

English 361-22086  
**NATIVE AMERICAN WRITERS: NOVEL**

Professor Kirby Brown  
Office: 523 PLC Hall  
Office Hours: T 10-11, R 2-4, and by appointment  
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Class Meetings  
TTh: 12-1:20pm  
Location: 191 ANS

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Cherokee/Choctaw scholar Louis Owens declared that all Native novels are centrally occupied with recovering and (re)articulating an Indigenous sense of identity from within the discursive and linguistic contexts of colonialism. For Owens, this inherently dialogic process draws heavily on elements of the oral tradition and finds its most powerful articulation in the mixed-blood protagonist. Often depicted as a mongrel degradation of both Indian and non-Indian peoples, Owens argues that the mixedblood becomes in the work of Native writers a figure of possibility and transformation whose return home signals not a loss of authenticity but an attempt by Native writers to write themselves into “other destinies and other plots.”

Though important for its attention to the intersections between Native, narrative, and postcolonial studies, some criticize Owens' work for unnecessarily privileging the mixedblood experience and foregrounding mediation and negotiation with the colonial center at the expense of local and diasporic Indigenous experiences and histories. Still others question the practical efficacy of postcolonial theory (i.e. *after* colonialism) to address the politics of Native writing. Informed by the questions organizing this debate, this reading-intensive course examines the Native novel/novella from its emergence to the present day, paying particular attention to the ways in which critical methodologies define and delimit understandings of the politics of Native writing.

### **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

- Read literary texts with discernment and comprehension and with an understanding of structural, generic, and other conventions.
- Situate literary texts and writers within their appropriate historical and tribal/cultural contexts, and 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 Native American literatures, specifically the relationship between cultural production, federal policies, and contemporary movements toward Native sovereignty and self-determination.
- Develop capacities to engage in thoughtful, critical presentation and debate around questions of race, class, gender, sexuality, nation, citizenship, and belonging.
- Consistently work to hone close, critical reading skills applicable to a variety of textual forms and intellectual/professional contexts.
- Write focused, analytical essays in clear, grammatical prose, drawing upon primary and secondary sources, with proper acknowledgement and attribution.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS**

Zitkala-Sa/Gertrude Bonnin (Dakota), *American Indian Stories* (1921)  
John Joseph Mathews (Osage), *Sundown* (1934)  
N. Scott Momaday (Kiowa), *The Way to Rainy Mountain* (1967)  
Leslie Marmon Silko (Laguna Pueblo), *Ceremony* (1976)  
D'Arcy McNickle (Salish & Kootenai), *Wind from an Enemy Sky* (1978)  
Gerald Vizenor (White Earth Anishinaabe), *Heirs of Columbus* (1992)  
LeAnne Howe (Choctaw), *The Miko Kings: An Indian Baseball Story* (2007)  
Other readings available on Blackboard

\*\*All primary texts are available 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, 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 class participation, informal online blog discussions, group facilitations, and two formal essay exams. All assignments are due at the beginning of the class. **Late assignments will be accepted under no circumstances.**

### Reading Journals

You are required to keep a daily reading journal (Exam Green Books @ Duckstore) for this course 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 after each unit on a credit/no credit basis. To receive credit, you **must** demonstrate **legitimate engagement** of **at least a one full page** for each assigned text.

### Class Blog (Blackboard)

Blog Discussions and Responses are your opportunity to engage critically with a primary text, essay or critical 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 **three times** throughout the term. **Blog posts** should synthesize ideas from your reading journal, class discussions, group work, and course notes, and critically explore an issue, problem or question of form that the texts bring up (i.e. I want to see you wrestling with the text). **Responses** should substantively engage the issues, problems, or questions posed in 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).

### Group Facilitation

In groups, you will be asked to facilitate a discussion of how historical or other documents inform our understanding of the week's readings. Facilitations should be between **15-20 minutes** in length and should eventually guide our attention to **three or four** problems, questions, or critical issues to guide discussion. You should print out a 1-2 page handout for the class that outlines your main ideas/claims on the text and lists 3-4 discussion questions. **I encourage you to use A/V technology and to consult with me ahead of time.** You will be evaluated based upon your understanding and communication of the material, the clarity and creativity of your presentations, and your ability to field questions from your colleagues and guide discussion.

### Close Readings

These formal written exercises will ask you to focus on a formal, thematic, or narrative element of the text and explicate its function and significance to the rest of the work. Readings should be driven by a **clearly articulated thesis statement** that makes an **interpretive claim on the text**. You will support this thesis with **evidence from the text** followed by your own **interpretive explanation**. Papers should be **double-spaced** with **1" margins** and composed in **Times New Roman 12-point font** (see example on Blackboard). The first close reading should be

2-4 pages in length (2 pages minimum, 4 pages maximum). The second close reading should be between 5-7 pages in length (5 pages minimum, 7 pages maximum).

You will have the opportunity to **revise** both papers for **up to a full grade point adjustment** at my discretion. Revisions should include a cover page with a one paragraph reflection on the revision process. You will resubmit the revised papers, including cover page and reflection, to the assignment on Blackboard.

#### Final Exam (option 1)

The final exam will be comprehensive, composed exclusively of essay questions, and will ask you to synthesize information from throughout the term.

#### Final Research Project (option 2)

In lieu of a final exam, you may elect to perform a final research project. The project can be an extension of one of your close readings, or a new project entirely. Regardless, it must in some way engage one or more of the texts, critical issues, or historical contexts we've discussed in class. It can take the form of a traditional research paper, or can employ various technologies and forms (visual culture, material culture, new media; film, music, television, graphic novels, comics, gaming). If you choose this path, you need to work out the logistics directly with me well ahead of time (generally by week 5). A draft presentation should be prepared by week 8 or 9 for discussion and feedback. Final drafts will be due on the day of the final exam, posted to the final exam assignment on Blackboard. You are required to consult **at least 4 outside sources**, at least two of which should be hard copy sources from the library or Special Collections.

#### **GRADING**

Reading Journal	5%
Group Facilitation	10%
Course Blog	15%
Close Reading #1 (2-3pp)	15%
Close Reading #2 (5-7pp)	25%
Final Exam/Research Project	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.

#### **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. 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.**

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**

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. 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](http://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](http://www.libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students).

## COURSE SCHEDULE

<u>Date</u>	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Assignment Due</u>
<b>Week 1</b>		
Jan. 6	Introductions, Logistics, Framing the Course	
	<b>Unit 1: "Kill the Indian, Save the Man": Education, Allotment, and Family</b>	
Jan. 8	Zitkala Sa/Gertrude Bonnin, <i>American Indian Stories</i> , "Impressions of an Indian Childhood"	
	Vine Deloria, Jr., "Anthropologists and Other Friends" (Blackboard)	
	**Model Facilitation: "Ethnography, auto-Ethnography"	
Jan. 9, 5pm		<b>BLOG POST (1,3,5)</b>
<b>Week 2</b>		
Jan. 12		<b>BLOG RESPONSE (2,4,6)</b>
Jan. 13	Zitkala Sa/Gertrude Bonnin, <i>American Indian Stories</i> , "The School Days of an Indian Girl" and "An Indian Teacher Among Indians"	
	**Model Facilitation: "Indian Education Policy and the Politics of Sentimental Fiction" (Blackboard)	
Jan. 15	Mathews, <i>Sundown</i> 1-86	
Jan. 16, 5pm		<b>BLOG POST (2,4,6)</b>
<b>Week 3</b>		
Jan. 19, 5pm		<b>BLOG RESPONSE (1,3,5)</b>
Jan. 20	Mathews, <i>Sundown</i> , 87-186	
	Facilitation: "Debates over Allotment" (Blackboard)	
Jan. 22	Mathews, <i>Sundown</i> , 187-244	
<b>Week 4</b>		
Jan. 26, 5pm		<b>CLOSE READING #1</b>
Jan. 27	Finish: Mathews, <i>Sundown</i> 245-312 Begin: Begin McNickle, <i>Wind from an Enemy Sky</i> , 1-100	
Jan. 29	McNickle, <i>Wind from an Enemy Sky</i> , 101-173	

*Facilitation: "Termination and Relocation" (Blackboard)*

Jan. 30, 5pm

**BLOG POST (1,3,5)**

**Week 5**

Feb. 2, 5pm

**BLOG RESPONSE (2,4,6)**

Feb. 3            McNickle, *Wind from an Enemy Sky*, 174-256

**Unit 2: Contesting the Archive: Reclaiming Experience,  
Re-Writing/Righting Histories**

Feb. 5            Finish: *Wind from an Enemy Sky*  
Begin: Momaday, *Way to Rainy Mountain*, 1-41

**JOURNALS DUE**

*Facilitation: King, "A Million Porcupines Crying in the Dark"*  
(Blackboard)

Feb. 6, 5pm

**BLOG POST (2,4,6)**

**Week 6**

Feb. 9, 5pm

**BLOG RESPONSE (1,3,5)**

Feb. 10           Momaday, *Way to Rainy Mountain*, 42-89

*Facilitation: Momaday's "Man Made of Words" (Blackboard)*

Feb. 12           Finish: Momaday, *Way to Rainy Mountain*  
Begin: Vizenor, *Heirs of Columbus*, 1-62

Feb. 13, 5pm

**BLOG POST (1,3,5)**

**Week 7**

Feb. 16, 5pm

**BLOG RESPONSE (2,4,6)**

Feb. 17           Vizenor, *Heirs of Columbus*, 63-129

Feb. 19           Vizenor, *Heirs of Columbus*, 130-189

**JOURNALS DUE**

*Facilitation: "Constitution of the White Earth Nation, 2013"*  
and Carlson, "Trickster Hermeneutic and the White Earth  
Constitution" (Blackboard)

Feb. 20, 5pm

**BLOG POST (2,4,6)**

**Week 8**

Feb. 23, 5pm

**Unit 3: Historical Trauma and Healing Through Story**

**BLOG RESPONSE (1,3,5)**

Feb. 24           Silko, *Ceremony*, 1-139

Feb. 26           Silko, *Ceremony*, 139-188

*Facilitation:* Bird, "Towards a Decolonization of the Mind and Text: Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony*" (Blackboard)

Feb. 28, 5pm

**CLOSE READING #2**

**Week 9**

Mar. 3 Silko, *Ceremony*, 188-262

*Facilitation:* Bauerkemper, "Narrating Nationhood: Indian Time and Ideologies of Progress in Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony*" (Blackboard)

Mar. 5 Howe, *Miko Kings*, map-47

**Week 10**

Mar. 10 Howe, *Miko Kings*, 48-152

*Facilitation:* Howe, "The Story of America: A Tribalography," and "Choctaw Aesthetics" (Blackboard)

Mar. 12 Howe, *Miko Kings*; 153-221; Course Wrap-up

**JOURNALS DUE**

**Week 11**

Mar. 19 **TAKE HOME FINAL EXAM OR FINAL RESEARCH PROJECT  
DUE ON BLACKBOARD BY 5PM**