

ENGL 2717-710: Native American Literature
Dr. Karen Ramirez/ Spring 2010

Course Description:

This class will introduce you to a wonderful body of literature, most of it written since the advent of the “Native American Renaissance” in 1969, and it will teach you tools for appreciating this growing body of American Literature. We will learn about (and discuss) the various sets of cultural metaphors that inform the literature we read, as well as the historical circumstances that the literature engages. Our study will especially consider how issues of orality, place, communality, gender and identity construction, and survival humor are communicated through the fiction and non-fiction we read. More broadly, though, this is a class in literature and culture. The study of the literature and the culture of several American Indian nations will also offer opportunities to discuss your own, perhaps unrecognized, cultural metaphors.

Required Texts (in the order read):

- Thomas King, *The Truth About Stories*, (2003)
- Rosenwasser & Stephen, *Writing Analytically* (2006)
- Vine Deloria, *Custer Died for Your Sins* (1988)
- Zitkala-Ša, *American Indian Stories, Legends, and Other Writings* (2003)
- N. Scott Momaday, *House Made of Dawn* (1999, Perennial Classics)
- LeAnne Howe, *Shell Shaker* (2001)
- Diane Glancy *Stone Heart: A Novel of Sacagawea* (2003)
- Heid E. Erdrich, *National Monuments* (2008)
- Sherman Alexie, *Flight*, (2007)

Required Website

CULearn:

- You will use CULearn to 1) submit work online; 2) read some required material only available on CULearn; 3) find copies of recommended readings; 4) find copies of class handouts. You can access CULearn on CUConnect or by going to <https://culearn.colorado.edu>.

Snapshot of Grading Distribution:

Participation/ Attendance	10%	80 pts
Discussion-Leader Analysis Papers	15%	120 pts
Writing Analytically Work	10%	80 pts
Exam 1	10%	80 pts
Paper 1	20%	160 pts
Paper 2	20%	160 pts
Final Exam	15%	120 pts
	<hr/>	
	100%	800 pts

[There will be more information on all these assignments on separate handouts]

Syllabus

English 2717-710: Native American Literature
Spring 2010
Dr. Karen Ramirez

IMPORTANT NOTES

- The syllabus indicates work due ON that day of class.
- Unit readings are available on CULearn and **MUST be printed in full**
- **ALWAYS BRING YOUR TEXT/S TO CLASS.**

Unit 1: Situating American Indian Literature

Mon January 11– Introduction

Wed. January 13 – Public Awareness of American Indians

- **Short written assignment:** Ask 5 people (preferably not all students) what comes to mind when they hear the term “Native American” or “American Indian” and ask them to name 3-5 Native Americans. Write down the responses and bring to class.
- King, *The Truth about Stories* Ch. 2: pp. 31-60 [if you don’t have the text, this is also on CULearn. You must print it off if you don’t have a copy of the text]
- Reading questions on Thomas King posted on CULearn

Fri. January 15 – Understanding Colonialism

- Loomba, “Situating Colonial and Postcolonial Studies” [Unit 1 reader]
- Introduction to *Native American Studies* [Unit 1 reader]

Mon. January 18 – MLK Day – No class

Wed. January 20 – American Indian History (in brief) as a context for the literature

- Utter, “Discovery Doctrine” and “Summary History” [Unit 1 reader]
- *Writing Analytically* Ch. 1
 - (Summary/Response due, 10 pts)

Fri. January 22 – American Indian History (from one American Indian perspective)

- Deloria, *Custer Died for Your Sins* pp 1-27

Mon. January 25 – American Indian History (from one American Indian perspective)

- Deloria, *Custer Died for Your Sins* pp 28-77

Unit 2: American Indian Oral Literatures and Early Literature in English

Wed. January 27 – Review of American Indian History and Introduction to Orality

- Thomas King, *The Truth about Stories*, Ch. 1: pp. 1-30

Fri. January 29 – Orality: Emergence Stories (Navajo focus)

- Matthews, *Navaho Legends* [Unit 2 reader]

Mon. February 1 – Orality: Medicine Ways (Navajo focus)

- “By This Song I Walk: Navajo Songs” with Andrew Natonabah [Unit 2 reader]
- Navajo Night Chant selection (from Norton Anthology) [Unit 2 reader]
- View video of Natanobah online (link on CULearn under “Links”)
- *Writing Analytically* pp. 31-58, 63-65 and 96-102
 - (Summary/Response due, 10 pts)

Wed. February 3 – Orality: Tricksters and Translation (Navajo and Hopi focus)

- Babcock and Cox, “The Native American Trickster” [Unit 2 reader]
- Iisaw: Hopi Coyote Stories with Helen Sekaquaptewa [Unit 2 reader]
- View Sekaquaptewa storytelling online (link on CULearn under “Links”)

Fri. February 5 – Early American Indian Literature in English: Zitkala-Sa

- Zitkala-Sa, “Introduction” and part of “Old Indian Legends” (p. xi-26, 114-118)

Mon. February 8 – Early American Indian Literature in English: Zitkala-Sa

- Zitkala-Sa, “American Indian Stories” (pp. 68-113)

Wed. February 10 – Dialogue Day

Fri. February 12 – Exam 1

Unit 3: Rise of the Native American Renaissance: Momaday and Silko

Mon. February 15 – Return of the Native: Momaday

- *House Made of Dawn*, 1-27

Wed. February 17 – Return of the Native: Momaday

- *House Made of Dawn*, 28-76
- *Writing Analytically*, pp. 109-120, 123-129
 - (Summary/Response due, 10 pts)

Fri. February 19 – Return of the Native: Momaday

- *House Made of Dawn*, 79-120

Mon. February 22 – Return of the Native: Momaday

- *House Made of Dawn*, 123-166
- **Group Recording Assignment Due** (see separate handout)

Wed. February 24 – Return of the Native: Momaday

- *House Made of Dawn*, 169-185
- View film, “A Seat at the Drum” (on reserve)

Fri. February 26 – Expanding Native American Literature: Silko

- Silko, “Landscape, History and the Pueblo Imagination” [Unit 3 reader]
- Silko, *Storyteller* opening, “Tony’s Story,” and “Long Time Ago” [Unit 3 reader]

Unit 4: Historical Agency in American Indian Literature

Mon. March 1 – Introduction to Leanne Howe

- Howe, “My Mothers, My Uncles, Myself” (handout)
- *Shell Shaker*, 1-29
- *Writing Analytically*, pp. 139-157, 254-257
 - (Summary/Response due, 10 pts)

Wed. March 3 – Bridging the Past and Present: Howe

- *Shell Shaker*, 30-96

Fri. March 5 – Bridging the Past and Present: Howe

- *Shell Shaker*, 97-136

Mon. March 8 – Bridging the Past and Present: Howe

- *Shell Shaker*, 136-169
- **Submit paper #1 topic/plan via email by the end of the day**

Wed. March 10 – Bridging the Past and Present: Howe

- *Shell Shaker*, 170-222

Fri. March 12 – Discuss “Spiral of Fire” (film featuring Leanne Howe)

- View film, “Spiral of Fire” (on reserve)

Mon. March 15 – In-class Paper Workshop

- **Submit your draft on CULearn before class and bring 3 copies of your submitted paper to class.**

Wed. March 17 – Introduction to Glancy’s novel on Sacagawea

- *Stone Heart* pp. 1-56

Fri. March 19 – Rethinking the Past: Glancy

- *Stone Heart* pp. 57-78
- **Paper due in class and on CULearn**

Spring Break

Mon. March 29 – Rethinking the Past: Glancy

- *Stone Heart* pp. 79-152

Wed. March 31 – Challenges to Agency, Past and Present

- Beth Brant, “A Long Story” [Unit 4-6 reader]

Unit 5: Exploring American/Indian Nationalism

Fri. April 2 – Thinking about Nationalism and National “monuments”

- Simon Ortiz, “Towards a National Indian Literature” [Unit 4-6 reader]
- Info page on NAGPRA (from Jack Utter’s book) [Handout]
- Heid E. Erdrich, *National Monuments*, pp 3-13

Mon. April 5 – Complicating “Nationalism”: Heid E. Erdrich

- Heid E. Erdrich, *National Monuments*, pp 14-48

Wed. April 7 – Complicating “Nationalism”: Heid E. Erdrich

- Heid E. Erdrich, *National Monuments*, pp. 51-96

Unit 6: Modern Indian Identity in American Indian Literature

Fri. April 9 – Indian Identity and Authenticity

- Owens, “Beads and Buckskin” [Unit 4-6 reader]
- Thomas King, *The Truth about Stories*, Ch. 3 pp. 61-90

Mon. April 12 – Indian Identity and Authenticity continued

- Thomas King, *The Truth about Stories*, Ch. 5 pp. 121-152
- **review of paper 1 due (10 points)**

Wed. April 14 – Exploring Modern Indian Identity: Alexie

- *Flight* pp.1-78

Fri. April 16 – Exploring Modern Indian Identity: Alexie

- *Flight* pp. 79-138
- **Submit paper topic/plan via email by the end of the day**

Mon. April 19 – Exploring Modern Indian Identity: Alexie

- *Flight* pp. 139-181

Wed. April 21 – Exploring Modern Indian Identity in film: *Smoke Signals*

- view *Smoke Signals* (on reserve)

Fri. April 23 – Dialogue Day 2

Mon. April 26 – Review of American Indian Literature

- Thomas King, *The Truth about Stories*, Ch. 4 pp. 91-120
- **Paper 2 due in class and on CULearn**

Wed. April 28 – The Truth about Stories

- Thomas King, *The Truth about Stories*, Afterword, p. 153-168

Fri. April 30 – Review

Wed May 5, 4:30-7:00 pm – FINAL EXAM (in our regular classroom)