why during this period? And why in such astonishing numbers?

This course will survey the work of some 20 poets of the past quarter century whose work raises these and many other questions. Poets to be considered will include Carroll Arnett, Joseph Bruchac, Robert J. Conley, Joy Harjo, Linda Hogan, N. Scott Momaday, Simon Ortiz, Carter Revard, Leslie Silko, Luci Tapahonso, and Wendy Rose. All of these poets are Native American, by their own self-definition as well as by other definitive criteria used to make such distinctions between "Indian" and "non-Indian"; all are alive in 1999, still writing and being published.

Required texts:

Geary Hobson, ed., *The Remembered Earth* (1979): includes assorted essays and short stories as well as the work of about 70 American Indian poets.

Joseph Bruchac, ed., *Songs From This Earth on Turtle's Back* (1983): includes work by 52 contemporary American Indian poets.

Class packet: supplemental texts including work published in special issues of *Studies in American Indian Literatures* (2.2 [Summer 1990] and 4.4 [Winter 1992]) and the forthcoming anthology *Returning the Gift* (U of Arizona P, 1994).

Additionally, you'll be expected to read the relevant interviews and "autobiographical essays" contained (respectively) in *Survival This Way* (ed. Joseph Bruchac, 1987) and *I Tell You Now* (ed. Brian Swann and Arnold Krupat, 1987), both on reserve for this course at Boatwright Library.

Course design: Attached is a tentative class schedule. Following the first week of introductory comments, I've planned to devote each week to the work of one major contemporary poet. Though this tentative class schedule highlights only 11 poets, I'm hoping we can work in other major and minor voices as time and interests allow. If, while browsing through an anthology, you run across a writer whose work you think is worth paying attention to, I'm perfectly willing to adjust the schedule accordingly.

Because this is a seminar, each class participant will be taking responsibility for (at least) the first hour of one class meeting during the course. I'll be passing around a sign-up list in class on 1 September, and at that time you'll need to select the week you'll be responsible for. **This means you'll need to choose a poet (and a selection of that writer's poems) and begin thinking about what you want to say, and how you will present what you have to say, very soon.** During the week for which you are responsible, you *may* elect to focus your presentation on some poet other than the one privileged by this syllabus [see "Class Schedule," below], or to focus on some relevant topic rather than on a particular writer; if so, you'll need to let me and the rest of the class know, **at least a week in advance**, what we're supposed to be thinking about. Apropos of such elections, some other good/important poets to consider include Sherman Alexie, Paula Gunn Allen, Peter Blue Cloud, Jimmie Durham, Nia Francisco, Lance Henson, Maurice Kenny, Adrian Louis, Nila Northsun, Ralph Salisbury, Carol Lee Sanchez, Mary Tallmountain, James Welch.)

Papers, Exams, etc.:

(1) Beginning with the 8 September class meeting, I'll expect one short (2-3 pp.) paper from you every two-week period (a total of 6 such papers during the semester). **When** during each two-week period you submit a paper is up to you. **What** you focus on in this short paper will also be up to you; all I require is that you deal with a text or a writer covered during that two-week period and that your paper not be simply a reiteration of class notes. These papers may be "exploratory" (raising issues) rather than "authoritative" (settling them for all time).

(2) Additionally, you'll be writing a longer (c. 10-12 pp.) bibliographic essay on some contemporary Native American poet other than one of the eleven featured in the class schedule. This paper should include a comprehensive bibliography of that writer's published work along with the essay. The essay itself should focus on what's "traditional," and what's new, in/about this writer's work. **Note:** It's quite probable that this project will involve use of Inter-Library Loan as well as some personal correspondence; therefore I urge you to select a writer and begin your research **before Fall Break**.

(3) The final exam will be optional. If you take it, it will count for about 25% of your final grade for the course. You will be required, at the last regular meeting of the course (W 1 December), to elect whether or not to take a final exam.

(4) Your final grade will be based on the quality of your in-class presentation (c.20%), overall class participation (c.20%), bi-weekly papers (c. 50%), and bibliographical essay (c.25%); if you elect to take the final exam, the overall combined rating for these four areas of performance will account for c.75% and the exam for c. 25%. You'll note that the above percentages don't add up to 100; that's because I plan to privilege whichever category of performance you do best in and prorata the others accordingly.

Attendance Policy:

I'm required by University policy to state in writing my attendance policy for this course. Since I must state one, I also intend to abide by it quite strictly. Read and heed, then:

I'll expect you to attend classes regularly. If for any reason you miss 3 or more class meetings (i.e., 25% or more of class time), your final grade will go down by .5 grade-point for the third absence and by 1.0 grade-point for every absence thereafter.

Class Schedule

25 Aug Intros: "traditional" Native American poetics & contexts (ritual poetry, the narrative texture of storytelling)

1 Sept Joseph Bruchac

(RE:) Ellis Island; First Deer; Birdfoot's Grampa; The Remedies; The Geyser; Three Poems for the Indian Steelworkers; Elegy for Jack Bowman

CRIT: Wiget, *Native American Literature* chapters 1, 2, 5; Hobson, "Remembering the Earth" (RE 1-11); Allen, "Iyani: It Goes This Way" (RE 191-93) "Notes of a Translator's Son" (ITYN); "The Many Roots of Song" (xerox at Library)

(cf. Maurice Kenny)

8 Sept Simon Ortiz

(RE:) Heyeashi Guutah; Time to Kill in Gallup; A San Diego Poem: January-February 1973; Dry Root in a Wash; To Insure Survival; Yuusthiwa; The Boy and Coyote; The Significance of a Veteran's Day

(SE:) My Father's Song; A New Story; From *From Sand Creek*; Indian Guys at the Bar

(xerox:) coyote poems from *A Good Journey*; Making Quiltwork; And the Land Is Just as Dry

CRIT: "The Language We Know" (ITYN); "The Story Never Ends" (STW)

15 Sept Leslie Silko

(RE:) When Sun Came to Riverwoman; Horses at Valley Store; Slim Man Canyon; Story From Bear Country

(SE:) Where Mountainlion Laid Down With Deer; Toe'osh: A Laguna Coyote Story

(xerox:) Indian Song: Survival

22 Sept Joy Harjo

(RE:) 3 AM; Too Far Into Arizona; Someone Talking

(SE:) Anchorage; Remember; New Orleans; She Had Some Horses; Crossing the Border Into Canada

(xerox:) I Give You Back; Deer Woman

CRIT: "Oklahoma: The Prairie of Words" (RE 43-45); "The Story of All Our Survival" (STW); "Ordinary Spirit" (ITYN)

29 Sept Linda Hogan

(RE:) Heritage; Blessings; Mosquitoes; Celebration: Birth of a Colt; Thanksgiving; Oil

(SE:) Song For My Name; Cities Behind Glass; Saint Coyote; Black Hills Survival Gathering, 1980

CRIT: "To Take Care of Life" (STW); "The Two Lives" (ITYN)

(cf. Diane Glancy)

[fall break]

13 Oct Gogisgi / Carroll Arnett

(RE:) The Story of My Life; Powwow; *uwohali*; Tlanuwa; Roadman; Early Song; Homage to Andrew Jackson

(SE:) Bio-Poetic Statement; Ahoyu Kanogisdi; The Old Man Said; Look Back; Last May; Song of the Breed
(cf. Lance Henson, Roxie Gordon, Sherman Alexie)

20 Oct Carter Revard

(RE:) Ponca War Dancers; People From the Stars; Wazhazhe Grandmother
(xerox) Birch Canoe; An Eagle Nation; Given; A Brief Guide to American History Teachers; When Earth Brings
CRIT: "Something That Stays Alive" (STW); "Walking Among the Stars" (ITNY)

27 Oct Robert J. Conley

(RE:) Self-Portrait; The Rattlesnake Band; We Wait
(SE:) untitled; Tom Starr; Ned Christie; *Wili Woyu*, Shaman, also known as Billy Pigeon; The Hills of *Tsa la gi*

3 Nov Scott Momaday

(RE:) Headwaters; Rainy Mountain Cemetery; The Fear of Bo-talee; The Story of a Well-Made Shield; The Horse That Died of Shame;
The Gourd Dancer
(SE:) The Delight Song of Tsoai-talee; The Colors of Night; The Eagle-Feather Fan
CRIT: "The Man Made of Words" (RE 162-73); "The Magic of Words" (STW)

10 Nov Luci Tapahonso

(RE:) Conversations; For Lori Tazbah; Misty Dawn
(SE:) The Belly of the Land; It Was a Special Treat; Shepherder Blues; Hills Brothers Coffee; The Dust Will Settle
(xerox:) Light a Candle; The Pacific Dawn; In 1864; The Motion of Songs Rising; Remember the Things They Told Us; Blue Horses
Rush In
CRIT: "The Way It Is" (xerox in Library)

17 Nov Wendy Rose

(RE:) To Some Few Hopi Ancestors; For the White poets who would be Indians; Indian Anthropologist; Three Thousand Dollar Death
Song; Trickster: 1977; Soul Tattoos
(SE:) The Well-Intentioned Question; Sarah: Cherokee Doctor; Julia; How I Came to Be a Graduate Student; Loo-wit
CRIT: "Neon Scars" (ITYN); "The Bones Are Alive" (STW)
Cp: Carol Lee Sanchez

[Thanksgiving break]

1 Dec wrap-ups

materials on (closed 2-hour) reserve (filed under "English 233/431"):
[starred items are collections of essays or interviews]

- *Allen, Paula Gunn. *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions*.
Boas, Franz. "The Hummingbird," "P'acayanyi," and "Kaupata." From *Keresan Texts*. (Xerox)
Bruchac, Joseph. "The Many Roots of Song." (Xerox)
----- "Notes of a Translator's Son." In *I Tell You Now* (ed. Swann and Krupat), pp. 197-205.
----- *Survival This Way: Interviews with American Indian Poets*.
Evers, Larry. "Words and Place: A Reading of *House Made of Dawn*." In *Critical Essays on Native American Literature* (ed. Andrew Wiget).
Jaskoski, Helen. "Bird Songs of Southern California: An Interview with Paul Apodaca." (Xerox)
*Kroeber, Karl, ed. *Traditional Literatures of the American Indian: Texts and Interpretations*.
*Lincoln, Kenneth. *Native American Renaissance*.
Nelson, Robert M. "Snake and Eagle: Abel's Disease and the Landscape of *House Made of Dawn*." (Xerox)
----- "He Said / She Said: Writing Oral Tradition . . ." (Xerox)
----- "Place and Vision: The Role of Landscape in Ceremony." *Journal of the Southwest* 30.3: 281-316. (Offprint)
Scarberry-García, Susan. *Landmarks of Healing: A Study of House Made of Dawn*.
Spicer, Edward H. "Federal Policy Towards American Indians." *The American Indians*, pp. 176-203.
*Swann, Brian, and Arnold Krupat, eds. *I Tell You Now: Autobiographical Essays by Native American Writers*.
*-----. *Recovering the Word: Essays on Native American Literature*.
Tedlock, Dennis. "The Spoken Word and the Work of Interpretation in American Indian Religion." In *Traditional Literatures of the American Indian: Texts and Interpretations* (ed. Karl Kroeber), pp. 45-58.
Toelken, Barre. "Life and Death in the Navajo Coyote Tales." In *Recovering the Word*, pp. 388-401.
Wiget, Andrew. *Native American Literature*.
*----, ed. *Critical Essays on Native American Literature*.
----- "Telling the Tale: A Performance Analysis of a Hopi Coyote Story." In *Recovering the Word*, pp. 297-338.

Two of these books are full of interviews with many of the writers we'll be covering in the course: *Survival This Way* (ed. Joseph Bruchac) and *I Tell You Now* (ed. Swann and Krupat).

English 541

SCOPE OF THE SEMINAR

This course is about texts of prose fiction and poetry composed by Native Americans.

Until quite recently, there were plenty of texts about Native American life, ranging from obscure journal reports beginning in the 1500s up through the surrender speeches of the 18th and 19th centuries, the "as-told-to" personal narratives and ethnography being collected around the turn of the past century, and any number of other accounts, sympathetic and otherwise, of Native American life, presented either as fiction or as nonfiction. But these are all "etic" texts -- texts written by non-Natives, "outsiders" looking "in" rather than "emic" texts, that is, works in which the representation of Native American identity is controlled by Indians themselves. Even such classic works as Neihardt's *Black Elk Speaks* and Cushing's *Zuñi Folk Tales* are, finally, works *about* Native American literary performances; but they are not Native American texts. Most of the readings for this course are emic Native American works (or critical analyses of such texts).

Most of the texts are also products of the second half of the twentieth century. This does not reflect any particular prejudice of mine towards contemporary literature, but rather reflects one of the interesting aspects of Native American literary traditions in general: only very recently have many Indian verbal artists begun to work in the medium of print. In 1985 critic Kenneth Lincoln coined the term "Native American Renaissance" to label the remarkable outpouring of literature written by Native Americans during the last two and a half decades or so (c. 1968-present). When treated as a literary "movement" it is an interesting phenomenon: at least 300 Native American cultural traditions, including their literary traditions, have been extant for centuries, but only recently have significant numbers of the heirs to those traditions begun adapting traditional materials to the conventions and values of the Euro- American literary tradition. Why now? And why in such astonishing numbers?

Thanks to the peculiar history of US government policy with respect to American Indians from the 1870s onwards, English is the first or second language of all of these writers, and all these writers have been thoroughly exposed to the dominant culture's institutions and values. Consequently, the works featured in this course will probably strike most readers as recognizably works of American literature, in that they contend with themes and issues that can be said to characterize 20c American literature (and culture) generally. Here's the catch: part of the American cultural ethos is the idea that Native Americans are a distinct cultural and ethnic entity, and therefore this literature must have some characteristic "Indianness" (that is, some characteristic "un-Americanness") about it.

Going along with this fiction, we'll be looking first at Roy Harvey Pearce's study of how Euroamerican cultural tradition defined this Indianness, and in so doing created the historical, political, and ethnic context--an Anglo fiction of Indianness--that later writers would have to contend with. We'll then turn our attention to some important Native American writers who have shaped their dual cultural heritage into literary works addressing, among others, the question of Indian identity. Part of that identity is, of course, encoded in the various motifs, themes, and literary techniques that, taken together, have come to characterize a Native American literary tradition; I'll try to draw attention to these elements as we go.

COURSE MATERIALS

In any course that privileges an unfamiliar cultural milieu, there's always a temptation to emphasize cultural literacy over literary literacy. This is especially true of this course, because in the traditions of almost every Native American group I know of, fixed texts (like books, movies, oil paintings) have until very recently played little or no part in the preservation, transformation, and transmission of collective or individual identity. Nevertheless, I've tried to design a syllabus that will keep us all grounded in the kinds of fixed texts most of us are used to encountering in English courses: works of prose fiction (novels), poetry, and a lot of "secondary" or "supplementary" works of literary criticism. At the same time, I've tried to select texts that (1) are generally considered to be some of the best work that has emerged in the Native American literary tradition during the past century or so and/or (2) have been written by the best writers contributing to that emerging tradition "best" both by prevailing Anglo standards and by most Native American criteria. If there is any consensus "canon" of Native American literature, much of what you'll be reading in this course is already part of it.

I am also attaching a list of several major (or strongly up-and-coming) Native American poets. Each seminar participant will be presenting on one of these writers, so you'd do well to begin skimming through a good poetry anthology (Hobson's *The Remembered Earth* or Bruchac's *Songs From This Earth on Turtle's Back* are the current classics in the field) to see who sounds interesting or familiar.

Required texts: Roy Harvey Pearce, *Savagism and Civilization*

D'Arcy McNickle, *The Surrounded*

Scott Momaday, *House Made of Dawn*

Leslie Silko, *Ceremony*

James Welch, *The Death of Jim Loney*

Louis Owens, *The Sharpest Sight*

Geary Hobson, *The Remembered Earth*

Strongly recommended secondary reading: Paula Gunn Allen, *The Sacred Hoop*

Leslie Silko, *Storyteller*

Andrew Wiget, *Native American Literature*

Kenneth Lincoln, *Native American Renaissance*

Andrew Wiget, ed., *Critical Essays on Native American Literature*

Brian Swann and Arnold Krupat, eds., *Recovering the Word*

Vine Deloria, Jr., *Custer Died for Your Sins*

Edward H. Spicer, *The American Indians*

Robert M. Nelson, *Place and Vision*

Some important contemporary poets:

Sherman Alexie (Coeur d'Alene)
Carroll Arnett/Gogisgi (Cherokee)
Joseph Bruchac (Abenaki)
Robert J. Conley (Cherokee)
Joy Harjo (Creek)
Lance Henson (Cheyenne)
Linda Hogan (Chickasaw)
Simon Ortiz (Acoma)
Carter Revard (Osage)
Wendy Rose (Hopi-Miwok)
Carol Lee Sanchez (Laguna)
Luci Tapahonso (Navajo)
Ray Youngbear (Mesquaki)

Note: Published collections of interviews with selected Native American authors include Joseph Bruchac, ed., *Survival This Way*; Brian Swann, ed., *I Tell You Now*; Laura Coltelli, ed., *Winged Words*; and William Balassi et al., *This Is About Vision*.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND PRIVILEGED ISSUES

[Note: you'll notice the syllabus gets sketchier with each projected session. That's because I want to keep the seminar "flexible": I'd like to see it become a project of the evolving concerns of those taking it.]

27 Aug [openers]

3 Sep **(a) Pearce, *Savagism and Civilization***: Constructing "Indianness": types & stereotypes (literary and otherwise) of The Indian, contact-1930s: prevailing concepts of savagism (noble, vicious) and primitivism

(b) Hobson, "The Rise of the White Shaman" (RE 100-08); Silko, "An Old-Time Indian Attack" (RE 211-16): "Whose story is this?" sounding the issues of cultural imperialism, cultural (mis-) appropriation, cultural exploitation, cultural genocide

For a good overview of how evolving stereotypes of Native America have played out historically as (generally genocidal) US history, see Spicer, "Federal Policy toward American Indians," *The American Indians* 176-203; a more slanted version of Spicer's story is Ward Churchill's *Fantasies of the Master Race* (fasten your seatbelt!).

10 Sep **(a) McNickle, *The Surrounded***: "Assimilate or die"; the Vanishing American motif)

(b) Sanchez, "Conversations" (RE 240-43, 249-50); Conley, "We Wait" (RE 72-73); Durham, "Columbus Day" (xerox) (towards a strategy of survival: cultural dualism, cultural separatism.

This would be a good time to read Vine Deloria's *Custer Died for Your Sins*, esp. the opening chapter.

17 Sep **Momaday, *House Made of Dawn***: Ambiguous survival; polyvocality; *hozhoojii*)

Evers, "Words and Place" in Wiget, ed., *Critical Essays on Native American Literature* 211-29; Nelson, *Place and Vision* 41-89. For an intriguing analysis of several Navajo chantways (Blessingway, Beautyway, Mountainway) as they relate to *HMOD*, see Susan Scarberry-García's *Landmarks of Healing*.

24 Sep **writing oral tradition I**: from ethnography to ethnopoetics

(a) "By This Song I Walk" (xerox)

(b) videotapes of live performances: Andrew Natonabah, "By This Song I Walk" (Navajo); Rudolph Kane, "Origins of the Crown Dance" (Apache); Helen Sekaquaptewa, "Iisaw" (Hopi)

Some seminal works in the evolution of ethnopoetics include Hymes, "Introduction" to *In Vain I Tried to Tell You*; Mattina, "Editing Texts for the Printed Page" (*Recovering the Word* 129-48); Tedlock, "On the Translation of Style" (*Smoothing the Ground* 57-78) and "The Spoken Word and the Word of Interpretation" in Kroeber, ed., *Traditional Literatures of the American Indians* 45-58. Don't miss Karl Kroeber's intro to Kroeber, ed., *Traditional Literatures of the American Indians*, esp. his thumbnail intro to Alan Dundes' text/texture/context schema.

1 Oct **writing oral tradition II**: e.g., Coyote stories

(a) Sekaquaptewa, "Iisaw" (video); Wiget, "Telling the Tale" (Recovering the Word 297-336)

(b) a Coyote sampler: Simon Ortiz, Leslie Silko, Peter Bluecloud (xerox)

For a pan-tribal sampling of Coyote (and other trickster) stories, see Barry Lopez, *Giving Birth to Thunder On the Dark Side* of all this, see Barry Toelken, "Life and Death in Navajo Coyote Tales" (*Recovering the Word* 388-401)

8 Oct **writing oral tradition III**: some latter-day "traditional" poets and motifs

Tapahonso; sampler from *Remembered Earth*

15 Oct [fall break]

22 Oct **Silko, *Ceremony***

(a) the pretexts; the "body" of Story

(b) the prose narrative

Boas, translated transcriptions from *Keresan Texts* (xerox); Nelson, *Words and Place* 11-39

29 Oct poetry

5 Nov **Welch, *The Death of Jim Loney***: What does it take to be a "genuine" or "authentic" Indian?

Nelson, *Words and Place* 91-131

12 Nov **Owens, *The Sharpest Sight***: Who sez an Injin can't be an English prof?

19 Nov poetry

26 Nov [Thanksgiving break]

3 Dec TBA
