

**ENGLISH 660-12268**  
**NATIVE AMERICAN WRITING AND THE POLITICS OF FORM: BETWEEN WOUNDED  
KNEE AND THE "RENAISSANCE"**

Professor Kirby Brown  
Office: 523 PLC Hall  
Office Hours: T: 10am-noon; W 1-2pm, and by appointment  
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Class Meetings  
PLC 253  
Th 9am-11:50am

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

From the pre-revolutionary writings of Samson Occom and Joseph Johnson to the revisionist histories of William Apess and John Rollin Ridge to lesser known texts by Native women writers like Alice Callahan and Pauline Johnson, much has been done over the past three decades to recover early writings by American Indians. Still, little attention has been given to Native writing – both literary and non-literary – between allotment and tribal dissolution in the late-19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and the “Native American Renaissance” of the late 1960s. What work exists conventionally positions Native writers as traumatized subjects of late nineteenth century assimilationist policies, or as pragmatic accommodationists bent on bringing Native peoples into modernity often at the expense of tribal cultures and identities. Failing in their search for an explicitly oppositional politics or identifiable signs of Indianness, many scholars have concluded that while writing from this period may indeed be “Indian,” its critical and intellectual content deserves little scrutiny.

Recent work has begun to complicate such reductive assumptions, not only by continuing projects of recovery but also revisions of how we might better understand the complex literary, cultural and intellectual politics of this era. Building upon this growing body of scholarship, and rooted in a strong commitment to historicist methodologies, this course frames an examination of the formal politics of genre and narrative representation via some of the theoretical questions, problems, concepts and methods central to contemporary Native Studies. We will not only attend to the rich diversity of Native political and artistic expression from this period, but also to the ways in which attitudes, ideas, beliefs and narrative strategies shift – sometimes dramatically – in response to personal experiences and changing intellectual, cultural and political circumstances.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

- Situate Native writing from this period within the appropriate historical, intellectual and tribally-specific contexts, with special attention to the intersections between historical contexts and the politics of genre across narrative forms.
- Critical engage and facilitate discussion of contemporary scholarship, mapping out arguments; identifying key concepts, methodological frameworks and theoretical interventions; and considering what opportunities, problems, and/or issues for further research such work provokes.
- Undertake original research by identifying important new scholarly problems/fields or building on existing ones; locating, accessing and evaluating current scholarship; framing arguments clearly, cogently, and logically, offering convincing evidentiary support for interpretive claims; and explaining how their arguments relate to existing scholarly debate/knowledge on their topic.

- Develop an original, targeted conference proposal and produce a conference paper (10-12pp) representing original research and argumentation.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS**

Deloria, Ella Cara. *Waterlily* (2009)

Downing, Todd. *The Cat Screams* (1934)

Eastman, Charles Alexander. *From the Deep Woods to Civilization: Chapters in the Autobiography of an Indian* (1916).

Mathews, John Joseph. *Sundown* (1934)

McNickle, D'Arcy. *Runner in the Sun* (1953)

Momaday, N. Scott. *Way to Rainy Mountain* (1967)

Mourning Dove/Christine Quintasket, *Cogewea the Half-Blood: A Depiction of the Great Montana Cattle Range* (1927)

Zitkala-Sa/ Gertrude Bonnin, *American Indian Stories, Legends and Other Writings* (1921)

Supplementary readings available on Blackboard

### **ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENT**

Critical Blog Posts/Responses: (20%)

Facilitation of Critical/Literary text: (10%)

Research Proposal: (15%)

Annotated Bibliography: (20%)

Conference Paper, 10-12 pages (Draft): (35%)

### **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 after 8am on 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. 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

### WEEK 1: MAPPING THE FIELD – QUESTIONS, PROBLEMS, CONCEPTS, METHODS

October 2

- Primary Reading(s):
  - o Huhndorf, Shari. "Literature and the Politics of Native American Studies." *PMLA* 120.5 (Oct. 2005), pp. 1618-1627.
  - o Deloria, Phil. "Introduction: Expectation & Anomaly." *Indians in Unexpected Places*. Lawrence: UP of Kansas, 2005. 2-11.
  - o Maddox, Lucy. "Going Public" and "Conclusion" from *Citizen Indians: Native American Intellectuals, Race and Reform*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2006. 1-16, 166-75.
- SUGGESTED READING: Lyons, Scott. "Introduction: Migrations/Removals." *X-Marks: Native Signatures of Assent*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2010. 1-33.

### WEEKS 2-4: KILL THE INDIAN, SAVE THE MAN – ALLOTMENT, EDUCATION, CITIZENSHIP AND THE SOCIETY OF AMERICAN INDIANS (1887-1923)

#### Week 2

October 8 (5pm): Critical Blog Posts (Group 1)

October 9: Federal Policy, Regionalism, and "the Nation" in Short Fiction from Indian Country

- o Primary Reading(s):
  - Johnson, "A Red Girl's Reasoning" (Blackboard)
  - Oskison, "The Problem with Old Harjo" (Blackboard)
  - Posey, "Fus Fixico Letters" (Blackboard)
  - Zitkala-Sa, "The Widespread Enigma Concerning Blue-Star Woman" (AIS)

- Secondary Reading(s):
  - Foster, Tol. "Of One Blood: An Argument for Relations and Regionality in Native American Literary Studies." *Reasoning Together: The Native Critics Collective*. Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 2008. 265-78 (excerpt).
  - Piatote, Beth A. "Entangled Love: Marriage, Consent, and National Belonging in Works by E. Pauline Johnson and John M. Oskison." *Domestic Subjects: Gender, Citizenship, and Law in Native American Literature*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2013. 17-48.
- SUGGESTED READING: Martinez, David. "Part II: From Reservation System to Reform, 1880s-1920s." *American Indian Intellectual Tradition: An Anthology of Writings, 1772-1972*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2011. 99-112.
- Facilitation:

October 10 (5pm): Critical Response Posts (2) (Group 2)

### **Week 3**

October 15 (5pm): Critical Blog Posts (Group 2)

October 16: Sentimentalism, Romance, and the Representation of Indigenous Experience

- Primary Reading(s): Zitkala-Sa, *American Indian Stories* (1921)
- Secondary Reading(s):
  - Bernardin, Susan. "The Lessons of a Sentimental Education: Zitkala-Sa's Autobiographical Narratives." *Western American Literature* 32.3 (Fall 1997): 212-38.
  - Rifkin, Mark. "Romancing Kinship: A Queer Reading of Indian Education and Zitkala-Sa's *American Indian Stories*." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 12.1 (2006): 27-59.
- Facilitation:

October 17 (5pm): Critical Response Posts (2) (Group 1)

### **Week 4**

October 22 (5pm): Critical Blog Posts (Group 1)

October 23: Assimilation, Acculturation and the Rhetorical Politics of Autobiography

- Primary Reading(s): Eastman, *From the Deep Woods to Civilization* (1916)
- Secondary Reading(s):
  - Powell, Malea. "Rhetorics of Survivance: How American Indians Use Writing." *College Composition & Communication* 53.3 (2002): 396-34.

- Carlson, David J. "Charles Eastman and the Rights of Character." *Sovereign Selves: American Indian Autobiography and the Law*. Urbana-Champaign: U of Illinois P, 2005. 152-70.
  - Facilitation:

October 24 (5pm): Critical Response Posts (2) (Group 2)

## WEEKS 5-7: THE POLITICS OF GENRE IN THE AGE OF REFORM (1923-1945)

### Week 5

October 30: Civilization, Progress and the Politics of an Indigenous Western

- Primary Reading(s): Mourning Dove, *Cogewea, the Half-Blood* (1927)
- Secondary Reading(s):
  - Brooks, Joanna. "Sacagawea, Meet Cogewea: A Red Progressive Revision of Frontier Romance." *Lewis and Clark: Legacies, Memories and New Directions*. Kris Frisonke and Mark Spence, eds. Berkeley: U of California P, 2004.
  - Piatote, Beth H. "Preoccupations: Labor, Land and Performance in Mourning Dove's *Cogewea*." *Domestic Subjects: Gender, Citizenship and Law in Native American Literature*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2013. 91-132.
- Facilitation:

October 31: **CONFERENCE PAPER PROPOSAL DUE IN OFFICE CONFERENCE (523 PLC)**

### Week 6

November 5 (5pm): Critical Blog Posts (Group 2)

November 6: Colonialism, Capitalism, and Indigenous Detection (Mystery)

- Primary Reading(s): Downing, *The Cat Screams* (1934)
- Secondary Reading(s):
  - Cox, "Dreadful Armies: Indigenistas and Other Criminals in Todd Downing's Detective Novels" from *The Red Land to the South: American Indian Writers and Indigenous Mexico*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2012.
  - TBD
- SUGGESTED READING: Martinez, David. "Part III: The Birth and Termination of Modern Indian Nations, 1930s-1970s." *American Indian Intellectual Tradition: An Anthology of Writings, 1772-1972*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2011. 260-68.

- Facilitation:

November 7 (5pm): Critical Response Posts (2) (Group 1)

### **Week 7**

November 12 (5pm): Critical Blog Posts (Group 1)

November 13: Race, Nation and Modernity in a Native American Bildungsroman

- Primary Reading(s): Mathews, *Sundown* (1934)
- Secondary Reading(s)
  - Schedler, Christopher. "Introduction" and "John Joseph Mathews: Tribal Modernism." *Border Modernism*. London: Routledge, 2014. 41-53, 73-84.
  - Musiol, Hanna. "Sundown and 'Liquid Modernity' in Pawhuska, Oklahoma." *Journal and American Studies* 46.2 (May 2012): 357-73.
- Facilitation:

November 14 (5pm): Critical Response Posts (2) (Group 2)

## **WEEKS 8-9: POST-WAR POLITICS AND THE NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS (1941-1961)**

### **Week 8**

November 20: "The Indian" and the Gendered Politics of Ethnographic Fiction

- Primary Reading(s): Deloria, *Waterlily* (1944)
- Secondary Reading(s):
  - V. Deloria, Jr., "Anthropologists Among Other Friends" and "Anthros, Indians, and Planetary Reality" from *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto*. Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 1968/1988.
  - Cotera, "'All My Relatives are Noble': Recovering the Feminine in Ella Cara Deloria's *Waterlily*" from *Native Speakers: Ella Deloria, Zora Neale Hurston and the Politics of Culture*.
- Facilitation:

November 21 (5pm): **ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE VIA BLACKBOARD**

### **Week 9**

November 26 (5pm): Critical Blog Posts (Group 2)

November 27 (Reschedule???): Termini-Nation, Resistance, and a Vision for Transnational Indigeneity

- Primary Reading(s): McNickle, *Runner in the Sun* (1958)

- Secondary Reading(s):
  - Warrior, Robert et al. "Ethnic Studies in the Age of Transnationalism." *PMLA* 122.3 (May 2007): 805-814.
  - Cox, James H. "The Red Land of the South: Indigenous Kinship in D'Arcy McNickle's *Runner in the Sun*." *The Red Land to the South: American Indian Writers and Indigenous Mexico*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2012. 151-72.
- Facilitation:

**WEEK 10: SOVEREIGNTY, SELF-DETERMINATION AND THE "NATIVE AMERICAN RENAISSANCE" (1961-1968)**

December 1 (5pm): Critical Response Posts (2) (Group 1)

December 4

- Primary Reading(s): Momaday, *Way to Rainy Mountain* and "Man Made of Words"
- Secondary Reading(s):
  - Warrior, Robert Allen. "Momaday in the Movement Years: Rereading *The Man Made of Words*." *The People and the Word: Reading Native Non-Fiction*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2005. 143-80.
  - Teuton, Christopher B. "N. Scott Momaday's *The Way to Rainy Mountain*: Vision, Textuality, and History." *Deep Waters: The Textual Continuum in American Indian Literature*. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 2010. 53-94.
- SUGGESTED READING: Warrior, "Intellectual Trade Routes." *The People and the Word: Reading Native Non-Fiction*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2005. 181-88.
- Facilitation:

**WEEK 11: FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12<sup>TH</sup>: FINAL CONFERENCE PAPERS DUE AT COURSE POTLUCK & CELEBRATION (LOCATION/TIME TBD)**