Feathers, Politics, and Princesses: Representations of Native Americans and Gender in Film
Fall 2013
Ethnic Studies 370
CRN: 17972
MW: 2-3:20pm
111 Alder

Dr. Chris Finley
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818 E. 15th Ave Alder Building
Room 216
Office hours: Tuesday 4-5 and Wednesday 10-1

Purpose of Course
As Shari Huhndorf has argued, little work in Native studies has been done on visual representations of Native peoples in popular culture even though that is where most of the narratives of Native peoples are distributed. In other words, fictional historical accounts of Native peoples are the dominant mode of representation, yet these have little to do with actual living and breathing Native peoples. Native peoples are always placed in the past and not in the present or future. Most representations of Native peoples involve periods of first contact between settlers and Native peoples; rarely are Native peoples represented pre-contact or post-conquest.

The idea of Native people and Native political issues existing in the present disrupts the primary representations of Native peoples as fictional characters from history. I focus on representations of Native peoples in popular culture because many of these images circulate un-interrogated. The analyses that do exist lament the sadness and tragedy of these representations, but alternative “positive” representations respond to colonial sexual violence portraying Native peoples as asexual to protect them from heteropatriarchy and settler-colonialism. A queer Indigenous reading of popular culture places Native peoples in the present and offers sex positivity as an alternative to desexualizing Native communities. After all, as history shows, desexualizing Native peoples has not helped us escape the sexual violence inherent in the heteropatriarchal logic that is the foundation of settler colonialism.

This class focuses on films made by and for Native peoples and Native representations in film produced by settlers. The films in this course will not adhere to any one genre or academic discipline. Instead, we shall experience the diversity of Native representations in cinema with an eye to the future. We use gender and sexuality as important lens of analysis. Texts such as films, news articles, and argumentative essays about politics in Native America will be read, discussed, and written about during the course of this quarter. Some of the main themes of the class in relation to Native peoples are: Land, colonialism, gender, heteropatriarchy, sovereignty, self-determination, education, environmentalism, culture, spirituality, and repatriation.
**Required Texts**
The readings for this course will be available on Blackboard and I recommend a Netflix streaming subscription to watch the films. You may also have to purchase movies from Amazon instant video or another venue to complete film screenings for class.

**Grading**

- **Attendance/Participation:** 10%
- **Final film project or 2 Essays:** 50%
- **Reading Responses:** 30%
- **Quizzes:** 10%

**Attendance/Participation**
This is a collaborative class that requires student participation and preparation for class. (You must do the readings and reading responses for the course on the day they are assigned.) Students should not miss any class. If you know you are going to miss a class, please let me know at least a week in advance so you may turn in your work early. **There are no excused absences.** If you miss more than two classes for the quarter, your **overall** grade will be affected. Late work will not be accepted as a result of an absence. If you miss more than three classes, your overall grade for the course will drop by **a full letter grade per absence after three absences. Six absences will result in failure for the course unless a very sound medical excuse is proffered in a timely fashion.** (In the latter case, you may require additional make-up work.)

**Grading Scale**

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<th>Percentage Range</th>
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<tr>
<td>100%-94%</td>
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<tr>
<td>90%-93%</td>
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<td>87%-89%</td>
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<td>74%-76%</td>
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<td>70%-73%</td>
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<td>60%-63%</td>
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*Please have a valid reason and a legitimate argument about your grading issue. Remember, I can lower your grade as well as increase your grade if you decide to dispute your grade.

**Reading Summaries/Quizzes**
To ensure students read and work to understand the materials thoroughly, you will write a paragraph explaining the reading with the main argument of the reading and three supporting points the author uses to prove her position. Also, you need to conclude with two questions to generate class discussion or to clarify parts of the articles you did not understand. I will give quizzes if students do not participate in discussion or if it is clear that most students have not done the reading. (It is possible that there will be no quizzes.) Reading summaries and quizzes are worth thirty-percent of your overall grade. Each one is worth 2.5% of your overall grade and you will need to turn in 12 reading summaries.

**Final Projects/Essays (50% of your overall grade)**
You have the opportunity to make a film (at least 10 minutes long but less than 20 minutes) about settler colonialism, positive Native representations in films, attitudes about Indians in film, negative representations of Natives in films, or another project approved by me. You will need to attend a film screening of all the student films on the day of the final or the last day of class. The film will be accompanied by an artist statement and a description of film that is 750 words or less.
If you decide to do an essay project in lieu of the film project you may write a 12 page paper that will be due on the day of the final or the last day of class OR two 6 page papers during the quarter. (One paper will be due during week 6 and the other paper will be due at the end of the course.) Writing prompts for the 6 page essays will be provided but if you wish to do the longer paper, please meet with me during office hours to devise a research paper plan for you.

**Academic Misconduct**
The University Student Conduct Code (available at [conduct.uoregon.edu](http://conduct.uoregon.edu)) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. By way of example, students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without express permission from the instructor. Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the students’ obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act. Additional information about a common form of academic misconduct, plagiarism, is available at [libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students](http://libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students).

**Late Work**
Papers and class assignments need to be turned in on time. But life does happen and interrupt the ability to finish work in a timely manner. If you do not turn in your assignment at the beginning of class, it is considered late. Emailing me your work during a class you are not attending does not count as turning in your assignment on time. *For every day your paper is late, it will be marked down a third of a letter grade.* (If you turn in a paper five minutes after class starts and you earned an A, it will become an A-.) If you do not turn in a paper a week after the deadline, it will receive a score of a zero.

**Students With Disabilities**
If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with the instructor soon. Also please request that the Counselor for Students with Disabilities send a letter outlining your approved accommodations. [Disability Services: disabsrv@uoregon.edu, 346-1155; http://ds.uoregon.edu/].

*Note: Some of the readings may change. I will notify you of these changes through Blackboard.*

**Schedule**
**Week 1:** Anne Keala Kelly’s *Noho Hewa: The Wrongful Occupation of Hawai‘i* (2009)
**September 30:** Introductions

October 2: Read excerpts from *Film: A Critical Introduction* AND Read Haunani-Kay Trask’s “‘Lovely Hula Hands:’ Corporate Tourism and the Prostitution of Hawaiian Culture” AND Robert Warrior’s “Foreward” to Beverly R. Singer’s *Wiping the War Paint off the Lens: Native American Film and Video*

**Week 2:** Courtney Hunt’s *Frozen River* (2008) and Kent Mackenzie’s *The Exiles* (1961)
October 7
Watch Kent Mackenzie’s *The Exiles* (1961) [In class screening]
Read Eve Tuck’s “Suspending Damage: A Letter to Communities” in *Harvard Educational Review*

October 9
Watch Courtney Hunt’s *Frozen River* (2008)
Read Anne McClintock’s “Lay of the Land: Genealogies of Imperialism” in *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*

**Week 3:** Don Featherstone’s *BabaKiueria* (1986) and Kevin Costner’s *Dances with Wolves* (1990)

October 14
Watch: Don Featherstone’s *BabaKiueria* (1986)
Read Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s “Introduction”

October 16
Watch: Kevin Costner’s *Dances with Wolves* (1990)
Read Shari Huhndorf’s “Introduction” to *Going Native*

**Week 4:** James Cameron’s *Avatar* (2009)

October 21: M. Elise Marubbio’s “Introduction” to *Killing the Indian Maiden: Images of Native American Women in Film*

October 23: Read Jennifer Nez Denetdale’s “Chairmen, Presidents, and Princesses: The Navajo Nation, Gender, and the Politics of Tradition”

**Week 5:** *Dead Man* (1995)

October 28: Neva Jacquelyn Kilpatrick’s “Introduction” to *Celluloid Indians: Native Americans and Film*

October 30: Selections from Michelle Raheja’s “Ideologies of (In)Visibility: Redfacing, Gender, and Moving Images” in *Reservation Reelism: Redfacing, Visual Sovereignty, and Representations of Native Americans in Film*

**Week 6:** Zacharias Kunuk’s *Atanarjuant (Fast Runner)* (2001)

November 4: Read Shari Huhndorf’s “Introduction” to *Mapping the Americas: The Transnational Politics of Contemporary Native Culture*
November 6: Essay 1 due. Continue discussion of Zacharias Kunuk’s *Atanarjuant (Fast Runner)* (2001) and Huhndorf reading

**Week 7:** Sherman Alexie’s *The Business of Fancydancing* (2002)


**Week 8:** Clint Eastwood’s *Flags Of Our Fathers* (2006)
November 18: Eve Tuck’s “Suspending Damage: A Letter to Communities” in *Harvard Educational Review*

November 20: Michelle M. Jacob’s “Introduction” in *Yakama Rising: Indigenous Cultural Revitalization, Activism, and Healing*

**Week 9:** Chris Eyre’s *We Shall Remain: After the Mayflower* (2009)
November 25: Read Andrea Smith’s “Spiritual Appropriation as Sexual Violence” Chapter 6 in *Conquest*

November 27: No class. “Thanksgiving break.”

**Week 10:** Iciar Bollain’s *Even The Rain* (2010)

December 3: Maria Josefina Saldana-Portillo’s “Introduction” in *The Revolutionary Imagination in the Americas and the Age of Development*

December 5: Continue discussion of Iciar Bollain’s *Even The Rain* (2010) and Maria Josefina Saldana-Portillo’s “Introduction” in *The Revolutionary Imagination in the Americas and the Age of Development*

**Final project screenings or Essay 2 due on Thursday December 12 at 3:15pm-5:15pm**