COURSE DESCRIPTION
There is perhaps no image more widely recognized yet more grossly misunderstood in American popular culture than the “Indian.” Represented as everything from irredeemable savages and impediments to progress to idealized possessors of primitive innocence and arbiters of new-age spiritualism, “the Indian” stands as an anachronistic relic of a bygone era whose sacrifice on the altars of modernity and progress, while perhaps tragic, is both inevitable and necessary to the maintenance of narratives of US exceptionalism in the Americas. Though such images have a long history in a variety of discursive forms, the emergence of cinematic technologies in the early twentieth century and the explosion of film production and distribution in the ensuing decades solidified the Noble Savage/Vanishing American as indelible, if contradictory, threads in the fabric of the US national story.

Of course, the Reel Indians produced by Hollywood say very little about Real Native peoples who not only refuse to vanish but who consistently reject their prescribed roles in the US national imaginary, insisting instead on rights to rhetorical and representational sovereignty. Through a juxtaposition of critical and cinematic texts, the first third of the course will explore the construction of “Reel Indians” from early ethnographic documentaries and Hollywood Westerns to their recuperation as countercultural anti-heroes in the 60s, 70s and 80s. The last two-thirds of the course will examine the various ways in which Native-produced films of the late 1990s to the present contest—if not outright refuse! — narrative, generic, and representational constructions of “the white man’s Indian” on the way to imagining more complex possibilities for “Real Indians” in the twenty-first century.

LEARNING OUTCOMES
1. Read critical and cinematic texts with discernment and comprehension, paying particular attention to the intersections of race, representation, cinematic/narrative conventions and form.
2. Situate course content in its relevant historical, cultural, intellectual, and cinematic contexts in Indian Country and the US.
3. Interrogate the relationship between cultural production, popular attitudes, and federal policy.
4. Examine popular and scholarly engagements with course material, and critically evaluate the ways in which cultural and intellectual assumptions, values, and beliefs frame engagements with and understandings of course material.
5. Produce focused, critical, formal analyses/close readings of literary and cinematic texts in clear, grammatical prose.
6. Generate original research utilizing primary and secondary sources with proper attribution per disciplinary conventions.

REQUIRED TEXTS
All required readings are available on Canvas.

FILMS
Flaherty, Robert J. *Nanook of the North: A Story of Life and Love in the Actual Arctic* (79 min). 1922.
Harjo, Sterlin (Mvscogee/Creek), *This May Be the Last Time* (90 mins). 2014.
Danis Goulet (Cree/Metis), “*Wakening*.” (9mins). 2014.

**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 daily reading/viewing journals, weekly informal online blog posts/responses, two film reviews from a list of my choosing, and a final research project. **Late assignments will be accepted under no circumstances.**

**Group Facilitation**

In groups, you will be asked to facilitate a discussion of one of our primary readings for a given day. 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 require that you consult with me as a group in advance of the presentation.** 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.

**Discussion Forum (Canvas)**

Discussion Posts and Responses are your opportunity to engage critically with a primary text, essay, idea or 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 **at least three times** throughout the term.

**Discussion posts** should be focused and substantive (~750 words) and synthesize ideas from your reading journal, course notes, and class discussions by critically exploring a specific issue, problem or question of form elicited by the text(s) (i.e. I want to see you wrestling with the text/film). They should be clearly written; advance a clearly-articulated, interpretive claim (i.e. thesis statement); present evidence from the text that illustrates that claim; and, **most importantly**, interpret that evidence for your readers (i.e. an explanation of how the text/illustration functions as you claim it does).

**Responses** will substantively engage (~250-300 words) the issues, problems or questions posed in **TWO** discussion posts in an informal yet sophisticated way (i.e. I want to see you wrestling with the arguments of your peers).
Film Reviews
You are required to submit **TWO** double-spaced, formally written film reviews of selections from a list of my choosing that speak in some way to the films/critical contexts we’ve discussed in class. One will examine a single film in 4-5 pages. A second review of 6-7 pages will be comparative in nature. Explicit instructions are available on Canvas.

Final Research Project
The project can be an extension of one or both of your reviews, a discussion you’ve begun in your journals and on the discussion forum, or a new project entirely. Regardless, it must in some way engage one or more of the texts/films, critical issues, or historical contexts we’ve discussed in class. It can take the form of a traditional research paper (8-10 page, double-spaced for undergraduates, 10-12 page double-spaced for graduate students) or can employ various technologies and forms (visual culture, material culture, new media; film, music, television; graphic novels, comics, gaming). You need to work out the logistics directly with me well ahead of time. A draft presentation should be prepared by week 8 or 9 for discussion and feedback. Final drafts will be due on the scheduled day of our final exam and will be posted to the final exam assignment listing on Canvas.

**Please note** that undergraduates are required to consult **at least 6** outside sources **not on the syllabus**; graduates should consult **at least 8** outside sources **not on the syllabus** (you may, of course, include sources on the syllabus, but you’ll need to consult the requisite number of **additional** sources listed here). At least two of these should be **hard copy sources** from the library or Special Collections.

**GRADING**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion Posts/Responses (DP, DR)</td>
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<td>Facilitation of Secondary Text (F)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Film Review #1, single film (SFR)</td>
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<td>Film Review #2, comparative (CFR)</td>
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<td>Final Research Project (FRP)</td>
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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.

**GRADE POINT DISTRIBUTION**

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**COURSE CONTENT AND INTELLECTUAL DISCUSSION**

Due to the ongoing histories/experiences of settler-colonialism, institutional racism, gender violence, state violence, dispossession, and incarceration that inform both our contemporary moment and our readings for the term, 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**

Get in the habit of checking your UO email account regularly (i.e. daily) 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.
CONVENTIONS OF ADDRESS
Communicating with 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 instructed otherwise. You should also get into the habit of including greetings, salutations, and language appropriate to such contexts. 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 cancellations. 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.

INCLUSION & ACCESSIBILITY ACCOMMODATIONS
If you have a documented need that necessitates accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with me as soon as possible and request that a counselor at the Accessible Education Center send a letter verifying your requests.

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 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: Setting the Scene: Critical and Cinematic Contexts
Tuesday, April 3

• Discussion: Course logistics, Central Questions, Film Viewing

Thursday, April 5

• Viewing and Discussion: Finish Reel Injun (85 min). 2009.
• Suggested Reading: Angela Aleiss, “Hollywood and the Silent American”

Friday, April 6

• Assignment: DP #1 (Group 1, 5pm)
WEEK 2: IMPERIAL DESIGNS AND THE ETHNOGRAPHIC GAZE: ROBERT FLAHERTY’S NANOOK OF THE NORTH

Monday, April 9
- Assignment: DR #1 (Group 2, 5pm)

Tuesday, April 10
- Readings:
  - V. Deloria, “Anthros and Other Friends” from Custer Died for Your Sins
- Viewing: Robert J. Flaherty, Nanook of the North: A Story of Life and Love in the Actual Arctic (79 min), 1922.

Tuesday, April 12

Friday, April 13
- Assignment: DP #1 (Group 2, 5pm)

WEEK 3: PULP WESTERNS, HOLLYWOOD TRANSLATIONS, AND MORAL ANXIETIES: THE CASE OF JOHN FORD

Monday, April 16
- Assignment: DR #1 (Group 1, 5pm)

Tuesday, April 17
- Readings:
- Viewings: Clips from John Ford, Stagecoach. (96 min). 1939; Begin John Ford’s The Searchers (119 min.), 1956.

Thursday, April 19
- Viewing: Finish The Searchers (119 min.) 1956.
- Readings:
  - Angela Aleiss, “Shattered Illusions” from Making the White Man’s Indian (101-118)
- Suggested Reading: Jacquelyn Kilpatrick, “The Cowboy Talkies of the 1930s, 40s and 50s.” Celluloid Indians: Native Americans and Film. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1999. 36-64. (Canvas)
**WEEK 4: RECUPERATING “THE INDIAN” AS COUNTER CULTURE HERO IN ARTHUR PENN’S LITTLE BIG MAN (1970)**

**Monday, April 23**
- **Assignment:** 488: SFR DUE (5pm)
  588: TBD (5pm)

**Tuesday, April 24**
- **Readings:**
  - Angela Aleiss, “Savagery on the Frontier” from *Making the White Man’s Indian*. 119-140.
- **Viewing:** Arthur Penn, *Little Big Man* (139 min), 1970.

**Thursday, April 26**
- **Viewing:** Finish viewing *Little Big Man* (139 min) 1970.
- **Reading:**

**Friday, April 27**
- **Assignment:** DP#2 (Group 1, 5pm)

**WEEK 5: UNMAKING THE ARCTIC PRIMITIVE IN THE FILMS OF IGLOOIK ISUMA PRODUCTIONS**

**Monday, April 30**
- **Assignment:** DR#2 (Group 2, 5pm)

**Tuesday, May 1**
- **Readings:** TBD
- **Viewing:** Clips from *Atarnajuaq/The Fast Runner* (2001); Begin viewing Cousineau and Ivalu (Inuit), *Before Tomorrow* (2008).

**Thursday, May 3**
- **Viewing:** Finish *Before Tomorrow*
- **Readings:** TBD

**Friday, May 4**
- **Assignment:** DP#2 (Group 2, 5pm)

**WEEK 6: HUMOR AND THE REMAKING OF “THE WEST” IN THE INDIGENOUS ROAD/BUDDY FILM**

**Monday, May 7**
- **Assignment:** DR#2 (Group 1, 5pm)

**Tuesday, May 8**
- **Readings:**
  - Joana Hearne, “‘A Way to Sit at the Same Table’: Indigenizing Popular Culture”
• Viewing: Begin Chris Eyre’s Smoke Signals (1998)

Thursday, May 10
• Viewing: Finish Chris Eyre’s Smoke Signals (89 mins), 1998.
• Readings:
  o Joana Hearne, “Native Spectatorship and the Politics of Recognition in Skins and Smoke Signals”

Friday, May 11
• Assignment: DP#3 (Group 1, 5pm)

WEEK 7: HAUNTING, HEALING, & HISTORICAL TRAUMA: REPRESENTING THE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL EXPERIENCE
Monday, May 14
• Assignment: DR #3 (Group 2, 5pm)

Tuesday, May 15
• Readings:
  o Brian Klopotek and Brenda Child, “Introduction” to Indian Subjects: Hemispheric Perspectives on the History of Indigenous Education
  o Eve Tuck (Aleut, St. Paul Island) and C. Ree, ”A Glossary of Haunting” (Canvas)
• Viewing: Jeff Barnaby’s (Mi’kmaq) Rhymes for Young Ghouls (88 mins), 2013.

Thursday, May 17
• Viewing: Finish Rhymes for Young Ghouls; clips from Older Than America
• Readings:
  o Brenda Child (Ojibwe), “The Boarding School as Metaphor”

Friday, May 18
• Assignment: DP #3 (Group 2, 5pm)

WEEK 8: INDIGENOUS DOCUMENTARY REALISM — (RE)PRESENTING THE PAST, UNDERSTANDING THE PRESENT, ENVISIONING THE FUTURE
Monday, May 21
• Assignment: DR #3 (Group 1, 5pm)

Tuesday, May 22
• Readings: TBD
• Begin Viewing: Sterlin Harjo (Mvscogee/Creek), This May Be the Last Time (90 mins), 2014.

Thursday, May 24
• Finish Viewing: Harjo, This May Be the Last Time.
• Readings: TBD
Friday, May 25

- **Assignment: 488:** CFR Due (5pm)
  
  **588:** TBD (5pm)

**WEEK 9: NOT YOUR INDIAN PRINCESS: REPRESENTING INDIGENOUS WOMANHOOD IN CONTEMPORARY BIOPICS**

**Tuesday, May 29**

- **Readings:**
  
  o Rayna Green, “The Pocahontas Perplex: The Image of Indian Women in American Culture”
  
  o M. Elise Marubbio, “Introduction” from *Killing the Indian Maiden: Images of Native American Women in Film*

- **Viewing:** Begin Charlie Soap (Cherokee Nation) and Tim Kelly, *The Cherokee Word for Water* (98 mins), 2013

**Thursday, May 31**

- **Viewing:** Finish and discuss Soap and Kelly, *The Cherokee Word for Water*

- **Readings:** TBD

**WEEK 10: DESIRE, DESTRUCTION, AND FUTURITY IN INDIGENOUS SPECULATIVE FILM**

**Tuesday, June 5**

- **Reading:**
  
  o Cutcha Risling-Baldy (Hupa, Yurok, Karuk), *“Why I Teach the Walking Dead in my Native Studies Classes.”*
  
  o Grace Dillon (Anishinaabe), “Imagining Indigenous Futurisms”

- **Viewing:** Danis Goulet (Cree/Metis). *“Wakening,“* (9mins), 2014.

**Thursday, June 7**

- **Readings:**
  
  o Gabriel Estrada, “Navajo Sci-Fi Film: Matriarchal Visual Sovereignty in Nanobah Becker's *The 6th World*”
  
  o Salma Monani, “Science Fiction, Westerns, and the Vital Cosmo-ethics of *The 6th World.*”

- **Viewing:** Nanobah Becker (Diné). *“The 6th World,“* (15 mins), 2014.

**WEEK 11: FINAL RESEARCH PROJECTS DUE VIA CANVAS BY 5PM, MONDAY, JUNE 11**

- **488:** Research Papers
  
- **588:** TBD
SELECTED LIST OF FILMS FOR REVIEW/RESEARCH

Non-Native Films
The Vanishing American (1925) / Could be paired with Leslie Marmon Silko’s Ceremony
The Silent Enemy (1930) / Could be paired with London short fiction, Nanook, and Atarnajuat, The Fast Runner
Broken Arrow (1950) / Could be paired with Dances With Wolves (1990) or Avatar (2009)
Arrowhead (1953) / Could be paired with Zitkala-Sa’s American Indian Stories and/or Older Than America
Run of the Arrow (1957) / Could be paired with Dances with Wolves and Avatar
Cheyenne Autumn (1964) / Could be paired with Cooper’s Last of the Mohican and its various film incarnations
Soldier Blue (1970) / Could be paired with The Plainsman (1937) or Stagecoach (1939)
Man Called Horse (1970s-80s) series / Could be paired with Cheyenne Autumn, Dances With Wolves or Avatar
Billy Jack series (1970s)
One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest (1975) / Could be paired with the Ken Kesey novel of the same title
Dances With Wolves (1990) / See potential pairings above
Last of the Mohicans (1992) / Could be paired with Cooper novel of the same title or any of the numerous filmic translations
The Unforgiven (1992)
Pocahontas (1995) and Pocahontas II: Journey to a New World (1998) / Could be paired with Run of the Arrow (1957), The New World (2005), Avatar (2009), Naturally Native, Maina, Empire of Dirt
The New World (2005)
Avatar (2009) / Could be paired w/ Dances With Wolves or Cowboys and Aliens
Cowboys and Aliens (2011) / Could be paired with Avatar or Dances With Wolves
The Revenant (2015) / Could be paired w/ Little Big Man, A Man Called Horse, or Dances With Wolves

Native Films
Powwow Highway (1989)
It Starts with a Whisper (1993)
Medicine River (1994) / Pair w/the novel by the same name by Thomas King
Grand Avenue (1996) / Pair w/ The Exiles and Urban Rez, Alexie stories
Naturally Native (1998) / Pair w/ Alexie romances, Christmas in the Clouds
Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner (2001) / Pair with London stories, Nanook
Skins (2002) / Pair w/novel of the same name by Adrian C. Louis
Imprint (2007) / Pair w/Older Than America or Rhymes for Young Ghouls
On the Ice (2011) / Pair w/Nanook, Atanarjuat
Star Wars (1977/2013), translated into Navajo (2013) / Pair w/Atanarjuat
Empire of Dirt (2013) / Pair w/ Naturally Native, Alexie’s short stories, Pocahontas
Maina (2013) / Pair w/London stories, Atanarjuat
The Cherokee Word for Water (2013) / Pair w/ Barking Water or Christmas in the Clouds
Barking Water (2009) / Pair w/ any contemporary Native text or film

SUGGESTED BIBLIOGRAPHY
Useful Studies on the Genealogy and Expression of Indianness in the Non-Indian Imaginary

Cinematic Studies on Indianness


