

ENGLISH 244-16400
INTRODUCTION TO NATIVE AMERICAN LITERATURES

Professor Kirby Brown
Office: 523 PLC
Office Hours: T 10am-noon; W 1-2pm, and by appointment
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Class Meetings
T/TH 2:00pm-3:20pm
VIL 300

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In 1968, Kiowa writer N. Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for American literature. Momaday's award signaled for many the "arrival" of Native authors to the American literary scene, and ushered in an unprecedented era of Native literary production widely known as the Native American Renaissance. While the explosion of Native writing and the critical tradition that emerged from it carved out much needed cultural and institutional spaces for Native self-representation and Native Studies, it had the unintended effect of privileging contemporary Native novels over writing from other periods and across a variety of genres and forms. This introductory survey of Native American literature widens the net to include an array of native self-representation across genres, regions, periods, forms and tribal nations. We will read cultural critiques and policy debates alongside short stories and novels, as well as juxtapose drama and short films alongside YouTube videos, op-eds, and other media.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Situate conventional literary texts alongside other cultural forms in which Native peoples have exercised self-representation, always being careful to locate writers and texts within their appropriate historical and tribal/cultural contexts.
- Gain a more complicated understanding of and appreciation for the diversity and complexity of Native American intellectual and cultural production
- Develop a historically-nuanced grasp of some of the major issues, questions, and concerns that run throughout Indian Country today, specifically the relationship between cultural production, federal policies, and contemporary movements toward Native sovereignty and self-determination.
- Consistently work to hone close, critical reading skills applicable to a variety of textual forms and intellectual/ professional contexts
- Develop capacities to engage in thoughtful, collegial and critical debate around questions of race, class, gender, sexuality, nation, citizenship and belonging.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Thomas King (Cherokee), *The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative*. (TTAS)

Leann Howe (Choctaw), *The Miko Kings: An Indian Baseball Story*. (MK)

Sherman Alexie (Coeur d'Alene), *The Toughest Indian in the World*. (TlitW)

Devon Mihesuah (Choctaw), *American Indians: Stereotype and Realities*.

Other readings, videos and music via Blackboard

All primary course texts on reserve in the Knight Library

SUPPLEMENTARY TEXTS ON RESERVE IN THE KNIGHT LIBRARY

Colin Calloway, *First Peoples: A Documentary Survey of American Indian History*, esp. chapters 5-8. This text is an accessible introduction to Native American history which will supplement the historical contexts discussed in class.

PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE

You are expected to attend class regularly, to remain current with reading assignments, to bring assigned texts and writing materials to class, and to make substantial contributions to class discussions. **Always remain civil and on point in your discussion of texts and ideas.**

Though I don't have an official attendance policy, missing class regularly will severely impact your grade due to missed in-class group assignments, quizzes and class discussions. If you miss class, **it is your responsibility entirely** to approach your fellow classmates 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 class participation and group work, weekly reading quizzes, online exercises, short writing assignments, and two exams. All assignments are due at the beginning of the class on which they are due. **Late assignments will be docked 1/3 grade point for every day they are late.**

GRADING

Reflection Essay	5%
Reading Journal	10% (cr/ .5 cr/no cr)
Quizzes	10%
Course Blog	20%
Midterm Examination	25%
Final Examination	30%

GRADE POINT DISTRIBUTION

F <59.5	B- 79.6-83.5
D- 59.6-63.5	B 83.6-87.5
D 63.6-67.5	B+ 87.6-89.5
D+ 67.6-69.5	A- 89.6-93.5
C- 69.6-73.5	A 93.6-97.5
C 73.6-77.5	A+ 97.6-100+
C+ 77.6-79.5	

NOTE: Meeting the minimum requirements for the course (attending consistently, regular participation, and meeting minimum assignment criteria) will typically result in an average grade, or a C on the college scale. Higher grades are awarded based upon exceeding minimum expectations.

COURSE CONTENT AND INTELLECTUAL DISCUSSION

Due to the histories/experiences of settler-colonial violence, racism, dispossession, and genocide that frame both the colonization of the Americas and Indigenous responses to it, this course will openly and without censorship engage these and related issues. If content makes attendance and participation impossible, please see me to make alternative arrangements.

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. **Please be aware that I will not respond to emails sent after 5pm or**

on the weekend until the next weekday.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the case of inclement weather, please check the UO homepage, UO Alerts Blog, and local weather stations for information on travel, closures and cancelations. If inclement weather makes traveling to campus difficult, I will notify you by email about whether we are holding class. 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. Consequently, 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 discrimination, harassment or abuse of any kind has taken, or is taking, place. Employees are NOT required to reveal the names of survivors, however.

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. Additional information about a common form of academic misconduct, plagiarism, is available at www.libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Texts	Assignment Due
Week 1		
Sept. 30	Introductions, Logistics, Framing the Course TEXTS: Syllabus, "Strategies for Close Reading" and "What I (Think) I Know About American Indians" Instructions (Blackboard)	
Oct. 2	The Stories We Tell TEXT: King, <i>TTAS</i> , Ch. 1 CONTEXTS: Mihesuah, "11. Indians are a Vanished Race," "1. Indians are all alike," & "22. Indians know all the histories"	
Oct. 3		REFLECTION ESSAY
Week 2		

Oct. 7	Unit 1: Popular Culture, Representation and Gender TEXT: King, <i>TTAS</i> , Ch.3; Apess, "Eulogy On King Philip" (Blackboard)	
	CONTEXTS: Mihesuah, "Afterword: The Effects of Stereotyping"; 1491s & Ryan Red Corn, " Bad Indians "	
Oct. 9	TEXT: Apess, "Eulogy" (cont.); Johnson, "A Strong Race Opinion: On the Indian Girl in Modern Fiction" and "A Red Girl's Reasoning" (Blackboard)	
	CONTEXTS: Mihesuah, "4. Indians had no civilization..."	
Oct. 10		BLOG POST #1 (1,3,5,7)
Week 3		
Oct. 14	TEXT: Green, "The Pocahontas Perplex" (Blackboard); Mojica, <i>Princess Pocahontas and the Blue Spots</i> (through Trans. 3)	BLOG RESPONSE #1 (2,4,6,8)
	CONTEXTS: Mihesuah, "8. Indians did not value or empower women"	
Oct. 16	TEXT: Mojica, <i>Princess Pocahontas and the Blue Spots</i> (Trans. 4-7)	
Oct. 17		BLOG POST #1 (2,4,6,8)
Week 4		
Oct. 21	TEXT: Mojica, <i>Princess Pocahontas and the Blue Spots</i> (Trans. 8-13)	BLOG RESPONSE #1 (1,3,5,7)
	CONTEXTS: Smith, "Sexual Violence as a Tool of Genocide" (Blackboard)	
Oct. 23	TEXTS: Erdrich, " Rape on the Reservations "; White Buffalo Calf Women's Society, " It Ends Where It Begins " (Youtube); Rebecca Belmore, " Fringe "	
Oct. 24		BLOG POST #2 (1,3,5,7)
Week 5		
Oct. 28	MIDTERM EXAM	JOURNALS DUE
Oct. 30	Unit 2: Assimilation and the Assault on Native	BLOG RESPONSE #2 (4,6,8,2)

Nations, Lands and Families

TEXTS: King, *TTAS*, Ch. 5; Zitkala Sa/Gertrude Bonnin, "School Days of an Indian Girl" (Blackboard)

CONTEXTS: Mihesuah, "16. Indians are not capable of completing school"

Oct. 31

BLOG POST #2 (2,4,6,8)

Week 6

Nov. 4

TEXT: Zitkala-Sa/Gertrude Bonnin, "School Days of an Indian Girl" (cont.); Oskison, "The Problem of Old Harjo" (Blackboard)

BLOG RESPONSE #2 (3,5,7,1)

CONTEXTS: Zitkala-Sa, "Why I Am a Pagan" (Blackboard)

Nov. 6

TEXTS: Oskison, "The Problem of Old Harjo" (continued); Bronson, "The Serpent" (Blackboard)

CONTEXTS; Montezuma, "Let My People Go!" (Blackboard)

Nov. 7

BLOG POST #3 (1,3,5,7)

Week 7

Nov. 11

TEXT: King, Ch. 4; Howe, *Miko Kings*, 1-67

BLOG RESPONSE #3 (6,8,4,2)

CONTEXTS: *His Last Game* (silent film; in-class screening)

Nov. 13

TEXT: Howe, *Miko Kings*, 68-150

CONTEXTS: Howe, "Tribalography: The Power of Native Stories" (Blackboard)

Nov. 14

BLOG POST #3 (2,4,6,8)

Week 8

Nov. 18

TEXT: Howe, *Miko Kings*, 151-188

BLOG RESPONSE #3 (5,7,3,1)

CONTEXT: Howe, "Choctalking on Other Realities" (Blackboard)

Nov. 20

TEXT: Howe, *Miko Kings*, 188-221

JOURNALS DUE

CONTEXT: Howe, "Choctaw Aesthetics"

Nov. 21

BLOG POST #4 (1,3,5,7)

Week 9

Nov. 25

Writing Contemporary Native Lives

BLOG RESPONSE #4 (2,4,6,8)

TEXT: King, *TTAS*, Ch. 2; Alexie 1-20, 35-56

CONTEXT: King, "[I'm Not the Indian You Had in Mind](#)" (short film)

Nov. 27

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY; NO CLASS

Nov. 28

BLOG POST #4 (2,4,6,8)

Week 10

Dec. 2

TEXT: Alexie, 21-34, 121-149

BLOG RESPONSE #4 (1,3,5,7)

CONTEXT: [As They Are: Two-Spirited People in the Modern World](#)
(18 min., short film)

Dec. 4

TEXT: Alexie, 150-188, 209-238

JOURNALS DUE

CONTEXT: 1491s, "[Man Talk](#)"; "[Geronimo, E-KIA](#)"

Week 11

Dec. 10

TAKE HOME FINAL EXAM DUE VIA BLACKBOARD BY 5PM