Topics in Native American Literature: Women Writers

Course Description

Catalog: (3-0) 3 hours credit. Prerequisite: Completion of the Core Curriculum requirement in literature. Critical study of a topic in Native American/Indigenous literatures focusing on an author, a genre, a theme, or on traditional and oral literature. May be repeated for credit when topics vary.

This course will emphasize indigenous women’s voices through readings of autobiographies, life stories, and socio-historical essays. We will consider the complexities of indigenous identity through a native-centered perspective and consider the importance of self-representation as we examine historical and contemporary representations of Indianness. In addition, this interdisciplinary class (WMST/AMST/ENG) will ask you to complicate and challenge generic and confining disciplinary boundaries by reading these works within their appropriate historical and cultural contexts. Some primary questions we will consider throughout the semester are: What does it mean to tell a life story? Whose stories and histories are valued and legitimized and whose are forgotten? And how can we problematize the binary constructed between the oral and written traditions by complicating our notions of literacy? It is my hope that as a collective group we can grapple and work through the material to develop an intellectual community that is able to skillfully and respectfully debate pressing issues. This class will require that you regularly participate in class discussions. And although some discussions might evoke strong emotions and debate about particular subjects, we must remember to respect everyone’s opinions and comments throughout the course. This course does not assume that you will have background in Native American Studies.

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 texts by Native American women
- 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 critically examine historical and contemporary representations of American Indians, especially indigenous women

Required Texts

- Florence Connolly Shipek, ed. – Delfina Cuero Her Autobiography An Account of Her Last Years and Her Ethnobotanic Contributions
• Zitkala-Sa -- American Indian Stories
• Linda Hogan -- The Woman Who Watches Over the World
• E-Reserves: required readings/articles can be found on Blackboard. I suggest that you maintain a separate binder for this course that includes copies of the readings downloaded from Blackboard.

Recommended Texts

• LeAnne Howe – Evidence of Red
• Paul Chaat Smith -- Everything You Know about Indians Is Wrong
• Linda Tuhiwai Smith -- Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples
• Paula Gunn Allen – Off the Reservation: Reflections on Boundary-Busting, Border-Crossing Loose Canons and The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions
• Devon A. Mihesuah – American Indians: Stereotypes and Realities, Indigenous American Women and Indigenizing the Academy
• Andrea Smith – Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide
• Gloria Bird and Joy Harjo – Reinventing the Enemy’s Language: Contemporary Native Women’s Writings of North America
• Leslie Marmon Silko – Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit and Ceremony

Course Requirements and Grading Criteria

No late assignments accepted! You will be given a zero for all late 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

Blackboard: We will be using Blackboard frequently throughout this course, so please become familiar with the basic tools (i.e. Discussion Board, Assignments, Announcements, 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 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. You are required to comment on the material and ask questions on BB biweekly. These “posts” 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.). If you paraphrase and/or quote from the readings, make sure to cite page numbers! Some examples of what you might write for BB discussion 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, autobiography, essay, poem, or short story 3) discuss the narrative style and techniques of the writer 4) respond to the article/creative work by relating it to your own lived experience and/or knowledge of the subject matter 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 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

I will ask that you turn in a portfolio of your BB comments/questions during midterms and at the end of the semester.

Please see the following websites for universal practices of online “netiquette”:
http://www.csustain.edu/Blackboard/Netiquette.html
http://www.netmanners.com/

Essays (5p x2): All essays are to be turned in electronically via Blackboard as well as in person. There will be two required formal essays. Your essays will require that you formulate your own original, creative thesis on a reading from class. Any essay written on a non-related topic/text will require my approval. 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 ALL essays 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, and literary tradition 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: 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 see me in office hours at least one week 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.

Quizzes: Several quizzes will be given throughout the semester.

Documentary Screenings: Throughout the semester we will screen documentaries related to the readings. These screenings will be held during class or placed on library reserves.

Point Distribution

Quizzes .......................... 40pts x 2= 80
Midterm Essay .......................... 80pts = 80
Final Essay ......................... 80pts = 80
Reflection Essay ...................... 10pts = 10
Presentation ......................... 20pts = 20
Discussion/Portfolio .................. 30pts = 30
Total Points ........................ 300

Final Grading Scale

A 276 points and above (92-100%)  C 216-227 (72-75%)
A- 264-275 (88-91%)  C- 204-215 (68-71%)
B+ 258-263 (86-87%)  D+ 198-203 (66-67%)
B 246-257 (82-85%)  D 186-197 (62-65%)
B- 234-245 (78-81%)  D- 180-185 (60-61%)
C+ 228-233 (76-77%)  F 179 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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| Aug 25th  | • Introductions  
            • Review Syllabus  
            • Sign Up for Presentations  
            • Submit/Upload an essay from your prior ENG/AMS/WMST class to SAMPLE Assignment! (Blackboard)  
            • Questions/Clarifications  
            • Video: “Native Voices” from *American Passages Series* |
| Aug 30th  | • Continue Introductions  
            • Discussion Video: “Native Voices”  
            • From *Reinventing the Enemy’s Language: Contemporary Native Women’s Writings of North America* eds. Gloria Bird and Joy Harjo “Introduction” (p.19-31)  
            • Poetry – Close Readings |
| Sept 1st  | • “Columbus, The Indians and Human Progress 1492-1992” by Howard Zinn (p.1-22) |
| Sept 6th  | • Video: Leslie Silko |
| Sept 8th  | • From *Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit: Essays on Native American Life Today* by Leslie Marmon Silko “Interior and Exterior Landscapes: The Pueblo Migration Stories” (p. 25-47) and “Language and Literature from a Pueblo Indian Perspective” (p.48-59) |
| Sept 10th | QUIZ 1 (on Blackboard) |
| Sept 13th | • From *Sending My Heart Back Across the Years: Tradition and Innovation in Native American Autobiography* by Hertha Dawn Wong, “Introduction” (p.3-10) and “American Indian Women Telling Their Lives” (Chp. 1: “Literary Tradition” p. 3-26)  
            • Autobiography Lecture/Discussion |
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Events</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Lecture California Indian History</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 20th</td>
<td>• <em>Delfina Cuero Her Autobiography An Account of Her Last Years and Her Ethnobotanic Contributions</em> by Florence Connolly Shipek (p.23-40)</td>
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<td>Sep 22nd</td>
<td>• <em>Delfina Cuero Her Autobiography An Account of Her Last Years and Her Ethnobotanic Contributions</em> by Florence Connolly Shipek (p.41-98)</td>
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<td>Sept 27th</td>
<td>• Writing Workshop (Discuss Midterm Essays!); Conferences</td>
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<td>Sept 29th</td>
<td>• NAAAS Conference</td>
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<td>• Work on Research and Drafts of Midterm Essay</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 4th</td>
<td>• NAAAS Conference</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Work on Revisions and Final Drafts of Midterm Essay</td>
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<td>Oct 6th</td>
<td>• MIDTERM ESSAY DUE</td>
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<td>• Video: “In the White Man’s Image”</td>
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<td>Oct 11th</td>
<td>• From <em>Kill the Indian Save the Man</em> by Ward Churchill “Genocide by Any Other Name” (p. 1-24 and p. 44-60)</td>
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<td>Oct 13th</td>
<td>• <em>American Indian Stories</em> by Zitkala-Sa (p.7-45)</td>
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<td>Oct 18th</td>
<td>• <em>American Indian Stories</em> by Zitkala-Sa (p.47-99)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 20th</td>
<td>• <em>American Indian Stories</em> by Zitkala-Sa (p.47-99)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 25th</td>
<td>• Review for QUIZ</td>
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<td>Oct 27th</td>
<td>• QUIZ 2 (on Blackboard)</td>
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<td>Nov 1st</td>
<td>• <em>The Woman Who Watches Over the World</em> by Linda Hogan (p.14-67)</td>
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<td>• Video: “Sand Creek Massacre”</td>
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<td>Nov 3rd</td>
<td>• <em>The Woman Who Watches Over the World</em> by Linda Hogan (p.68-142)</td>
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<td>• “Genesis of Removal” by Wilma Mankiller (p.45-58)</td>
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<td>Nov 8th</td>
<td>• <em>The Woman Who Watches Over the World</em> by Linda Hogan (p.143-207)</td>
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<td>Nov 10th</td>
<td>• <em>The Woman Who Watches Over the World</em> by Linda Hogan (p.143-207)</td>
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<td>Nov 15th</td>
<td>• Librarian Guest Speaker: Tara Scmidt (begin brainstorming for final essays)</td>
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<td>Nov 17th</td>
<td>• Continue brainstorming for final essays/research writing/conferences</td>
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<td>• Review MLA format/style; review plagiarism</td>
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<td>Nov 22nd</td>
<td>• Writing Workshop; Rough Draft of Final Essay Due; Bring two typed copies for Peer Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 29th</td>
<td>• FINAL ESSAY DUE (also submit electronically on Blackboard)</td>
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<td>Dec 1st</td>
<td>• Course Evaluations; Reflections on course</td>
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<td>Dec 6th</td>
<td>• Reflection Essays Due!</td>
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<td>Dec 8th</td>
<td>• Student Study Days</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 14th</td>
<td>• Final Exam 10:30a-1p</td>
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