COURSE DESCRIPTION
There is perhaps no image more widely recognized yet more grossly misunderstood in American popular culture than the “Indian.” Represented as everything from irredeemable savages and impediments to progress to idealized possessors of primitive innocence and arbiters of new-age spiritualism, “the Indian” stands as an anachronistic relic of a bygone era whose sacrifice on the altar of modernity and progress, while perhaps tragic, is both inevitable and necessary to the maintenance of narratives of US exceptionalism and political legitimacy in the Americas. Though such images have a long history in a variety of discursive forms, the emergence of cinematic technologies in the early twentieth century and the explosion of film production and distribution in the ensuing decades solidified the Noble Primitive/Savage Heathen/Vanishing American as indelible, if contradictory, threads in the fabric of the US national story.

Of course, the Reel Indians produced by Hollywood say very little about Real Native peoples who not only refuse to vanish but who consistently reject their prescribed roles in the US national imaginary, insisting instead on rights to rhetorical and representational sovereignty. Through a juxtaposition of literary, critical and cinematic texts, the first half of the course will explore the construction of “Reel Indians” from early ethnographic documentaries and pulp westerns to their recuperation as countercultural anti-hero and ecological spiritualist in the 60s, 70s and 80s. The last half of the course will examine the various ways in which Native-produced films of the late 1990s to the present contest—if not outright refuse!—the narrative, generic and representational constructions of “the white man’s Indian” on the way to constructing more complex and complicated possibilities for “Real Indians” in the twenty-first century.

LEARNING OUTCOMES
1. Read literary and cinematic texts with discernment and comprehension, paying particular attention to the intersections of race, representation, cinematic/narrative conventions and form.
2. Situate course content in its relevant historical, cultural, intellectual and cinematic contexts in the US.
3. Interrogate the relationship between cultural production, popular attitudes and federal policy with respect to images of Indianness and Native families, peoples, communities and nations.
4. Examine popular and scholarly engagements with course material, and critically evaluate the ways in which cultural and intellectual assumptions, values, and beliefs frame engagements with and understandings of course material.
5. Produce focused, critical, formal analyses/close readings of literary and cinematic texts in clear, grammatical prose.
6. Generate original research utilizing primary and/or secondary sources with proper attribution per disciplinary conventions.

REQUIRED TEXTS
Zitkala-Sa/Gertrude Bonnin (Dakota), American Indian Stories (1902)
Sherman Alexie, The Toughest Indian in the World (1992)
All other readings available on Blackboard
**All required texts and films are on reserve in the Knight Library**

FILMS
Flaherty, Robert J. Nanook of the North: A Story of Life and Love in the Actual Arctic (79 min). 1922.
Ford, John. The Searchers (119 min). 1956

**PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE**

You are expected to attend class regularly, bring assigned texts to class and make substantial contributions to class discussions. This requires that you keep up with the reading assignments, make observations and take careful notes for each text, and bring thoughtful questions or concerns to class. **Always remain civil and on point in your discussion of texts and ideas.**

Missing class more than twice in the term will result in reduction of your final grade by 1/3 of a letter grade for each absence beyond the two permitted. There is no distinction between excused and unexcused absences. If you miss class, it is your responsibility entirely to get notes for that day and catch up on any material you missed.

**ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENT**

This course offers a variety of assignments by which your performance is ultimately assessed so that your final grade is not dependent upon a single skill or performance. These include daily reading/viewing journals, weekly informal online blog posts/responses, three film reviews from a list of my choosing, and a final research project. **Late assignments will be accepted under no circumstances.**

**Reading/Viewing Journals**

You are required to keep a daily reading/viewing journal in which to take notes, ask questions, make observations, and sketch out preliminary and ongoing thoughts about the readings for the week. These journals will be evaluated throughout the term on a credit/half-credit/no credit basis. To receive full credit, you must demonstrate legitimate engagement of at least two full pages for each assigned text/film.

**Class Blog (Blackboard)**

Blog Discussions and Responses are your opportunity to engage critically with a primary text, essay, idea or concept as well as respond thoughtfully to the thoughts, arguments and analyses of your peers. Each student will be required to submit one original post and reply to two others at least four times throughout the term.

**Blog posts** should be focused and substantive (500-700 words) and synthesize ideas from your reading journal, course notes, and class discussions by critically exploring a specific issue, problem or question of form elicited by the text(s) (i.e. I want to see you wrestling with the text/film). They should be clearly written; advance a clearly-articulated, interpretive claim (i.e. thesis statement); present evidence from the text that illustrates that claim; and, **most importantly,** interpret that evidence for your readers (i.e. an explanation of how the text/illustration functions as you claim it does).

**Responses** will substantively engage (~250 words) the issues, problems or questions posed in TWO blog posts in an informal yet respectful and sophisticated way (i.e. I want to see you wrestling with the ideas and arguments of your peers).

**Film Reviews**

You are required to submit **TWO** 2-3 page, double-spaced, formally written film reviews of selections from a list of my choosing that speak in some way to the films/critical contexts we’ve discussed in class. Reviews should provide a short, succinct summary of the film’s plot, identify two or three critical/formal issues the film brings up, and leave readers with a sense for how the film speaks to other films that we’ve watched or read about in class. Sample film reviews will be made available on Blackboard.
Precis & Annotated Bibliography

- In consultation with me, by **week 5** you should have a decent idea of what research project you’d like to pursue.

- By the **beginning of week 7**, you’ll submit a one-page, single spaced précis of this research project in which you provide adequate but concise contextualization, identify clearly the research questions you’ll seek to answer, and finish with a clearly articulated thesis statement which makes an interpretive claim of some kind upon the text(s) you’re going to examine.

- By the **beginning of week 9**, you will turn in a **minimum five source** annotated bibliography in which you provide a one-paragraph summary of each source’s main argument(s)/content and a one-paragraph meta-commentary for how you intend to use the source in your own project.

Final Research Project
The project can be an extension of one of your reviews, a discussion you’ve begun in your journals and on the course blog, or a new project entirely. Regardless, it must in some way engage one or more of the texts/films, critical issues, or historical contexts we’ve discussed in class. It can take the form of a traditional research paper (8-10 page, double-spaced for undergraduates, 10-12 page double-spaced for graduate students) or can employ various technologies and forms (visual culture, material culture, new media; film, music, television; graphic novels, comics, gaming). You need to work out the logistics directly with me well ahead of time, generally by week 6. A draft presentation should be prepared by week 8 or 9 for discussion and feedback. Final drafts will be due on the scheduled day of our final exam and will be posted to the final exam assignment listing on Blackboard. **Please note** that undergraduates are required to consult at least 4 outside sources; graduates should consult at least 6 outside sources. At least two of these should be **hard copy sources** from the library or Special Collections.

**GRADING**

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<th>Assignment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Reading/Viewing Journal</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<td>Course Blog</td>
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<tr>
<td>Film Review #1 (single film)</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Film Review #2 (comparative)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Precis &amp; Annotated Bibliography</td>
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<td>Final Research Project</td>
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**CLASS COMMUNICATION**
Get in the habit of checking your UO email account regularly as this will be our primary means of communication outside of class. I highly recommend trying to contact me via email rather than telephone as I check it regularly and am thus able to respond more quickly, generally within two working days. **Also be aware that I will not respond to emails sent after 5pm or on the weekend until the next weekday.**

**INCLEMENT WEATHER**
If inclement weather makes traveling to campus difficult, I will notify you by email and/or voice mail about whether we are holding class. If the weather is bad, check your email for a message from me, and check my voice mail (541-346-1314) if there are electrical outages around town that might prevent my emailing you. Whether or not I decide to hold class, you should use your own judgment about the safety of traveling to campus.

**DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS**
If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with me soon and request that the Counselor for Students with Disabilities send a letter verifying your disability.

**TITLE IX POLICY AND REPORTING RESPONSIBILITIES**
The UO is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of prohibited discrimination and sexual
harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence and gender-based stalking. Additionally, all UO employees are required to report to appropriate authorities (supervisor or Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity) when they have reasonable cause to believe that any child with whom they come in contact has suffered abuse or any person with whom they come in contact has abused a child.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT
The University Student Conduct Code (conduct.uoregon.edu) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the student’s obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act. Additional information about a common form of academic misconduct, plagiarism, is available at www.libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students.

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COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: Setting the Scene: Literary, Performative and Cinematic Contexts
Monday, March 31st
- **Readings:**

Wednesday, April 2nd
- **Reading:**

Week 2: U.S. Imperial Designs and the Ethnographic Gaze: Jack London’s Alaska Short Stories and Robert Flaherty’s Nanook of the North
Monday, April 7th
- **Readings:**
Wednesday, April 9th
- **Viewing:** Flaherty, Robert J. *Nanook of the North: A Story of Life and Love in the Actual Arctic* (79 min). 1922.
- **Readings:**

**Week 4: Moral Ambiguities and Savage Anxieties in John Ford’s The Searchers**
Monday, April 14th
- **Reading:** Haycox, Ernest. “A Question of Blood” (1937), “Stage to Lordsburg” (1937), “Stage Station” (1939)

Wednesday, April 16th
- **Readings:**
  - Kilpatrick, Jacquelyn. “The Cowboy Talkies of the 1930s, 40s and 50s.” *Celluloid Indians: Native Americans and Film.* Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1999. 36-64. (Blackboard)

Monday, April 21st
- **Viewing:** Ford, John. *The Searchers* (119 min). 1956
- **Reading:**

Wednesday, April 23rd
- **Continue discussion of The Searchers**
- **Readings:**
Thursday, April 24th

- **REQUIRED ATTENDANCE:** *Reflections Unheard: Black Women in Civil Rights*, a film screening and discussion with director and producer Nevline Nnaji, 4pm, Knight Library Browsing Room.

Friday, April 25th

- **Assignment:** FILM REVIEW #1 DUE (SINGLE FILM)

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**WEEK 5: RECOVERING “THE INDIAN” AS COUNTER CULTURE HERO**

Monday, April 28th

- **Reading:**

Wednesday, April 30th

- **Viewing:** Finish *Little Big Man*; Clips from *Tell Them Willie Boy is Here, Billy Jack, One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest, the Ecological Indian*, etc.

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**WEEK 6: REPRESENTING TRAUMA: RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS, ALLOTMENT AND THE POLITICS OF SENTIMENTALITY AND SUSPENSE**

Monday May 5th

- **Readings:**
  - Zitkala-Sa (Gertrude Bonnin). *American Indian Stories.* 1-35, 72-83
- **Viewing:** Begin *Older Than America* (102 mins)

Wednesday, May 7th

- **Viewing:** Finish and discuss *Older Than America*

Friday May 9th

- **REQUIRED ATTENDANCE @ AT LEAST ONE PANEL:** Alternative Sovereignties: Decolonization Through Indigenous Vision and Struggle, EMU Ballroom Level, 8:30am-6:00pm

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**WEEK 7: TERMINATION, RELOCATION, AND THE (RE)PRESENTATION OF URBAN INDIAN EXPERIENCES**

Monday, May 12th

- **Readings:**
  - Early Reviews & Contemporary Critiques of *The Exiles.* (Blackboard)

- **Assignment:** PRECÍS & RESEARCH AGENDA DUE

**Wednesday, May 14th**

- **Readings:**

**Thursday, May 15th**

- **REQUIRED ATTENDANCE:** “American Indians in the American Popular Imagination,” a lecture by Phil Deloria sponsored by Phi Beta Kappa and the Department of History, 7:30pm, EMU Ballroom.

**Week 8: Gender and Sexuality in the Short Fiction and Films of Sherman Alexie**

**Monday, May 19th**


**Wednesday, May 21st**

- **Viewing:** Eyre, Chris. *Smoke Signals* (89 min). Narrative Film. 1998.
- **SPECIAL GUEST:** Dr. Brian Klopotek, Ethnic Studies

**Friday, May 23rd**

- **Assignment:** FILM REVIEW #2 DUE (COMPARATIVE)

**Week 9: Gender and Sexuality in the Short Fiction and Films of Sherman Alexie**

**Monday, May 26th**

- **MEMORIAL DAY: NO CLASS!!**

**Wednesday, May 28th**

- **Readings:**
- **Viewing:** Begin Sherman Alexie’s *The Business of Fancy Dancing* (103 min). 2002.
- **SPECIAL SKYPE GUEST:** Dr. Lisa Tattonetti, Kansas State University, Department of English
- **Assignment:** ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE
WEEK 10: ROMANCE, DESIRE AND THE POLITICS/ETHICS OF INDIGENOUS ROMANTIC COMEDY

Monday, June 2nd
- **Viewing:** Finish *The Business of Fancy Dancing*
- **Viewing:** Begin Kate Montgomery’s *Christmas in the Clouds* (96 min). 2001.

Wednesday, June 4th
- **Viewing:** Finish *Christmas in the Clouds* (96 min). 2001.
- **Course Wrap Up**

WEEK 11: FINAL RESEARCH PROJECTS DUE VIA BLACKBOARD BY 5PM, TUESDAY, JUNE 10TH**
SELECTED LIST OF FILMS FOR REVIEW/RESEARCH

Non-Native Films
The Vanishing American (1925) / Could be paired with Leslie Marmon Silko’s Ceremony
The Silent Enemy (1930) / Could be paired with London short fiction, Nanook, and Atarnajuat, The Fast Runner
Broken Arrow (1950) / Could be paired with Dances With Wolves (1990) or Avatar (2009)
Arrowhead (1953) / Could be paired with Zitkala-Sa’s American Indian Stories and/or Older Than America
Run of the Arrow (1957) / Could be paired with Dances with Wolves and Avatar
Cheyenne Autumn (1964) / Could be paired with Cooper’s Last of the Mohican and its various film incarnations
Soldier Blue (1970) / Could be paired with The Plainsman (1937) or Stagecoach (1939)
Man Called Horse (1970s-80s) series / Could be paired with Cheyenne Autumn, Dances With Wolves or Avatar
Billy Jack series (1970s)
One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest (1975) / Could be paired with the Ken Kesey novel of the same title
Dances With Wolves (1990) / See potential pairings above
Last of the Mohicans (1992) / Could be paired with Cooper novel of the same title or any of the numerous filmic translations
The Unforgiven (1992)
Pocahontas (1995) and Pocahontas II: Journey to a New World (1998) / Pair with Run of the Arrow (1957), The New World (2005), Avatar (2009), Naturally Native, Maina, Empire of Dirt
The New World (2005)
Avatar (2009)
Cowboys and Aliens (2011)

Native Films
Powwow Highway (1989)
It Starts with a Whisper (1993)
Medicine River (1994) / Pair w/the novel by the same name by Thomas King
Grand Avenue (1996) / Pair w/The Exiles and Urban Rez, Alexie stories
Naturally Native (1998)
Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner (2001) / Pair with London stories, Nanook
Skins (2002) / Pair w/novel of the same name by Adrian C. Louis
Imprint (2007)
On the Ice (2011) / Pair w/Nanook, Atanarjuat
Star Wars (1977/2013), translated into Navajo (2013) / Pair w/Atanarjuat
Empire of Dirt (2013) / Pair w/Naturally Native, Alexie’s short stories, Pocahontas
Maina (2013) / Pair w/London stories, Atanarjuat
The Cherokee Word for Water (2013)

SUGGESTED BIBLIOGRAPHY
Useful Studies on the Genealogy and Expression of Indianness in the Non-Indian Imaginary

Cinematic Studies on Indianness


