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and by appointment

Anthropology 333: Native American Literatures

Spring 2003
Cabell 341, MW 3:30-4:45

Course Description:

In this course we will explore contemporary Native American written and oral literatures. We will be addressing the question of how Native American Literature has been defined and what part American Indian languages and cultures may have to play in this definition. Two issues will run throughout the class. First, we will question received ideas about the distinction between "oral tradition" and "literature". And secondly, we will ask how our own cultural assumptions influence the way we understand works of Native American Literature and consider the extent to which ethnographic accounts of language use and meaning within Native American contexts may change our understandings. We will compare the written work of contemporary Native American authors with examples of oral performances by persons living in Native American communities, including performances recorded by local artists, educators, anthropologists, linguists and folklorists. Our reading will be interwoven with experiences of films, audio-recordings, poetry-slams, and Web publications.

Grading policy

The course is designed so that each student turns in some writing for every class. For the majority of classes these will take the form of typed responses to the reading assigned for a given day. To get full credit, reading responses must be 1/2-1 page long. Students will write four 3-5 page essays on texts read for the class. Students will also develop an ethnopoetic analysis of a text of their choosing and present the results of their work to student workshop groups. On days when a paper or project is due, students are not required to turn in reading responses. **Student grades will be based upon:**

- four 3-5 page papers, 16% each
- an ethnopoetic project, 16%
- reading responses, 10%
- evidence of involvement with the class--including regular attendance, participating in class discussion or small group discussion, writing to the class e-mail list, coming to office hours, 10%

Required reading

Sherman Alexie, *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven*

Rodney Frey, *Stories that Make the World: Oral Literatures of the Indian Peoples of the Inland Northwest*. University of Oklahoma Press 1995.

Dell Hymes, *Reading Takelma Texts*

Refugio Savala, *The Autobiography of a Yaqui Poet*

Evers and Molina: *Yaqui Deer songs*

Additional articles in the course schedule are also required reading. They will be available through toolkit's electronic reserve and at other locations online as specified in the schedule.

Recommended

Julie Cruishank, *Life Lived Like a Story: Life Stories of Three Yukon Native Elders*

In conjunction with our readings on various Native American groups and languages, look these up in [Ethnologue: Languages of the United States](#) to find out what you can about the language, native language literacy efforts, and current population.

Schedule

Week 1

Wed 1/15: Introduction to the class

View: *2001 World Heavyweight Championship Poetry Bout: Sherman Alexie vs. Saul Williams*

Contemporary Fiction

Week 2

Mon 1/20: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Alexie, pp. 1-53

Listen to Alexie reading "[Dear John Wayne](#)"

For an author bio, and information about Alexie's other works in print and film, check out the official [Sherman Alexie website](#).

For background on the Wounded Knee Massacre and the Ghost Dance go to [The Wounded Knee Massacre](#), information contributed by Lori Liggett at Bowling Green State University, American Culture Studies Program.

Also, see [The official Coeur d'Alene Tribal website](#), and [The official page of the Spokane Tribe](#).

Wed 1/22: Alexie, pp. 54-103

Week 3

Mon 1/27: Alexie, pp. 104-153

Paper 1 assignment given

Watch first portion of the motion picture *Smoke Signals*

Wed 1/29: Alexie, pp. 154-223

Class meets in Clemons 201 to watch the second portion of the motion picture *Smoke Signals*
Last Day to Drop

There are many other contemporary Native American authors who it would be well worth your

while to learn about. You can do so at the Internet Public Library's [Native American Authors](#) site. Here you will find bibliographies of published works, biographical information, and links to online resources including interviews, online texts and tribal websites.

January 31: Last Day to Add

Oral Narratives as Contemporary Literatures

Week 4

Mon 2/3: Jahner "A Critical Approach"

Silko, "Yellowwoman"

View *Running on the Edge of the Rainbow: Laguna Stories and Poems*, with Leslie Marmon Silko.

Paper 1 due

Wed 2/5: Basso, "Stalking with Stories: Names, Places and Moral Narratives Among the Western Apache"

Heath, "What No Bedtime Story Means: Narrative Skills at Home and School"

Optional: Read texts 19-23 of [Chiricahua and Mescalero Apache Texts](#)

Watch first portion of videorecording *The Origin of the Crown Dance: An Apache Narrative and Ba'ts'oosee: An Apache Trickster Cycle* with Rudolph Kane

Cibecue, the community Basso describes, is located on the White Mountain Apache Reservation.

Explore the official website of the [White Mountain Apache Tribe](#).

Week 5

Mon 2/10: Frey, pp. xiii-38

Listen to Paul Ethelbah's Ndah Ch'iidn

Wed 2/12: Frey, pp. 39-107

Watch second portion of videorecording *The Origin of the Crown Dance: An Apache Narrative and Ba'ts'oosee: An Apache Trickster Cycle* with Rudolph Kane

Week 6

Mon 2/17: Frey, pp. 108-168

Wed 2/19: Frey, pp. 169-231

Paper 2 assignment given

Week 7

Mon 2/24: Sarris, "Keeping Slug Woman Alive: The Challenge of Reading in a Reservation Classroom"

Check out a webpage representing the [Kashaya Pomo](#)

Wed 2/26: Dennis Tedlock "On the Translation of Style in Oral Literature"

Paper 2 Due

Week 8

no class--spring break

Native American Languages, Poetic forms

Week 9

Mon 3/10: Hymes, "Some Northwest Pacific poems"

Listen to Paul Ethelbah's Deer Song

Wed 3/12: Barre Toelken and Tacheeni Scott, "Poetic Retranslation and the 'Pretty Languages' of Yellowman"

Week 10

Mon 3/17: Hymes, pp. 1-22

Chose a text to work on from [Chiricahua and Mescalero Apache Texts](#)

Ethnopoetic project assigned

Wed 3/19: Hymes, pp. 23-42

Exercise: recognizing lines and verses

Last Day to Withdraw

Week 11

Mon 3/24: Hymes, pp. 43-65

Exercise: recognizing stanzas, scenes and acts

Listen to Ethelbah "He Became an Eagle"

Hybrid Genres, Cross-Cultural Translation, Cultural Encounter

Wed 3/26: Silverstein, "The Secret Life of Texts"

Read "Old Apache Customs", "A Mescalero's Prophecy in [Chiricahua and Mescalero Apache Texts](#)

recognizing genre and metacommunicative cues.

Week 12

Mon 3/31: Hanks, "Discourse Genres in a Theory of Practice"

Ethnopoetic Project due

Wed 4/2: Savala, pp. vii-xxiii; 2-25, 145-154

Week 13

Mon 4/7: Savala, pp. 27-50, 155-170; 51-72, 171-184

Wed 4/9: Savala, pp. 73-94, 185-196; 95-117, 197-206

Paper 3 assignment given

Week 14

Mon 4/14: Savala, pp. 117-144, 207-218

Strategies for Presenting Poetic Genres in Cultural Context

Wed 4/16: Evers and Molina ch 1

Paper 3 assignment due

Week 15

Mon 4/21: Evers and Molina ch 2

Watch *Yaqui Flower World* videorecording

Paper 4 assignment given

Wed 4/23: Evers and Molina ch 3

Week 16

Mon 4/28: Evers and Molina ch 4

last day of class

Mon 5/5 Paper 4 due-- leave them for me at the Anthro office during regular hours or in my box in the basement of Brooks Hall.