



ENGL 47 - Native American Literature

Catalog Description

Transfer Status: CSU/UC

Unit(s): 3.00

Lecture: 51.00 Contact hours/102.00 Out of class hours/153.00 Total hours/3.00 Unit(s)

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Course Description: This course will examine the lived experiences of Native Americans through a variety of texts and genres. Focus will be on the cultural, social, and historical aspects of Native American Literature, and how texts authored by Native Americans have contributed to U.S. culture. Texts are studied through the lens of critical ethnic studies and emphasis is placed on anti-racist issues and practices in Native American communities.

Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Analyze and articulate concepts such as race and racism, racialization, ethnicity, equity, ethno-centrism, eurocentrism, white supremacy, self-determination, liberation, decolonization, sovereignty, imperialism, settler colonialism, and anti-racism as analyzed in Native American studies.
2. Critically analyze the intersection of race and racism as they relate to class, gender, sexuality, religion, spirituality, national origin, immigration status, ability, tribal citizenship, sovereignty, language, and/or age in Native American communities.
3. Apply theory and knowledge produced by Native American communities to describe the critical events, histories, cultures, intellectual traditions, contributions, lived-experiences, and social struggles of those groups with a particular emphasis on agency and group-affirmation.
4. Read, analyze, and compare the lived experience of Native Americans in texts written by Native American essayists, poets, novelists, and activists.
5. Synthesize analyses of specific details in particular works of Native Literature in support of a clear, overall point or thesis that applies relevant literary and Native American studies theories.
6. Identify specific themes and cultural concerns distinctive to Native American literature in course texts, including oral literacy, storytelling, material culture, foodways, land rights, place, gender construction, and survivance.

Course Content

Topic Titles / Suggested Time Topic	
	<u>Lecture</u>
<u>Topics</u>	<u>Lec Hrs</u>
Sovereignty and Oral Tradition	2.00
Settler Colonialism and U.S. Law concerning Native Americans in literature	4.00
White Supremacy and the origin and development of stereotypes about Native peoples	2.00
Racialization in Early Native American writings, including the 18th and 19th centuries	5.00
Self-determination in Native American Literature from 1900-1970	10.00
Liberation in the Native American Renaissance, literature from 1970-present	20.00
Storytelling and the Intellectual Tradition of the Trickster tale	2.00
Spirit and Nature in Cultural Practice	2.00
Gender and Sexuality in Native American literary texts	2.00
Decolonization and the Two Spirit Community in Native American literary texts	2.00
Total Hours: 51.00	

Methods of Instruction

- A. Collaborative Group Work
- B. Discussion
- C. Homework: Students are required to complete two hours of outside-of-class homework for each hour of lecture
- D. Lecture
- E. Multimedia Presentations
- F. Reading Assignments

Methods of Evaluation

- A. Homework
- B. Class participation
- C. Final Examination
- D. Essays and research papers
- E. Class Discussion
- F. Students will be expected to write a minimum of 6,000 words

Examples of Assignments

Reading Assignments

1. Read William Apess' "An Indian's Looking-Glass for the White Man" (1833). Apess' refers to the racism he experiences as "color prejudice." As you annotate the text, identify how this text defines racism and how Apess' lived experiences illustrate survivance.
2. Read Layli Long Soldier's *Whereas* (2017). As you annotate the text, critically evaluate her inclusion of U.S. law in her poetry. At the end of your reading, evaluate the use of poetry as a genre to communicate her argument for sovereignty and decolonization.

Writing Assignments

1. Read Zitkala-Sa's *American Indian Stories* (1921). Contrast the reservation community of her early life and the residential boarding school Zitkala-Sa attended. Areas of analysis might include her community, religious practice, clothing, language, and foodways. How does Zitkala-Sa express agency and resistance within the residential boarding school system? How does the white supremacy enacted by the residential boarding school system impact early-twentieth century Native communities, and how do Native communities resist?
2. Write a formal character analysis of one character from Tommy Orange's novel *There, There* (2017). Explain how the character you have chosen expresses their connection to Native culture and community. How does the character express their Native racial identity? Consider the characters' gender, class, ability, sexuality, and tribal citizenship. What is the impact of these intersections? How is the characters' connection to their culture and Native community impacted by their lived experiences?

Out-of-Class Assignments

1. Attend the annual Women of Wisdom storytelling event or listen to a recording of a previous year. Storytelling is a method of knowledge production within the Native American oral tradition. Take notes as you listen and identify how the story illustrates critical events, histories, cultures, intellectual traditions, contributions, lived experiences, or social struggles and/or upholds Native agency and group affirmation. Be prepared to present your observations to the class.
2. Conduct and transcribe an interview with a member of a local tribe or find a published interview with a member of a California tribe. If you are conducting an interview, focus the interview on the individual's experience with storytelling (either as a storyteller or listener). What does the person interviewed state about the significance of storytelling in their life? Bring your writing to class, and we can analyze the range of experiences.

Recommended Materials of Instruction

Purdy, John L. and James Ruppert. (2001). *Nothing But the Truth: An Anthology of Native American Literature*. *Pearson Publishers*. 978-0130116420.

Delgado, Richard, and Jean Stancic. (2017). *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*. *New York University Press*, 3rd. 978-1479802760.

Erdich, Louise. (2012). *The Round House*. *Harper Perennial*. 978-0062065254.

Golassh-Boza, Tanya Maria. (2021). *Race and Racism: A Critical Approach*. *Oxford University Press*, 3rd. 978-0197533215.

Harjo, Joy, editor. (2020). *When the Light of the World was Subdued, Our Songs Came Through: A Norton Anthology of Native Nations Poetry*. *Norton*. 978-0393356809.

Dunbar-Ortiz, Roxanne. (2014). *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*. *Beacon Press*. 978-0807057834.

Soldier, Layli Long. (2017). *Whereas: Poems*. *Graywolf Press*. 978-1555977672.

Mailhot, Terese Marie. (2018). *Heart Berries: A Memoir*. *Counterpoint Press*. 978-1619023345.

Orange, Tommy. (2018). *There There: A Novel*. *Knopf*. 978-0525520375.

Silko, Leslie Marmon. (1977). *Ceremony*. *Penguin Books*. 978-0451138927.

Takaki, Ronald. (2008). *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America*. *Back Bay Books*. 978-0316022361.

Zitkala-Sa. (2003). *American Indian Stories*. *Bison Books*, 2nd. 978-0-8032-9917-7.

Other Learning Materials

Audio/Visual Materials
Handouts
Current News Articles
Internet Sites

Minimum Qualifications

English (Masters Required)
Ethnic Studies (Masters Required)

