SSEM: Native American Literature and Culture

Catalog Descriptions:

4973 Seminar for English Majors (3-0) 3 hours credit. Prerequisite: 12 upper-division semester credit hours in English. This undergraduate seminar, limited to English majors in their senior year, offers the opportunity to study a genre, author, or period in English or American literature. Content varies with each instructor. May be repeated once for credit when topics vary.

3233 Honors Seminar in Arts & Humanities (3-0) 3 hours credit. Prerequisite: Enrollment in the Honors College or consent of instructor. Interdisciplinary seminar that explores broad topics and themes in arts and humanities. May be repeated for credit when topics vary.

Course Description: This interdisciplinary course seeks to examine American Indian experience and culture by reading literature, testimonies, and socio-historical essays. Our main objective will be to better understand the native stories and histories of independent sovereign nations who have persevered through genocide and 500+ years of colonization, assimilation, and in some cases the absolute destruction of their culture. This course will encourage you to critically examine instances of cultural tourism and popular media stereotypes that continue to perpetuate gross misconceptions about American Indian identity. There will be no romanticizing of the “vanishing race,” but rather this course will seek to represent Indians as real flesh and blood people who have their own stories and histories. My hope is that this seminar will enhance your knowledge of American Indian identity and culture and problematize your understanding and experience of Indianness that is, your thinking, your speaking, and your actions in relationship to the Native American community.

Course Objectives

- Provide students the opportunity to effectively write a thesis driven college level essay including form and content as well as successful integration and documentation of secondary sources
- Provide students the opportunity to develop significant interpretations of a wide variety of literary and historical works
- Provide students the opportunity to effectively gather information and critically analyze social, political, economic and historical aspects of Native American literature and culture
- Provide students the opportunity to review Eurocentric social and cultural constructions of Indianness
- Provide students the opportunity to critically examine historical and contemporary representations of American Indians, especially indigenous women
- Provide students the opportunity to critically examine contemporary representations of American Indians in popular and visual culture through a native-centered perspective
Required Texts

- The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven by Sherman Alexie
- Electronic Articles: some required readings/articles can be found on Blackboard under E-reserves. I suggest that you maintain a separate binder for this course that includes copies of the readings uploaded to Blackboard.

Course Requirements and Grading Criteria

No late assignments accepted! You will be given a zero for all late assignments. There are also no makeup quizzes or assignments.

Attendance: You are required to attend class regularly and will be graded accordingly. More than three unexcused absences will result in your grade being lowered by 15 points, for each absence thereafter. You are responsible for knowing what was discussed in class. It is your responsibility to ensure that I receive advance notification of excused absences. Please see “UTSA Handbook of Operating Procedures” for a more detailed outline of approved excused absences and the process for proper notification to the instructor.
http://www.utsa.edu/hop/chapter5/5-9.cfm

Reading Responses: (2p) These responses will provide a space where you can critically analyze the readings. The purpose of the responses is to generate group discussion and enable you to begin formulating your thoughts for a longer essay. If you paraphrase and/or quote from the readings, make sure to cite page numbers! Some examples of what you might write for a reading response are: 1) close reading of a passage(s) that discusses the major themes, characters, setting, etc. 2) respond to one or two of the main themes/ideas of the documentary, film, novel, essay, poem, or short story 3) discuss the narrative style and techniques of the writer 3) respond to the article/creative work by relating it to your own lived experience and/or knowledge of the subject matter 4) respond by asking questions and critically engage in dialogue with the main ideas of the texts/films 5) compare creative works/essays/documentaries to other readings and or secondary sources {Note: Remember NOT to simply summarize the readings, but rather engage in critical analysis and commentary!} My criteria for grading reading responses will be based partly but not exclusively on the following:

- Your ability to critically analyze and interpret the readings
- Your ability to properly explicate and evaluate socio-historical essays and creative works
- Your ability to NOT simply summarize the articles/reading, but rather, discuss your own ideas and interpretations of a particular text
- Your ability to write well-thought responses and/or questions that are coherent and illustrate proper use of grammar, mechanics, and style (e.g. basic elements of language use; clear, effective, correct sentence structures, word choice, tone, voice)

Blackboard: We will be using Blackboard frequently throughout this course, so please become familiar with the basic tools (i.e. Discussion Board, Assignments, Announcements, Assessments, Mail, Course Content, Calendar, Weblinks, etc.). The following link has tutorials on various aspects of BB. https://elearning.utsa.edu/Tutorials/BB/Index.aspx

In-Class & Blackboard Discussions: Active participation in class discussions is required. For each class you should be prepared to discuss the material and address the comments/questions of
your peers. You should also come to class with at least two prepared questions to address to the class. The issues raised in this class are by no means resolved. It is thus expected that as a class we will often disagree and rarely come to a consensus about the material. This should be seen as positive rather than negative. Your participation on BB and face to face is key to creating a more dynamic class, one that allows us to learn from each other. I expect everyone to be respectful of their fellow peers and come to class with open minds that will allow for constructive debate and discussions about the material presented in class, especially during student presentations. I encourage you to continue your in-class discussions online through Blackboard. In order for me to maintain a record of your participation, I will grade your discussions and prepared questions biweekly based on a combination of your in-class and online participation.

My criteria for grading discussions will be based partly, but not exclusively on the following:

- Your ability to critically analyze another student’s comments and give critical feedback
- Your ability to engage in meaningful and substantial dialogue with your peers that focuses on the readings
- Your ability to bring in examples of lived experience that are relevant to the main topic of discussion
- Your ability to ask questions that engage your peers to think critically about a particular work
- Your ability to introduce new material (e.g. websites, new articles, current events, other journal articles, books, etc.) to the discussion group
- BB discussions grades will be based not only on the number of entries you make, but your interactive participation with peers and relevant responses to their comments/questions; this grade will also be based on how well you critically examine the readings beyond simple summary; these online discussions should not be treated as informal “chats” (please pay close attention to your grammar, mechanics, etc.)

Participation grades will be distributed as follows:

**In Class Discussion Grade:** A maximum of 5pts points each week will be given for your participation in large and small group discussions. You are required to come to class with at least two prepared questions and/or substantive comments on the day’s readings. These may be collected during class in order to promote discussion. I will record your participation during every class meeting. (Note: Points may be deducted for non-participation in weekly in-class discussions).

**Blackboard Discussion Grade:** (2p x 10) A maximum of 5 points each week will be given for BB discussion. You will be required to submit at least two questions per week covering the readings and you will need to respond/answer at least two of your peers’ questions and respond to at least one student’s response. This will take the form of “dialogue”; similar to an in-class discussion. Thus, you are encouraged to respond back and forth with a peer who has answered one of your questions (and/or has commented on your in-class presentation, etc.). I expect that ALL of these answers and responses to peers be substantial. Please note that you are encouraged to post questions/thoughts/responses after in-class discussion; but “discussion boards” will be locked at the end of each week. (Note: Points may be deducted for non-participation in weekly BB discussions).

Please see the following websites for universal practices of online “netiquette”:
http://www.csustain.edu/Blackboard/Netiquette.html
Final Essay: (15p) Your essay is to be turned in electronically via Blackboard. Your essay will require that you formulate your own original, creative thesis on a reading from class. All papers should be double-spaced and typed in 12-point font with a one-inch margin on all sides. (MLA Style) My criteria for grading your essay will be based partly but not exclusively on the following:

- Your ability to produce a coherent, well thought-out essay that includes secondary sources
- Your ability to produce an original, creative thesis
- Your ability to critically analyze and interpret the assigned articles, creative works and documentaries
- Your ability to do extensive research on a particular writer, novel, topic, etc. by utilizing the library databases; note: all secondary sources must be from peer-reviewed journals and/or books
- Your ability to submit an MLA style paper with proper documentation
- Reference websites for proper MLA style (also refer to latest edition of the MLA Handbook): http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/
- Coherence: thesis clarity and creativeness; paragraph topic-sentence clarity and cohesion with thesis; ideas are clearly stated; supporting evidence is appropriate to chosen topic; addresses the target audience
- Structure: the order around which the paper is organized; degree to which introduction and body develop towards conclusion; overall soundness of structure
- Thematics: creative use of topic (as opposed to simple summary); relevance of paper to the given assignment suggestions; level of engagement of the author(s)
- Grammar and Mechanics: basic elements of language use; clear, effective, correct sentence structures
- Stylistics: word choice, tone, voice

Presentations: (20min) Everyone will be responsible to present one of the weekly assigned readings in order to facilitate class discussion. Although it is not required you can utilize any of the following multi-media formats to aid in your presentations: film/documentary clips, visual slides, PowerPoints, material objects, music, visual art, youtube clips, and current news events that relate to the course readings. As a presenter you may synthesize the main points of the day’s reading and evaluate the author’s main arguments or narrative style, theme, etc. You may also provide historical background, biographical information of the author, or review current literary/historical criticism of the works. Please e-mail or meet with me before your presentation. Remember that your presentation must include questions that you present to the class.

Reflection Essay: (1-2p) This essay should be a well thought out reflection of the course and its major objectives. You should also discuss what you learned and your own intellectual growth after taking this course.

Documentary/Film Screenings: Throughout the semester we will screen documentaries/films, which will be either screened in class or on BB. All documentaries will be available through video streaming on Blackboard or placed on library reserves.

Point Distribution

| Reading Responses |           | 30pts x 3 = 90 |
Annotated Bibliography .................................. 30pts x 1 = 30
Final Essay .............................................. 100pts x 1 = 100
Reflection Essay ........................................ 20pts x 1 = 20
Presentation ............................................. 30pts x 1 = 30
Quiz .......................................................... 40pts x 1 = 40
Discussion (Blackboard) .............................. 10pts x 10 = 100
Discussion (In-Class) ................................. 10pts x 9 = 90
Total Points .............................................. 500

Final Grading Scale

A 450 points and above
B 400-449 (80-89%)
C 350-399 (70-79%)
D 300-349 (60-69%)
F 299 and below

Students with Disabilities

The University of Texas at San Antonio is committed to providing students, faculty, staff, and visitors access to all university programs, activities, and facilities in accordance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008. The university prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities in all programs, services and activities. Disability Services (DS) coordinates support services, accommodations, and equipment for students with disabilities. DS certifies eligibility for services, determines reasonable accommodations, and develops plans for the implementation of accommodations. The DS director also assists students in the informal resolution of complaints. Information regarding support services, accommodations and equipment for students may be found at the website: (http://www.utsa.edu/disability/students.htm) The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) coordinator assists faculty, staff, and visitors in the certification process and in the informal and formal resolution of complaints related to accommodation requests. The Human Resources Department serves as liaison for faculty and staff with disabilities in ensuring reasonable accommodation by the university. The procedure to request an accommodation under this policy can be found at: http://www.utsa.edu/hr/EmployeeRelations/ada.cfm

Scholastic Dishonesty (Plagiarism)

You will automatically receive a “0” for any assignment that has been plagiarized. The Office of Student Judicial Affairs or faculty may initiate disciplinary proceedings against any student accused of scholastic dishonesty. “Scholastic dishonesty” includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to give unfair advantage to the student (such as, but not limited to, submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructor, providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment), or the attempt to commit such an act. “Plagiarism” includes, but is not limited to, the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another’s work and the submission of it as one’s own academic work offered for credit. “Collusion” includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic
assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any section of the rules on scholastic dishonesty. For a more detailed overview please see the student code of conduct bulletin: http://www.utsa.edu/infoguide/appendices/b.html

Refer to following websites for avoiding plagiarism and read “plagiarism handouts thoroughly”:

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/
http://cambridge.cic.tsinghua.edu.cn/reading/plagiarism.html
http://www.utdallas.edu/judicialaffairs/UTDJudicialAffairs-AvoidDishonesty.html
http://www.utexas.edu/lbj/students/writing/plagiarism.pdf

**Student Code of Conduct**

Please Note: This course will foster an environment that instills dignity, respect, tolerance, appreciation of diversity and positive regard for all members of our college community. It will nurture an atmosphere free from racism, religious intolerance, sexism, ageism, homophobia, harassment, discrimination against those with disabling conditions, or discrimination based upon an individual’s political views or beliefs. Hate speech of any type in class or online (i.e. Blackboard, e-mail correspondence, etc.) will not be tolerated.

By enrolling at The University of Texas at San Antonio, a student neither loses the rights nor escapes the responsibilities of citizenship. All students are expected to obey federal, state, and local laws, the Rules and Regulations of the Board of Regents of The University of Texas System, the rules and regulations of The University of Texas at San Antonio, and directives issued by an administrative official in the course of his or her duties. A student who enrolls at the University is charged with the obligation to conduct himself or herself in a manner compatible with the University’s function as an educational institution; consequently, conduct which interferes with the use or utilization of University facilities by other persons may be punished regardless of whether such conduct is specifically proscribed by the provisions of the Student Code of Conduct.

According to the UTSA “Information Bulletin” section regarding student code of conduct, Sec. 202. Specific Conduct Proscribed, disciplinary proceedings may be initiated against any student for acts or violations including, but not limited to the following: advocacy, either oral or written, that is directed to inciting or producing imminent lawless action and is likely to incite or produce such action; engaging in conduct, either alone or in concert with other people, that is intended to obstruct, disrupt, or interfere with, or that in fact obstructs, disrupts, or interferes with any scheduled class, etc. For more details of this university policy please see:
http://www.utsa.edu/infoguide/appendices/b.html

Violations of these guidelines will result in a significant lowering of the student’s class participation grade at the instructor’s discretion, and may lead to other sanctions, including administrative removal from the class if necessary.
## Detailed Course Schedule

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<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Weekly Readings &amp; Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 25</td>
<td>• Introductions (Native American Literature, American History, Culture, Identity)</td>
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<td>• Review Syllabus</td>
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<td>• Sign Up for Presentations</td>
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<td>• Questions/Clarifications</td>
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<td>• Video: “Native Voices” from <em>American Passages Series</em></td>
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<td>• Video: “History lessons processing American indigenous history”</td>
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<td>Sept. 1</td>
<td><strong>Drop/Withdrawal begins</strong></td>
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<td>• from <em>A People’s History of the United States</em> “Columbus, The Indians and Human Progress 1492-1992” by Howard Zinn (p.1-22)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• “The Man Made of Words” by N. Scott Momaday (p. 36-46)</td>
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<td>• “Interior and Exterior Landscapes: The Pueblo Migration Stories” by Silko (p. 25-47)</td>
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<td>• “Language and Literature from a Pueblo Indian Perspective” by Silko (p.48-59)</td>
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<td>• (Screen the following videos on Blackboard; available via streaming)</td>
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<td>• Video: “N. Scott Momaday” and “Leslie Silko”</td>
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<td>Sept. 8</td>
<td>• excerpts from Zitkala-Sa “Impressions of an Indian Childhood” (p. 280-296)</td>
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<td>• “Genocide by Any Other Name” by Ward Churchill (p. 1-24 and p. 44-60)</td>
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<td>• From <em>Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide</em> by Andrea Smith</td>
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<td>“Boarding School Abuses and the Case for Reparations” (p.55-54)</td>
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<td>• Video: “In the White Man’s Image”</td>
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<td>• Quiz #1 (Available on Blackboard)</td>
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<td>• “Indigenous Identity: What Is It, and Who Really Has It?” by Hilary N. Weaver (p.240-255)</td>
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<td>• “Is Urban a Person or a Place? By Susan Lobo (p.56-65)</td>
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<td>• from <em>Lakota Woman</em> “We AIM Not to Please” by Mary Crow Dog (p. 73-91)</td>
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<td>• “Reflections on Alcatraz,” by Lanada Boyer (p.507-517)</td>
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<td>• Video: Alcatraz</td>
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<td>• Video: “Half of Anything”</td>
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<td>• Recommended:</td>
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<td>• From <em>Genocide of the Mind: New Native American Writing</em>, “Everyone Needs Someone” by MariJo Moore and “The Indians Are Alive” by Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve</td>
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<td>Sept. 15</td>
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<td>Sept. 16</td>
<td><strong>2nd Annual La Raza 16 de Septiembre Symposium Commemorating the Mexican Revolution: 1910-2010</strong></td>
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<td>Thu</td>
<td><strong>Tentative Speakers:</strong> Javier Rodriguez, Gabriela Gonzalez, Antonia Castaneda, Bill Fisher and Norma Cantú to discuss: The Impact of the Mexican Revolution on Tejana Letters</td>
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<td>• extra credit response</td>
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<td>Sept. 22</td>
<td>• from <em>Indigenous American Women</em> “Commonalty of Difference: American Indian Women and History” by Devon Mihesuah (p. 37-49)</td>
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<td>• From <em>Reinventing the Enemy’s Language: Contemporary Native Women’s Writings of</em></td>
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<td>Events</td>
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| Sept. 22 | • from *Indigenous American Women* “Commonality of Difference: American Indian Women and History” by Devon Mihesuah (p. 37-49)  
• From *Reinventing the Enemy’s Language: Contemporary Native Women’s Writings of North America* eds. Gloria Bird and Joy Harjo “Introduction” (p.19-31)  
• Excerpts from Linda Hogan’s *The Woman Who Watches Over the World*  
• Video: “Transitions destruction of a Mother tongue”  
• **Reading Response #1 Due**  
*Recommended:*  
• From *Seven Hands/Seven Hearts* by Elizabeth Woody “Introduction” (p.11-16) |
| Sept. 29 | • From *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide* “Better Dead Than Pregnant” (p.79-107) and “Natural Laboratories,” (p.109-117) by Andrea Smith  
• Reprise/Forced Sterilizations: Native Americans and the “Last Gasp of Eugenics” by Bruce E. Johansen (p.212-217)  
• Video: TBA |
• Videos: Demonstrations/Civil Disobedience Against Arizona Law HB2281  
• excerpts from *Rethinking Columbus: the next 500 years*” (p.32-41)  
• excerpts from *The Submuloc Show/Columbus Wohs: A visual Commentary on the Columbus Quincentennial from the Perspective of America’s First People* curated by Jaune Quick-to-See Smith  
• Tentative: Guest Speaker, Antonio Diaz, Indigenous Texas Council  
• **extra credit response** |
| Oct. 9 Sat | Indigenous Dignity Day – Human Rights March – Columbus Park – Downtown San Antonio |
| Oct. 13  | • “The Pocahontas Paradox…” by Cornel Pewewardy (p.1-7)  
• “The Pocahontas Perplex…” by Rayna Green (p.203-211)  
• From *Wiping the War Paint Off the Lens* “Bringing Home Film and Video Making” and “The War-Painted Years” by Beverly Singer (p. .5-22)  
• “Indian-Named Mascots: an Assault on Self-Esteem” by Tim Giago (p.217-218)  
• Video: “In Whose Honor?” and clips of Disney’s *Pocahontas*  
• **Reading Response #2 Due** |
| Oct. 20  | • *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* by Sherman Alexie (p. 1-109)  
• “Open Containers”: Sherman Alexie’s Drunken Indians by Stephen F. Evans  
• “Conversation With Alexie” – Interview by Ase Nygren  
• Videos: excerpts from Sherman Alexie interviews/readings |
| Oct 27  | SCMLA Conference  
• Continue Reading *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* by Sherman Alexie (p. 109-223)  
• “Hurricanes and Fires: Chaotics in Sherman Alexie’s *Smoke Signals* and *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven*” by Gordon Slethaug (10) |
| Ethnic Studies Week (October 1-7) |  |
| Nov. 5-7 | **El Mundo Zurdo: An International Conference on Anzaldúan Thought and Art and Performance**  
| | • extra credit response on one session/talk/keynote |
| Nov. 10 |  
| | • “American Indians, Anthropologists, Pothunters, and Repatriation…” by Devon Miheesuah (p.95-105)  
| | • “When Is a Photograph Worth a Thousand Words?” by Hulleah J. Tsinhnahjinnie  
| | • “The Indian With a Camera” and “On Photography” by Leslie Marmon Silko (p.175-186)  
| | • From *Excavating Voices: Listening to Photographs of Native Americans* by Michael Katakis “The Illusion of the Image” (p.1-5) and “Fugitive Pose” by Gerald Vizenor (p.7-15)  
| | • “Facing Ancestry” by Beverly Singer  
| | • “History Is Right Now” by Simon Ortiz  
| | *(Screen the following videos on Blackboard; available via streaming)*  
| | • Video: Who Owns the Past? |
| Nov. 11-16 | • Begin Research & Writing Final Essay |
| Nov. 17 | • Department Evaluations Conducted  
| | • Annotated Bibliography Due |
| Nov. 18-21 | **American Studies Association Conference**  
| | • extra credit response on one session/talk/keynote |
| Nov. 24 | • Final Essay Due |
| Nov. 25-27 | **Days of Mourning. No Class.**  
| | *Recommended Reading:*  
| | • “Why I'm Not Thankful for Thanksgiving” by Michael Dorris  
| | • “The Truth about the First Thanksgiving” by James W. Loewen (p. 70-92)  
| | • “The Savages in the Mirror: Phantoms and Fantasies in America” by Paula Gunn Allen (p.22-35) |
| Dec. 1 | **Drop/Withdrawal Deadline**  
| | **Final thoughts/reflections on course** |
| Dec. 6-7 M-T | Study Days. No Class. |
| Dec. 8 | **Reflection Essay Due by noon (upload to assignments on Blackboard)** |
| Dec. 10 F | **FINAL EXAM DAY (1:30-4p)** |
| Dec. 17 | Grades Due |