

**ENGLISH 580I and 860A:
Literature and Culture of the American Indian**

Spring 2007
Line #: 580I: 24127; 860A: 24291
Tuesday 4:30-6:50
Lindquist Hall 325
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Office hours: TTh 9:00-12:00
Th: 2:00-4:00

Course Description:

The course title indicates the purpose of this class: to study the role of the American Indian in American literature and culture. Such a course could look like a litter of kittens, straying off in all directions. We could apply postmodern theory to the literature. We could study the myths and beliefs of the many tribes that are a part of the generic "American Indian." We could focus on the political and economic policies that have resulted in second class status for the people Canadians call "First Nations." We could focus on Indian's world view. Any of these approaches is likely to leave us frustrated and/or confused. Instead, taking our lead from Sherman Alexie, we will focus on narrative: telling stories. After all, American Indians have been telling stories for hundreds of years: it is only in the 20th century that they began putting them into words on paper. And they are still telling stories. As ~~Alexie~~ ^{King} says, "It's turtles all the way down."

Indian narratives take many forms and appear in unexpected places in American culture. This is what we will be focusing on: is there one Indian story or many? how has it/have they influenced American culture *and* literature? Specifically, we will be looking at a range of stories, beginning with the earliest forms of the Indians' oral narratives and accounts of encounters written by Euro-Americans and Indians to explore how these stories reflect radically different views of the world. Early on we will examine both the Romantic myth of the Indian and the ways in which Indian/Euro-American confrontations have become a part of American culture. We will look at the ways the Indians' stories have become a part of mainstream American literature, music, film and technology.

Course Procedures:

This will be a discussion course. Participants are expected to keep up with the reading and contribute their ideas to the conversation. Blackboard will be used for communication and record keeping.

Grades will be based upon participation and on written and oral reports as follows:

580: Three short papers on topics to be determined by the student in consultation with the instructor.

860: A series of papers that explore an issue, topic or particular individual: 1) a brief description of project and annotated bibliography; 2) a formal proposal of app. 5 pages; 3) a formal documented paper 12-15 pages.

All of these papers will be due at the same time (see course schedule).

Attendance is required. If you aren't here, you will obviously be missed. Please let the instructor know if you will be absent. More than five absences for any reason will result in a failing grade for the course.

Course Schedule

Week One: Jan. 16: Telling Stories: Native Narrative Strategies

Thomas King, *The Truth about Stories*

Week Two: Jan. 23: Some More Theories about Telling More Stories

Thomas King, *The Truth About Stories*, continued

Reserved reading: Womack, *Red on Red*, "Introduction," and chp. 2 "Reading the Oral Tradition."

Week Three: Jan. 30: Yet More Stories

Leslie Marmon Silko, *Storyteller*

Week Four: Feb. 6: First Stories, White Stories, Indian Stories

Rowlandson, *Captivity*

Hawthorne, "Young Goodman Brown" and "Roger Malvin's Burial"

Luther Standing Bear, chps XIII-XVI, pp. 123-170 .

Zitkala-Sa, *Dreams and Thunder: Stories*

Reserved reading: Deloria, *Playing Indian*, "Introduction," chp 1, "Patriotic Indians and Identities of Revolution."

Week Five: Feb. 13: Indians in American Culture

Luther Standing Bear, *My People, The Sioux*, "Introduction" and chps I through XII (pp.3-122)

Zitkala-Sa, *Dreams and Thunder: The Sun Dance Opera*

Reserved reading: Womack, *Red on Red* chp.3, "In the Story Way" and following Hotgun's Story, pp. 75-105.

Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places*, "The Hills are Alive . . . With the Sound of Indians: Music," pp. 183-223.

580: First paper; 860: Annotated bibliography due

Week Six: Feb. 20: Clashes of cultures stories: one

James Welch, *Fool's Crow*

Reserved reading: Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places*, "The Killings at Lightning Creek: Violence," pp. 15-51

James Welch, *Killing Custer*, chps. 1 and 2, pp.25-73

Week Seven: Feb. 27 Indians in American culture: film

Luther Standing Bear, *My People, the Sioux*, chps XVII, p. 171 to end

Reserved reading: Welch, *Killing Custer*, chp. 3 pp. 74-94.

Week Eight: March 6 Research time (instructor out of town)

Week Nine: March 13 Visual Stories: film

Discussion of films: *Circle of Death*, *Stagecoach*, *Smoke Signals*

Video: *Buffalo Bill's Wild West* (2)

Films will be on reserve

Reserved reading: Deloria. *Indians in Unexpected Places*, "Indian Wars, the
Movie: Representation," pp. 52-107 and "I Want to Ride in Geronimo's
Cadillac: Technology," pp. 136-182.

860: Research proposal due

March 20:

SPRING BREAK

Week Ten: March 27: Clashes of culture: two

Linda Hogan, *Mean Spirit*

Reserved reading: Vizenor, *Manifest Manners*, chp 2 "Double Others," p 45-62.

Week Eleven: April 3 Clashes of culture: three

N. Scott Momaday, *House Made of Dawn*

580: Second paper; 860: Research proposal due

Week Twelve: April 10: Contemporary stories

Reprise Thomas King, *The Truth About Stories*

Sherman Alexie, *The Toughest Indian in the World*

Reprise: *Smoke Signals*

Reserved reading: Vizenor, *Manifest Manners*, chp 1 "Postindian Warriors" pp. 1-44.

Week Thirteen: April 17: Extended stories

Louise Erdrich *Tracks*

Week Fourteen: April 24: Really extended stories or These People Look Familiar

Louise Erdrich, *The Painted Drum*

Week Fifteen: May 1: Narrative: One Last Round

Thomas King, *Green Grass, Running Water*

580: Third paper 860: Final paper due May 10.

Texts for English 580I/860A: Literature and Culture of the American Indians

Sherman Alexie, *The Toughest Indian in the World*. NY: Grove, 2000

Louise Erdrich, *Tracks*. NY: Henry Holt, 1988

--- *The Painted Drum*. NY: HarperCollins, 2005.

Nathaniel Hawthorne, *Young Goodman Brown and Other Stories*. Mineola, NY: Dover, 1992.

Stories we will read: "Young Goodman Brown" and "Roger Malvin's Burial"

Linda Hogan, *Mean Spirit*. NY: Ivy/Ballantine, 1990.

Thomas King, *Green Grass, Running Water*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1993.

---. *The Truth about Stories: A Native Narrative*. Toronto: Anansi Press, 2003

N. Scott Momdady, *House Made of Dawn*. NY: Harper, 1968

Mary Rowlandson *The Account of Mary Rowlandson and Other Captivity Narratives*. Mineola, NY: Dover, nd

Leslie Marmon Silko, *Storyteller*. NY: Arcade, 1981

Luther Standing Bear, *My People the Sioux*. Lincoln: U Neb Press, 2006 ed.

James Welch, *Fool's Crow*. NY: Penguin/Viking, 1986

Zitkala-Sa, *Dreams and Thunder: Stories, Poems and the Sun Dance Opera*. Lincoln: U Nebraska P, 2002.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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* Indicates a book on reserve for assigned readings.

Bridger, Bobby. *Buffalo Bill and Sitting Bull*. Austin: Univ. Press of Texas, 2002.

Poorly written and documented hardly at all, this is a sprawling history of everything that might or might not have happened in the vicinity of either Buffalo Bill or Sitting Bull or a lot of other people. The author is a performer who has "spent nearly forty years researching, composing, producing and performing *A Ballad of the West*, a trilogy of one-man shows that . . . form an epic history of the American West," and he is determined to get every fact he ever encountered into this volume. What sources he does cite are not dependable or verified, including puffery biographies by B. Bill Cody and Gen. Custer as well as those of Mrs. Custer, who spent her life keeping her husband's real character from showing through her carefully crafted version of his reputation. Now and then there is some information about Cody's relations with the Indians he shot and/or hired for his Wild West Show. Sitting Bull is actually a minor character in Bridger's tome. I have no idea how he got into the title.

Buscombe, Edward. *Injuns! Native Americans in the Movies*. Cornwall, England: Reaktion Books, 2002. Series title: Locations.

Despite the rather objectionable title, this is a useful reference that includes discussion of the rise of the Western as a unique American genre, the "liberal" western, people who passed as Indians on the screen and in print and the European Western phenomenon with particular focus on Karl May. Excellent sources and good bibliography.

*Deloria, Philip. *Indians in Unexpected Places*. Lawrence: Univ. Press of Kansas, 2004.

Much of the background for my approach and organization for this class comes from Deloria's two volumes. This volume discusses the role of Indians in American culture in these areas: violence; film; athletics; technology; music and modernity. WSU: E98 S67 D46 2004

---. *Playing Indian*. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1998.

Beginning with pre-Revolutionary War (and earlier), Deloria traces ways in which Euro-Americans have "played" Indian--in organizations (remember the Boston Tea Party?) such as fraternal groups and Boy Scouts and how Indians have been viewed in American culture--in literature, ethnography, etc. WSU: E98 P 99 D45 1998

McNickle, D'Arcy. *Native American Tribalism: Indian Survivals and Renewals*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1973.

This is primarily a history but it is by an important Indian leader of the early twentieth century and is a good overview of tribal organization. McNickle also wrote short stories, collected in *The Hawk is Hungry* and novels, *The Surrounded* (1936), *Wind from an Enemy Sky* (1978: posthumous) and *Runner in the Star* (1954). The D'Arcy McNickle collection at the Newberry Library in Chicago is an important site for research in American Indian literature and culture. WSU: E91 M26 1976

Owens, Louis. *Other Destinies: Understanding the American Indian Novel*. Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1992.

Owens, of Choctaw-Cherokee-Irish descent, is one of the most important contemporary American Indian critics. After a general introduction, Owens discusses writers from the very early John Rollin Ridge and Mourning Dove through Momaday, Welch, Silko and Erdrich. WSU: PS153 I52 O74 1992

---. *Mixedblood Messages: Literature, Film, Family, Place*. Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1998.

In this study, Owens focuses on topics rather than works under the headings, "Mixedbloods and Mixed Messages" (literature); "Filming the Territory," "Autobiographical Reflections," and "Words, Wilderness and Native America."

Owens is also the author of a number of novels, mysteries, including *Nightsong*, *Dark River*, *The Sharpest Sight* and *Bone Game*. Like many successful American Indians, Owens evidently suffered from deep doubts and conflicts. He committed suicide in 2002. Bio at

http://www.dateline.ucdavis.edu/081602/dl_owens.html WSU: E98 M63 O9 1998

Rainwater, Catherine. *Dreams of Fiery Stars: The Transformations of Native American Fiction*. Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1999.

A study of the influence on and of Indian literature on American literary narrative. A fairly traditional, "thick" approach. WSU: PS374 I49 R35 1999

Reddin, Paul. *Wild West Shows*. Chicago: Univ of Chicago Press, 1999.

A good history of this truly American phenomenon. Reddin focuses on George Catlin, Buffalo Bill Cody, Miller's 101 Ranch and the film career of Tom Mix. The author does a good job of putting Buffalo Bill into his rightful historical context. The Indians that were an important part of his shows are discussed in some detail. Well documented with a good bibliography. If you want to study the beginnings of the America's love of extravaganzas and/or the nation's romantic view of the American West, Reddin's work is a good place to start.

Saris, Greg, Connie A. Jacobs and Games R. Giles. *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Louise Erdrich*. New York: Modern Language Association, 2004.

A part of the popular and valuable MLA series on teaching world literary classics, this volume follows the series' format, with sections on materials and various teaching strategies such as history and culture, Erdrich's fictional world (necessary for the often confused Erdrich reader), pedagogical issues and critical perspectives. Also included is a comprehensive bibliography. Since Erdrich continues to add novels to her string of interrelated stories, it is important to pay attention to dates of publications about her work.

Standing Bear, Luther. *Land of the Spotted Eagle*. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1933.

This is Standing Bear's first work. It is more general than *My People, the Sioux*, his autobiography. Standing Bear intended this volume to be an instructive account of Sioux life for Euro-American's curious about Indian life. He achieves his purpose: Standing Bear and Zitkala-Sa have left valuable eyewitness accounts of the rapid transformation of the plains Indians (primarily the Sioux) from "natives" into educated but not entirely assimilated "Americans." (Quote indicate some irony in this last sentence). WSU E99 T34 S7 1978

---. *Stories of the Sioux*. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1934.

As the title indicates, this is a volume of oral legends and stories told in print by someone who heard them as a boy in the tribe's camps, around the evening campfires. A good collection. WSU: E99 T34 S93 1998

Sweet Wong, Hertha D., ed. *Louise Erdrich's Love Medicine: A Casebook*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2000.

As the title indicates, this volume focuses on articles about Erdrich's first collection. Although only four years older than Saris's volume, it relies more on non-Native commentators and some essays already out of date. A good second reference after Saris's more recent, more comprehensive collection.

*Vizenor, Gerald. *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance*. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1994.

Vizenor, an Anishinaabe on the faculty of the Univ. of California at Berkeley, is, with Louis Owens, a premier Indian postmodern critic and author. Like other recent scholars, he broadens our view of American Indian literature, including correcting some of the "wannabe" and other non-Indian approaches. Vizenor is also the author of a number of novels and other works. Wikipedia biography: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerald_Vizenor

---. *Wordarrows: Native States of Literary Sovereignty*. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1978.

Vizenor uses the term "the new fur trade" to identify modern exchanges between white and Native Americans--money, language, skills, etc. This is not the usual formal critical study but rather a "creative" approach that includes the reincarnation of Gen. Custer as the head of Native American programs. Vizenor, like many Indian writers, has a subtle sense of humor. WSU: PS3572 19 W6

*Welch, James. *Killing Custer: The Battle of the Little Bighorn and the Fate of the Plains Indians*. New York: Penguin, 1994.

Welch wrote this comprehensive look at the defining conflict between Plains Indians and the American military while working on the American Experience production *Last Stand at Little Big Horn: Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse Battle Custer*. Not strictly an historical narrative, this work weaves Welch's own story, his curiosity about Custer and, most importantly, his research into the Indian's point of view into a fascinating narrative. The central chapter is a careful account of the battle itself that, as one of the Indians reportedly said, took about as long as it takes for a man to eat his dinner. In earlier chapters, Welch recounts the important confrontations between the Indians and whites that led up to the Bighorn battle and in the following chapters he reports on the fate of the Indians, including Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse and the final massacre at Wounded Knee.

The first two chapters are particularly helpful as background for reading Welch's novel *Fool's Crow*. WSU: E83 876 W38 1994

*Womack, Craig S. *Red on Red: Native American Literary Separatism*. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1999.

Womack, a member of the Creek Nation, focuses on several Creek writers to observe the role of the Indian writer and critic in (and outside) of the American literary mainstream. Womack's primary audience is the American Indian writer. Nevertheless, his first two chapters are valuable commentaries on the American Indian art of creative narratives. WSU: PS153 152 W66 1999

Zitkala-Sa. *Old Indian Legends*. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1985.

First published in 1901, this collection has long been in print, and, like Luther Standing-Bear's, is one of the first collections of oral tales by one of the first Sioux to be educated at an American Indian school (in Indiana). Recently reprinted by Nebraska as *Iktomi and the Ducks and Other Sioux Stories*.

---. *American Stories*. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1979.

First published in 1921, this volume includes Zitkala-Sa's frequently-reprinted autobiographical account of her removal from her Sioux tribe and her education into mainstream American culture, which the girl resisted as much as she could. It also includes an account of her later career and a number of original stories that reflect the conflicts American Indians encountered as a result of their marginal status in American society.

I have multiple copies of Zitkala-Sa's books that you can borrow if you are curious.

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FILMOGRAPHY

Buffalo Bill's Wild West. In *Cowboys: Old West Cowboys and Buffalo Bill's Wild West*.

Simitar Entertainment. 1999. VHS.

By His Own Request: Buffalo Bill and Lookout Mountain. Buffalo Bill Museum and

Grave, Parks and Recreation Department, City and County of Denver. No date.

VHS.

Circle of Death. 1934. Starring Monte Montana. VCI Entertainment, 2005. VHS

Last Stand at Little Big Horn: Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse Battle Custer. American

Experience. PBS. 1992. DVD

On the Pow Wow Trail. First on Board. No date. DVD NOTE: Not yet viewed or rated.

Smoke Signals. Produced and Directed by Chris Eyre. Shadowcatcher Entertainment. No

date. DVD. VHS copy in WSU library. Cassette #: 15779

Stagecoach. 1939. Starring John Wayne. Directed by John Ford. Caidin Film Co. DVD.

VHS copy in English dept. Video collection