

COURSE SYLLABUS: ENGL 6450 World Indigenous Literatures

Summer Session I. 2008

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course we will read and view literature and film produced by Indigenous or “Fourth World” writers and filmmakers. Most of us are familiar with the terms “First World” (“developed” or industrialized nations), “Second World” (“socialized” countries, the former Soviet bloc; also “developed” or industrialized), and “Third World” (“developing” or previously colonized nations). “Fourth World” is a term that came into widespread use following the formation in the 1970s of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples (WCIP) to identify indigenous nations existing within First and Third World nation-states, and to name and build a global presence and solidarity. Fourth World nations generally are considered to be the original indigenous populations present when European or other colonizers invaded, occupied, or settled their homelands; they may have:

- been dislocated to foreign territories where they may have displaced other indigenous peoples (e.g. Africans in the Caribbean)
- remained in their homelands as majority populations (e.g. parts of Africa, South America, Oceania, and Asia)
- remained in their homelands as minority populations (the U.S., Canada, New Zealand, Australia, etc.) (Allen, “Indigenous” 241-42)

The increasingly visible presence of Fourth World nations globally has been accompanied by cultural resurgence and burgeoning literary and artistic production.

We will begin with a study of a *testimonio* produced by one of the world’s best known indigenous leaders, Rigoberta Menchú Tum, whose Mayan people remain more than half the population in their homeland of Guatemala. For the remainder of the course, we will focus on writers and filmmakers whose nations exist as minorities within First World nation-states: Maoris in Aotearoa/New Zealand, Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in Australia, Native Hawai’ians in the United States, Alaska Natives, First Nations and Inuit peoples in Canada, and Samis in Scandinavia. The texts we examine will include poems, oral narratives, short stories, novels, essays, activist discourse, and documentary and feature films.

Our primary objectives will include:

- contextualization of the literatures within specificities of history and culture
- identification of worldviews, themes, and literary techniques shared across cultures within the worldwide movement to identify with other Indigenous peoples as “Fourth World” nations

We will also examine questions of identity and representation:

- Who can claim to be Indigenous?
- Who can claim ownership of cultural property?
- Who has represented indigenous peoples and nations to the world and to what ends?
- How are indigenous peoples “writing back” to colonial representations and redefining themselves and their nations in their literature and films?

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- identify and describe the cultural traditions, histories, and political issues that characterize nations that identify themselves as indigenous and their literary and artistic productions
- identify and describe the genres, styles, and forms through which these traditions, histories, and issues are portrayed by individual writers and filmmakers in their work
- identify themes and techniques shared by indigenous writers and filmmakers, and compare themes and techniques that are specific to authors and nations
- perform in writing and orally careful close readings of texts that attend to language use as well as theme and form
- examine indigenous literatures and films critically through the lenses of indigenous critical theories, postcolonial theories, and other appropriate literary theories
- analyze cultural representations on the internet, in literature and film and assess in terms of issues of “authenticity” and exploitation
- design a research project that integrates close textual readings of individual texts and the application of critical theories to develop original interpretation
- argue conclusions of research in graduate level critical writing and oral presentation

Some Notes on Course Format:

While the brevity and intensity of the summer school format and the constraints of working exclusively online will limit our personal interactions to an extent, it is my intention to try to reproduce a seminar atmosphere as much as possible. Therefore, online discussion is of central importance to the course. I hope that each of you will share with me the responsibility of keeping the course format as flexible and interactive as possible.

Some Tips on Using Blackboard:

If you have used Bb before, you know that on occasion it can be slow, and on occasion it is unavailable. At the beginning of the course, you should download to your personal hard drive or disc all the course documents you will need to have readily available. (**Download all documents and pdfs by right clicking** on the file name and selecting Save As, rather than opening files in Bb and then saving.) The newest Blackboard platform is supposed to work with all browsers. However, if you experience problems with Bb, try accessing it through a different browser. In my experience, Mozilla works fine. You will also need to download the most recent version of Adobe Acrobat to read pdf attachments easily.

You will find more material on the Bb site than you will be required to read for the course. I have posted a great many links and supplemental essays for you to browse for a sense of context, to read for your own interest, and to use in your research for papers. At the beginning of the course, you should examine the whole Bb site carefully to familiarize yourself with what is there, so can make use of it when the need arises.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Rigoberta Menchu, *I, Rigoberta Menchu: An Indian Woman in Guatemala*

Patricia Grace, *Potiki*

Witi Ihimera, *Whale Rider*

Haunani-Kay Trask, *Light in the Crevice Never Seen*

Kateri Awikenzie-Damm ed., *Skins: Contemporary Indigenous Writing*

Velma Wallis, *Two Old Women*

Tomson Highway, *Kiss of the Fur Queen*

Films: *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner, Whale Rider, Ten Canoes*

Plays, poems, interviews, and essays available on Blackboard

You may rent films or purchase them for about the same price as a book. If you choose to rent, check well in advance to see if they are available or can be ordered in time. Many video stores may not carry them.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS:

Joseph Gibaldi and Phyllis Franklin, *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (6th Ed.). New York: MLA, 2003.

Keri Hulme, *the bone people*.

READING JOURNALS

You will keep a reading journal for making notes and recording your personal reflections on course materials. The journal is for your private use, but you will need to draw on your journal responses for discussion, study questions, and papers. For maximum effectiveness, coordinate your journal with active reading of the texts by underlining key words and phrases, making notes in the margins, and noting page numbers of key quotes and references in your journal.

It is especially important when reading texts from a cultural context different from your own, to read *self-reflexively*, constantly examining your own reactions and questioning the expectations you bring to literature from your own cultural and academic training. Please refer to the READING JOURNALS/RESPONSE PAPERS document in this folder for some ideas and suggestions that may help you read more self-reflexively. You will want to begin from your personal reactions to develop more critical reflections for your Response Papers.

STUDY QUESTIONS

For most of the texts we read, you will find posted on Bb a series of Study Questions. These questions are to be used in combination with your Reading Journal; they add some specific questions to the more general ones suggested on the Reading Journal/Response Paper Handout. The Study Questions have several purposes:

- to guide your reading, to make you pause to consider elements of form and theme that you might not notice when you are focusing on the narrative
- to generate ideas for your papers
- to provide some general bases and ideas for the class discussion of each text

In addition, on occasion the Study Questions will be used as a kind of **reading quiz**. You will notice that some of the questions are starred (**); these are generally more in-depth or comparative questions to which you should pay special attention. You may be asked to **turn in** your answers to **some or all** of the starred questions to me in my Digital Drop Box, **before you enter the class discussion** on this particular text.

For short stories, poems, and essays, my suggestion is to read each story “cold” first without taking any notes or thinking about specific questions; then look over the Study Questions and reread, taking notes in your Reading Journal on what stands out to you. Then when you are done, think more specifically about the study questions.

For the novels and longer texts, you probably won't have the luxury of rereading each completely, so you may want to look a bit more closely at the Study Questions before you begin reading. However, I don't want you to concentrate on them so much that you allow the Study Questions to shape your reading experience or interfere with your own reading process. Take your own notes in your Reading Journal as you read, and then when you are done, go back to the Study Questions and work with them more specifically in your Reading Journal.

Submitted Study Questions do not need to be written like a formal paper. You don't have to worry about complete sentences, spelling, grammar, etc. You may do them in note or outline form—whatever works best for you. Mostly I am concerned to see that you are keeping up with the reading, reading **actively**, and thinking about the texts in terms of the larger issues and themes of the course.

PAPERS

Because this is a past-faced summer survey course with a demanding schedule, and our main objective is to read as widely as possible in our limited time frame, you will not write a long seminar paper that is typical of most graduate literature courses. Instead, you will be submitting to me several short informal papers on your reading, including Study Questions, Close Readings, and Poetry Critiques (1 ½-3 pages), and some longer, more formal Critical Response Papers (5-6 pages).

The Critical Response Papers will compare two or more primary texts. They should be polished essays centered on a specific theme, developed with the aid of **at least two critical sources**, and solidly grounded in **specifics** of the texts. Be sure to use plenty of illustrations and quotes to support your ideas (always with page references). The CLOSE READING EXERCISE is useful for helping you think about how to develop ideas using specifics. For informal papers that do not require critical sources, no Works Cited is needed; however any paper that cites sources beyond the primary texts, informal or formal, should have a Works Cited (see MLA guides).

The **MLA Bibliography** (go to the Joyner homepage, click Databases, select "M," then MLA Bibliography) is to best place to begin searching for critical sources. Also check out the other resources on the Joyner Library Electronic Resources Database under Literature, and the Gale Virtual Reference Library. You can locate full text sources of many articles through e-journal locator and download full text articles from databases like JStor and Project Muse. All these (and many other resources) can be accessed online through the Joyner Library webpage. (See Joyner Services for DE Students, listed under Resources for Research in Course Information.)

In addition, the Critical Response Papers should also trace your personal responses to the texts, their associated critical/contextual essays, your research, and online discussions. I want to know what your reactions and opinions are and how they contributed to your critical understanding and analysis of the texts (this is partly an exercise in "positionality"—see Terminology). Therefore, you should write these papers in the first person (using the word "I"!). More specific directions for formatting are posted under Directions for Papers: specific instructions for individual papers will be provided in Bb documents, the Course Calendar, or in posts to Bb Announcements.

Note: Study Questions and some other short paper assignments will be due before you enter Discussions; Critical Response Papers are due by midnight of the day they are assigned.

Late Work: I try to be as flexible as possible to accommodate busy lives. It is essential that you acquire all the texts required for the course at the beginning of the session; a book lost in the mail or out of stock is not an acceptable excuse for late work. Nor is the inevitable computer crash (**save every few minutes** while composing, and **back up everything** to disc or flash drives.) I expect you to look ahead on the syllabus and make adjustments for crunch times; in other words, you may have to do some reading or work ahead of time to balance other events in your life. If you have a legitimate problem that makes it impossible to complete work on time, all I ask is that you notify me ahead of time, and I will work with you as best I can.

PARTICIPATION IN ONLINE DISCUSSION:

Online discussion is a key component of the course (1/3 of your grade). On specified days (see CALENDAR), you will be expected to have finished the assigned primary text(s) and any assigned secondary reading (and in some cases, a short paper), and be ready to participate in discussion of several questions posted to the Discussion Board. You are expected to post a minimum of **two substantive responses** to each question within the first 48 hours after questions are posted. More specific directions for discussion participation are given on the **Directions for Discussion** handout in this folder.

GRADING:

Participation in online discussion	40%
Short Papers (Study Ques., Close Reading, Poetry Crit, etc.)	20%
Critical Response Papers (5-6 pp)	40%

COURSE CALENDAR

DATE	READING/DISCUSSION	PAPERS DUE:
Part I	Introduction	

<p>Tues. May 20</p>	<p>Reading: Course Information Folder (Course Descrip., Req., Calendar, directions for discussion and papers, assignment description handouts, etc.) Browse and familiarize yourself with the whole Bb site.</p> <p>Discussion: Introductions/ Questions Introduce yourself to the class and ask questions about the course.</p>	
<p>Wed. May 21</p>	<p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arnold, “Introduction” • Hist. Trauma Terms • “Intergen. Trauma in Sápmi” • Additional Terminology • Browse rest of Intro. Folder, esp. UN Declaration • Explore Internet Links on Indig. Peoples & “4th World” <p>Begin <i>I, Rigoberta Menchú</i></p> <p>Read over the suggestions in the Reading Journals/Response Papers handout, and begin using your Reading Journal.</p> <p>Discussion: Intro. Unit Be prepared to post a couple of informal comments and/or questions in response to reading and internet sites.</p>	
<p>Part II</p>	<p><u>Rigoberta Menchú, Mayans, and Issues of Representation</u></p>	
<p>Mon. May 26</p>	<p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline of Guat. History • <i>I, Rigoberta Menchú</i> • Menchu Tum Bio. (Wikiped.) • Browse sources on <i>testimonio</i> • 2 <i>Salon</i> Articles • D’Souza Article • Pratt Essay • Browse news stories and other essays on controversy <p>**Reflect on the book and the Study Questions in your Journal before reading the essays.</p>	<p>Due: Study Questions (1 ½ pp.)</p> <p>Deposit in my Digital Drop Box. Answer informally the four starred Study Questions. You don’t need to recopy the questions, but do begin each response with a word or two that identifies which question you are addressing. Use the formatting guidelines in Directions for Papers: 1 in. margins, normal font, double spacing. etc., but feel free to make an outline or list. Do give page numbers for quotes and examples.</p>

<p>Tues. May 27</p>	<p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poems by Juan Pech • Reviews of <i>Apocalypso</i> <p>Optional: view <i>Apocalypso</i></p> <p>Discussion: Menchú's <i>testimonio</i> and the Controversy</p> <p>- This will be a more formal discussion of the posted questions, but I hope class members will continue the discussion on your own. (See Directions for Discussion in Course Information; prepare for discussion by reviewing Study Ques.)</p>	<p>Due: Journal Summary/Position Paper (1 ½ pp.). Deposit in my Digital Drop Box before entering the Discussion. Summarize your response to learning about the controversy surrounding <i>I, Rigoberta Menchú</i>. How do you resolve this controversy for yourself? How do you think this book should be read and used in classrooms? Refer to at least two of the essays, one “pro” and one “con.” (Include a Works Cited.)</p> <p>This one should be a short essay (in paragraph form with complete sentences, in other words). Study the Directions for Papers and the sugges- tions for Writing Short Papers in the Course Requirements folder. Proofread and edit carefully for clarity, typos, grammatical errors, etc.</p>
<p>Part III</p>	<p>The Pacific/Oceania</p>	
<p>Wed. May 28</p>	<p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Pacific Islands Lits.” • Hau’ofa, “Our Sea of Islands” • Browse maps and links 	
	<p>A. Hawai’i</p>	
<p>Fri. May 30</p>	<p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief History of Hawai’i • Kleupfel, “Decolonizing Hawai’i”; Canoe Revival • Trask Bio • “Holo Mai Pele” • Trask, “Decolonizing Hawaiian Lit.” • Trask, <i>Light in the Crevice Never Seen</i> • Franklin & Lyons Interview <p>Recommended: Trask Speech on Envir. Racism</p> <p>Discussion: Pacific Lit., Hau’ofa, Trask</p> <p>Begin reading materials in Aoteroa/NZ folder, <i>Potiki</i>.</p>	<p>Due: Poetry Critique (1-1 ½ pp.)</p> <p>Select a poem from <i>Light in the Crevice Never Seen</i> for a Poetry Critique (see Poetry Critique handout for suggestions, but don’t just list answers to the questions posed in the handout; use the questions to help you “enter” and think about the poem, but write your own essay/critique). Pay special attention to the use of form and language—how form and language choice “perform” the themes of the poem--and to role of the poem in relationship to the book as a whole. Where does the poem fit in terms of the overall arrangement of the book and the development of its themes?</p>

Mon. June 2	Reading: You should be well into <i>Potiki</i> by now.	Due: Critical Response Paper I (4-5 pp.) <i>I, Rigoberta Menchú</i> and <i>Light in Crevice</i> are two very different books, in different genres, emerging from different time periods and cultural histories. However, you can observe certain commonalities and themes in them. Choose a theme that allows to make comparisons between the two books, using concepts from the theoretical sources you have read so far, i.e.: similarities in worldview, use of oral narrative traditions, reflection of historical trauma, or analysis of how they perform acts of decolonization, etc. Be sure to narrow your theme to a specific thesis that allows you do close textual reading (i.e. lots of specific examples and quotes). You should have a minimum of two or three critical sources and a W.C. for each Crit. Resp.
	B. Aoteroa/New Zealand	
Wed. June 4	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “NZ/Aotearoa History” • “Maori Literature” • “The Maori Renaissance” • “Maori Creation Myth” • <i>Grace, Potiki</i> • Tausky Interview Recommended: Grace’s two short stories in <i>Skins</i> ; “It Used to be Green Once,” and “Ngati Kangaru” (both very funny) Discussion: <i>Potiki</i>	
Mon. June 9	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ihimaera, <i>The Whale Rider</i> • Meklin & Meklin Interview Viewing: <i>The Whale Rider</i> After watching the movie, read the Figuroa review, Mita statement, and Ihimeara’s short story, “ Life as it Really Is, ” in <i>Skins</i> . Discussion: <i>The Whale Rider</i>, novel and film	Due: Journal Summary (1-1 ½ pp.) Compare your responses to reading the novella and watching the film. How were they different? How well do you think the film “captured” the novella? How might Ihimaera’s purposes for his text differ from Niki Caro’s for the movie? Turn in before discussion.
Wed. June 11		Due: Critical Response Paper II: <i>Potiki</i> and <i>The Whale Rider</i> (4-5 pp.) Choose a theme that allows you to compare the two novels.
	C. Australia	

Thurs. June 12	<p>Reading: Contextual Materials on Bb in Australia and <i>Skins</i> Folders</p> <p><i>Skins:</i></p> <p>Frankland, "Who Took the Children Away?"</p> <p>Laughton, "Night Games"</p> <p>Morgan, "The Letter"</p> <p>Wright, "Serpent's Covenant"</p> <p>Author Bios. (173-77)</p>	
Fri. June 13	<p>Viewing: <i>Ten Canoes</i></p> <p>Reading: <i>Ten Canoes</i> Study Guide</p> <p>Discussion: Short Stories and <i>Ten Canoes</i></p>	
Part IV	Alaska/The Arctic Circle	
Mon. June 16	<p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purdy, Dauenhauer Intro • Dauenhauer Salmon Poem • Russell on Dauenhauer • Gaskin, "Earth" • Dana, "Shaman Poet" • Valkeapää, "Circle of Life" • Valkeapää, from <i>Beyond the Wolf Line</i> • Contextual sites & materials <p>Optional: Paltto Stories</p>	<p>Due: Poetry Critique (1-1 ½ pp.)</p> <p>By this point, we have developed a sense of the complexities that underlie poems like the ones by Valkeapää and Dauenhauer, which to the uninformed First World reader might seem simplistic. How do you see the poetry of these two writers expressing complex indigenous worldviews and philosophies? What did you learn from the essay on Dauenhauer that adds to your reading of Valkeapää's poems?</p>
Tues. June 17	<p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wallis, <i>Two Old Women</i> • Ramsey Essay • Contextual materials <p>Discussion: Dauenhauer, Valkeapää, Wallis, Ramsey</p>	
Wed. June 18	<p>Viewing: <i>Atanarjuat</i></p> <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kunuk Interview • Notes on <i>Atanarjuat</i> • Contextual Materials <p>Discussion: Comparison of Films (<i>Apocalypto</i>, <i>Whale Rider</i>, <i>Ten Canoes</i>, <i>Atanarjuat</i>)</p>	<p>Due: Critical Response Paper III (4-5 pp.)</p> <p>The three films we have watched represent a steady progression of Indigenous involvement from <i>Apocalypto</i>. Summarize your responses to the three movies you have watched. How would you describe the changing representations of Indigenous peoples in these films?</p>
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Mon. June 23	<p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highway, <i>The Kiss of the Fur Queen</i> • Interview with Highway <p>Do your own research on background.</p> <p>Discussion: <i>The Fur Queen</i></p>	
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Wed. June 24	Final Exam	Due: Critical Response Paper IV/ Final Exam (4-5 pp.) Use what you have learned this semester to develop an interpretation of <i>The Kiss of Fur Queen</i> . Choose at least two other primary texts from the course for comparison. Three critical sources and a W.C.