

**ENGLISH 660-32194
NATIVE AMERICAN MODERNISMS
SPRING 2020**

Professor Kirby Brown

Office Hours: T: 10am-noon (Zoom/Canvas Chat/Conf, Phone)

W: 4:00-5:30 pm (Zoom/Canvas Chat/Conf, Phone)

Email: kbrown@uoregon.edu

Class Meetings

Location: Zoom Live Stream

R: 9-11:50 am

Phone: 541-346-5819

TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



The University of Oregon is located on Kalapuya ilih, the traditional Indigenous homeland of the Kalapuya people. Following treaties between 1851 and 1855, Kalapuya people were dispossessed of their Indigenous homeland by the United States government and forcibly removed to the Coast Reservation in Western Oregon. Today, Kalapuya descendants are primarily citizens of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and the Confederated Tribes of

Siletz Indians, and they continue to make important contributions to their communities, to the UO, to Oregon, and to the world.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Often framed as an early 20th century aesthetic movement defined by formal innovation and radical experimentation and associated with a cohort of metropolitan American, British, and European artists and writers, work in modernist studies over the past fifteen years has greatly expanded the conceptual, historical, stylistic, and cultural terrain of the field. We now speak of multiple modernisms responding to multiple modernities



operating across

multiple geographies articulated by a diverse array of writers within both “high” and popular forms. While these shifts have productively complicated the central terms, frameworks, and periodicities that organize the field, Native American and Indigenous writers, texts, and cultural productions have remained largely absent from these conversations.



Grounded in contemporary Indigenous, settler colonial, and comparative ethnic studies, this course addresses this absence by exploring how we think about Indigenous lives, literatures, and cultural productions in North America from the late-19th through the mid-20th century. Though often positioned as antitheses to both modernity and progress, a host of Indigenous writers, artists, performers, and intellectuals explicitly intervened in the very venues, genres, forms, and modes of representation and discourse

through which their lives, lands, and futures were being decided. Attending to such dynamics across tribal-specific, transindigenous and transnational contexts, this course troubles relationships between Indigeneity and modernity/modernism and resituates Indigenous actors as central contributors to and active co-creators of some of the most important political currents, aesthetic movements, and intellectual conversations of their time.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Situate Native writing from this period within the appropriate historical, intellectual, and tribal-specific contexts, with special attention to the politics of genre across narrative forms.
- Critically 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 (10-12 pp) representing original research and argumentation.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Deloria, Ella Cara. *Waterlily* (2009)

Downing, Todd. *The Cat Screams* (1934) (Wildside Press Edition, 2008; [avail. here](#))

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

Mathews, John Joseph. *Sundown* (1934)

McNickle, D'Arcy. *The Surrounded* (1936)

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

Zitkála-Šá /Gertrude Bonnin, *American Indian Stories* (1921) (Dover Edition)

Supplementary readings available on Canvas

ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

Facilitations (2) of Secondary Texts (20%, or 10% ea)

Bi-Weekly Critical Discussion Posts/Responses: (25%)

Research Proposal: (10%)

Annotated Bibliography: (15%)

Conference Paper, 10-12 pages (Draft): (30%)

GRADE POINT DISTRIBUTION

F <59.5

C- 69.6-73

B- 79.6-83

A- 89.6-93

D- 59.6-63.5

C 73.1-76

B 83.1-86

A 93.1-97.5

D 63.6-66

C+ 76.1-79.5

B+ 86.1-89.5

A+ 97.6-100+

D+ 66.1-69.5

COURSE CONTENT, INTELLECTUAL DISCUSSION, AND CRITICAL GENEROSITY

Due to ongoing histories/experiences of settler-colonial violence, institutional and individual 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 engagement and participation difficult, please reach out to me as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements.

I'd also like for us collectively to practice what some term "critical generosity" as we engage writers, texts, and one another throughout the term. As I understand and attempt to practice it, critical generosity entails reading and evaluating a text, reading, argument, or claim on its own terms and within its own contexts before launching into an intellectual take-down of everything it does wrong or everything it fails to do. Rather than this more adversarial approach, I invite you to take seriously the work a given text is trying to do and what avenues, critical vistas, or conceptual challenges it opens for us (i.e. what it offers and what can we take from it).

This doesn't mean, of course, that we can't engage in vigorous debate about potential limits or blind spots that might exist; this is, after all, how as scholars and intellectuals we express respect for the hard-won work of others—by reading it hard and rigorously interrogating it. It simply means that we begin from a place of critical generosity and with a shared commitment to engage intellectually—with texts and with each other—in good faith. We all bring different experiences, positionalities, histories, interests, commitments, and trainings to the table; it's important for me—especially in our current political and social climate—that we acknowledge, honor, and learn to speak from, within, and across those differences.

CLASS COMMUNICATION

Get in the habit of checking your UO email account and our course Canvas page regularly as this will be our primary means of communication outside of our weekly Zoom session. 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 note that I typically don't respond to emails sent after 6pm on weekdays or over the weekend until after 8am on the next business day.**

INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE EDUCATION

The University of Oregon is committed to fostering inclusive learning environments. **Please notify me if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation.** You are also encouraged to contact the [Accessible Education Center](#) in 360 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu to set up any necessary accommodations for the course.

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 harassment, bullying, and stalking. If you have experienced any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, know that help and support are available. UO has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

Please be aware that **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. We are also required to report instances of child abuse or endangerment.

If you wish to speak to someone confidentially—i.e. those not required to report—you can call 541-346-SAFE, UO’s 24-hour hotline to be connected to a confidential counselor to discuss your options, as confidential counselors are not required reporters. You can also visit the SAFE website at <https://safe.uoregon.edu/services> for more information. Each resource is clearly labeled as either “required reporter,” “confidential UO employee,” or “off-campus,” to allow you to select your desired level of confidentiality.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

The [University Student Conduct Code](#) 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 [here](#).

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 April 2

Modernist Studies Then and Now—Questions, Problems, Concepts, Methods Readings

- Irving Howe, “The Idea of the Modern” (1967)
- Raymond Williams, “When Was Modernism?” (1989)
- Charles Taylor, “Two Theories of Modernity” (1995)
- Susan Stanford Friedman. “Definitional Excursions: The Meanings of Modern/Modernity/Modernism” (2001)
- Walter D. Mignolo, “Coloniality: The Darker Side of Modernity” (2011)

See also: George Lukacs, “The Ideology of Modernism” (1962); Paul de Man, “Literary History and Literary Modernity” (1970); Marshall Berman, “Introduction” from *Everything That’s Solid Melts into Air* (1982); Fredrick Jameson, “Modernism and Imperialism” (1995); Douglas Mao and Rebecca Walkowitz. “The New Modernist Studies” (2008); Sanjay Seth, “Modernity without Prometheus: On Re-Reading Marshal Berman’s *All That is Solid Melts into Air*” (2012)

Week 2

(Re)Thinking Native American Modernisms/Modernities

April 8 **Facilitations Posted to Discussion Board by 9am**

April 9 Readings

- Phil Deloria (Dakota), “Introduction: Expectation & Anomaly” and “Conclusion: The Secret History of Indian Modernity” from *Indians in Unexpected Places*. University Press of Kansas, 2005.
 - **Facilitation:** _____

- Lucy Maddox, “Going Public” and “Conclusion” from *Citizen Indians: Native American Intellectuals, Race and Reform*. Cornell UP, 2006.
 - **Facilitation:** _____
- Scott Lyons (Red Lake Ojibwe), “Actually Existing Indigenous Nations: Modernity, Diversity, and the Future of Native American Studies.” *American Indian Quarterly* vol. 35, no. 3 (Summer 2011): pp. 294-312.
 - **Facilitation:** _____
- Beth Piatote (Nez Perce), “Introduction” and “Conclusion” from *Domestic Subjects: Gender, Citizenship, Law, and Native American Literature*. Yale UP, 2012
 - **Facilitation:** _____
- Kirby Brown (Cherokee Nation), “American Indian Modernities and the New Modernist Studies ‘Indian Problem.’” *Texas Studies in Language and Literatures* vol. 59, no. 3 (Fall 2017): 287-318.
 - **Facilitation:** _____

April 10

DP1 (Group A), by midnight

Week 3:

Assimilation, Allotment, and Settler Law in Native American and First Nations Short Fiction

April 13

DR 1 (Group B), by midnight

April 15

Facilitations Posted to Discussion Board by 9am

April 16

Primary Texts

- Alexander Posey (Mvskogee/Creek), excerpts from *The Fus Fixico Letters* (1902/03)
- E. Pauline Johnson/Tekahionwake (Mohawk), “A Red Girl’s Reasoning” (1893) and “Catharine of the Crow’s Nest” (1910)
- John Milton Oskison (Cherokee Nation), “Took Steh’s Mistake” (1897) and “The Problem of Old Harjo” (1907)
- Ruth Muskrat Bronson (Cherokee Nation), “The Killing of Gillstrape” (1914) and “The Serpent” (1922)

Secondary Texts

- Historical Contexts: David Martinez (Akimel O’odham/Hia Ced O’odham), “Part II: From Reservation System to Reform, 1880s-1920s” from *The American Indian Intellectual Tradition*. Cornell UP, 2011.
- Tereza Szeghi, “‘The Injin is civilized and aint extinct no more than a rabbit’: Transformation and Transnationalism in Alexander Posey’s *Fus Fixico Letters*” from *Studies in American Indian Literatures* vol. 21, no. 3 (Fall 2009): 1-35.
 - **Facilitation:** _____
- Beth Piatote, “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.

○ **Facilitation:** _____

- Alexander Cavanaugh, “Re-membering Cherokee Justice in Ruth Muskrat Bronson’s “The Serpent”” from *American Indian Quarterly* vol. 44, no. 1 (Winter 2020): pp. 36-58.

○ **Facilitation:** _____

See also: Tom Holm, *The Great Confusion in Indian Affairs: Native Americans and Whites in the Progressive Era* (2005); Kiara M. Vigil, *Indigenous Intellectuals: Sovereignty, Citizenship, and the American Imagination, 1880-1930* (2015)

April 17

DP 1 (Group B), by midnight

Week 4:

Federal Policy and Self-Fashioning in Native American Life Writing

April 20

DR 1 (Group A), by midnight

April 22

Facilitations Posted to Discussion Board by 9am

April 23

Primary Texts:

- Charles Alexander Eastman (Santee Dakota), *From the Deep Woods to Civilization* (1916)
- Zitkala-Sa (Yankton Dakota), *American Indian Stories* (1921)

Secondary Texts:

- Malea Powell, “Rhetorics of Survivance: How American Indians Use Writing” from *College Composition and Communication* vol. 53, no. 3 (Feb. 2002): pp. 396-434.
 - **Facilitation:** _____
- David Carlson, “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:** _____
- Mark Rifkin. “Romancing Kinship: A Queer Reading of Indian Education and Zitkala-Sa’s *American Indian Stories*.” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* vol. 12, no. 1 (2006): pp. 27-59.
 - **Facilitation:** _____

April 24

DP 2 (Group A), by midnight

Week 5:

Lynn Riggs: Indigenous Trans/National Modernism on the Stage and Screen

April 27

DR 2 (Group B), by midnight

April 29

Facilitations Posted to Discussion Board by 9am

April 30

Primary Text(s)

- Lynn Riggs (Cherokee Nation), *The Cherokee Night* (1936), *The Year of Pilar* (1938), “The Vine Theatre” (1939)
- Lynn Riggs and James Hughes, *A Day in Santa Fe* (1931)

Secondary Text(s)

- Historical Contexts: David Martinez, “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.
- James Cox, “Indian Territory! Lynn Riggs’s Indigenous Geographies” from *The Red Land to the South: American Indian Writers and Indigenous Mexico*. U of Minnesota P, 2012.
 - **Facilitation:** _____
- James Cox, “The Cross and the Harvest Dance: Lynn Riggs’ and James Hughes’ *A Day in Santa Fe*” from *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* vol. 32 (2015): 384-398.
 - **Facilitation:** _____

May 1 **Research Proposal via Canvas, by midnight**

Week 6: Reservation Modernism I

May 6 **Facilitations Posted to Discussion Board by 9am**

May 7 Primary Reading(s):

- D’Arcy McNickle (Confederated Tribes of Salish and Kootenai), *The Surrounded* (1936)

Secondary Reading(s):

- Alicia Kent, “You can’t run away nowadays”: Redefining Modernity in D’Arcy McNickle’s *The Surrounded*” from *Studies in American Indian Literature* vol. 20, no. 2 (Summer 2008): pp. 22-46
 - **Facilitation:** _____
- Beth Piatote, “The Long Arm of Lone Wolf: Disciplinary Paternalism and the Problem of Agency in D’Arcy McNickle’s *The Surrounded*” from *Domestic Subjects: Gender, Citizenship, and Law in Native American Literature*. Yale UP, 2012.
 - **Facilitation:** _____
- [Leif Sorensen, “D’Arcy McNickle’s Reservation Modernism” from *Modernism/modernity* Print Plus vol. 1, cycle 2 \(2016\).](#)
 - **Facilitation:** _____

May 8 **DP 2 (Group B), by midnight**

Week 7: Reservation Modernism II

May 11 **DR 2 (Group A), by midnight**

May 13 **Facilitations Posted to Discussion Board by 9am**

May 14 Primary Readings

- John Joseph Mathews (Osage Nation), *Sundown* (1934)

Secondary Readings

- Alexander Steele, “Sacred Space, Secular Time: *Sundown* and the Indigenous Modernism of John Joseph Mathews” from *Modernism/modernity* (forthcoming)
 - **Facilitation:** _____

- April Anson, “Sounding Silence: Survivance Ecology and John Joseph Mathews’s Bildungsroman” from *Western American Literature* vol. 53, no. 4 (Winter 2019): 439-467.
 - **Facilitation:** _____
- Karsetn Piep, “Modernity, World War I, and Appropriations of the Colonial Gaze in John Joseph Mathews’ *Sundown*” from *Journal of War and Culture Studies* vol. 11, no. 4 (2018): pp. 348-363.
 - **Facilitation:** _____

May 15

DP 3 (Group A)

Week 8:

Native American Popular Modernisms I: Indigenizing the Western

May 18

DR 3 (Group B)

May 20

Facilitations Posted to Discussion Board by 9am

May 21

Primary Reading(s):

- Mourning Dove (Okanagan), *Cogewea, the Half-Blood* (1927)

Secondary Reading(s):

- Dilia Narduzzi. “Modern Female Aboriginal Subjectivity (In) the Land: Mourning Dove’s *Cogewea*” from *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal* vol. 41, no. 1 (March 2008): pp. 61-76.
 - **Facilitation:** _____
- Beth Piatote, “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:** _____

May 22

Annotated Bibliography, by midnight

Week 9:

Native American Popular Modernisms II: Colonialism, Capitalism, and Indigenous Detection

May 27

Facilitations Posted to Discussion Board by 9am

May 28

Primary Reading(s):

- Todd Downing (Choctaw Nation), *The Cat Screams* (1934)

Secondary Reading(s):

- Charles Rzepka, “Red and White and Pink All Over: *Vacilada*, Indian Identity, and Todd Downing’s Queer Response to Modernity” from *Texas Studies in Language and Literature* vol. 59, no. 3 (Fall 2017): pp. 353-384.
 - **Facilitation:** _____
- James Cox, “Mexican Indigenismo, Choctaw Self-Determination, and Todd Downing’s Detective Novels” from *American Quarterly* vol. 62, no. 3 (September 2010): pp. 639-661.
 - **Facilitation:** _____

May 29

DP 3 (Group B)

Week 10: “The Indian” and the Gendered Politics of Ethnographic Fiction

June 2 DR 3 (Group A)

June 4 Facilitations Posted to Discussion Board by 9am

June 5 Primary Reading(s):

- Ella Cara Deloria (Yankton Dakota), *Waterlily* (1944)

Secondary Reading(s):

- Christopher J. Pexa, “Peoplehood Proclaimed: Publicizing Dakhóta Women in Ella Cara Deloria’s *Waterlily*” from *Translated Nation: Renriting the Dakhóta Oyáte*. U of Minnesota P, 2019.
 - **Facilitation:** _____
- Maria Eugenia 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*. U of Texas P, 2010.
 - **Facilitation:** _____

Week 11

June 11 Final Research Project