

ENGLISH 244-32026
INTRODUCTION TO NATIVE AMERICAN LITERATURES

Professor Kirby Brown
Office: 523 PLC
Office Hours: M 2-4pm; T 11am-12pm, and by email appointment
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Class Meetings
MWF 1:00pm-1:50pm
276 ED

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

Missing class regularly will severely impact your grade due to missed in-class group assignments, free writing assignments, daily/weekly 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/In-class assignments	15%
Course Blog	15%
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, meeting deadlines) will typically result in an average grade, or a C on the college scale. Higher grades are awarded based upon exceeding minimum expectations per my discretion.

COURSE CONTENT AND INTELLECTUAL DISCUSSION

Due to the **ongoing** 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 engage these and related issues without censorship. If content makes attendance and participation impossible, please see me to make alternative arrangements.

CLASS COMMUNICATION AND CONVENTIONS OF ADDRESS

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.**

Adopting appropriate conventions of address and communication for specific social contexts is crucial for establishing relationships and maintaining respect across communities. Speaking to a professor, instructor, administrator, staff member, employer, manager, or colleague is different (at least initially) from speaking/texting with a friend, family member, or other familiar relation. In a professional, intellectual context like the University, it is conventional to refer to faculty, administrators, staff, GTFs and others by their titles (Doctor, Professor, Instructor, Coach, preferred gender/gender neutral titles, etc.) unless explicitly instructed otherwise. You should also get into the professional habit of including greetings, salutations, and appropriate language/ tone in your communications. I will always respectfully refer to you according to your stated preferences and the appropriate context; I expect that you'll reciprocate in kind.

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

<u>Date</u>	<u>Texts</u>	<u>Assignment Due</u>
Week 1		
March 30	Introductions, Logistics, Framing the Course TEXTS: Syllabus & Course Schedule; "Strategies for Close Reading" (Blackboard, "Study Aids")	
April 1	The Stories We Tell TEXTS: King, <i>TTAS</i> , Ch. 1; "What I (Think) I Know About American Indians" Instructions (Blackboard, "Assignments") CONTEXTS: Mihesuah, <i>AISR</i> , "11. Indians are a Vanished Race," "1. Indians are all alike," & "22. Indians know all the histories"	
April 3	TEXT: King, <i>TTAS</i> , Ch.3 CONTEXTS: Mihesuah, <i>AISR</i> , "Afterword: The Effects of Stereotyping"	REFLECTION ESSAY
Week 2		
April 6	Unit 1: Popular Culture, Representation and Gender TEXT: Apess, "Eulogy On King Philip" (Blackboard) CONTEXTS: 1491s & Ryan Red Corn, "Bad Indians"	

April 8	TEXTS: "Critical Response Blogs: Rationale, Format, Deadline, Instructions" and "Sample Close Reading/Blog Post" (Blackboard, "Study Aids"); Johnson, "A Strong Race Opinion: On the Indian Girl in Modern Fiction" and "A Red Girl's Reasoning" (Blackboard) CONTEXTS: Mihesuah, <i>AISR</i> , "4. Indians had no civilization..."	
April 10	TEXTS: Johnson, "A Red Girl's Reasoning" (cont.); Green, "The Pocahontas Perplex" (Blackboard)	BLOG POST #1 (1,3,5,7)
Week 3		
April 13	TEXTS: Mojica, <i>Princess Pocahontas and the Blue Spots</i> (PPBS) (through Trans. 3; Blackboard) CONTEXTS: Mihesuah, <i>AISR</i> , "8. Indians did not value or empower women"	BLOG RESPONSE #1 (2,4,6,8)
April 15	TEXT: Mojica, <i>PPBS</i> (Trans. 4-6)	
April 17	TEXT: Mojica, <i>PPBS</i> (Trans. 7-10) CONTEXTS: Smith, "Sexual Violence as a Tool of Genocide" (Blackboard)	BLOG POST #1 (2,4,6,8)
Week 4		
April 20	TEXT: Mojica, <i>PPBS</i> (Trans 11-13)	BLOG RESPONSE #1 (1,3,5,7)
April 22	TEXTS: Erdrich, " Rape on the Reservations "; White Buffalo Calf Women's Society, " It Ends Where It Begins " (Youtube); Rebecca Belmore, " Fringe "	
April 24	Unit Wrap-up; Midterm Review	BLOG POST #2 (1,3,5,7)
Week 5		
April 27	MIDTERM EXAM	JOURNALS DUE
April 29	Unit 2: Assimilation and the Assault on Native Nations, Lands and Families TEXTS: King, <i>TTAS</i> , Ch. 5	BLOG RESPONSE #2 (4,6,8,2)
May 1	Indigenous Philosophies Symposium: Beth Piatote, "Contested Domesticities: Love, Literature, and the Legal Imaginary," 145 Straub Hall, 1pm. ATTENDANCE MANDATORY.	BLOG POST #2 (2,4,6,8)
Week 6		
May 4	TEXT: Zitkala Sa/Gertrude Bonnin, "School Days of an Indian Girl" (Blackboard)	BLOG RESPONSE #2 (3,5,7,1)

	CONTEXTS: Mihesuah, "16. Indians are not capable of completing school"	
May 6	TEXT: Oskison, "The Problem of Old Harjo" (Blackboard)	
	CONTEXTS: Zitkala-Sa, "Why I Am a Pagan" (Blackboard)	
May 8	TEXTS: Bronson, "The Serpent" (Blackboard)	BLOG POST #3 (1,3,5,7)
	CONTEXTS; Montezuma, "Let My People Go!" (Blackboard)	
Week 7		
May 11	TEXT: King, <i>TTAS</i> , Ch. 4, MK 1-26	BLOG RESPONSE #3 (6,8,4,2)
	CONTEXTS: <i>His Last Game</i> (silent film; in-class screening)	
May 13	TEXT: Howe, <i>MK</i> , 27-81	
	CONTEXTS: Howe, "Tribalography: The Power of Native Stories" (Blackboard)	
May 15	TEXT: Howe, <i>MK</i> , 82-102	BLOG POST #3 (2,4,6,8)
	CONTEXT: Howe, "Choctalking on Other Realities" (Blackboard)	
Week 8		
May 18	TEXT: Howe, <i>MK</i> , 103-128	BLOG RESPONSE #3 (5,7,3,1)
May 20	TEXT: Howe, <i>Miko Kings</i> , 129-199	JOURNALS DUE
May 22	TEXT: Howe, <i>Miko Kings</i> , 200-221	BLOG POST #4 (1,3,5,7)
	CONTEXT: Howe, "Choctaw Aesthetics"	
Week 9		
May 25	MEMORIAL DAY; NO CLASS	BLOG RESPONSE #4 (2,4,6,8)
May 27	Writing Contemporary Native Lives TEXT: King, <i>TTAS</i> , Ch. 2	
May 28	TEXT: Alexie, <i>TTIW</i> , 1-20, 35-56	BLOG POST #4 (2,4,6,8)
	CONTEXT: King, " I'm Not the Indian You Had in Mind " (short film)	
Week 10		
June 1	TEXT: Alexie, 21-34, 121-149	BLOG RESPONSE #4 (1,3,5,7)

June 3 TEXT: Alexie, 150-188, 209-238

June 5 TEXTs: 1491s, "[Man Talk](#)"; "[Geronimo, E-KIA](#)"

CONTEXTs: Course Wrap-up; Final Exam Review

JOURNALS DUE

Week 11

June 9

TAKE HOME FINAL EXAM DUE VIA BLACKBOARD BY 5PM