INTRODUCTION TO NATIVE AMERICAN LITERATURES

Professor Kirby Brown
Office: 523 PLC
Office Hours: M 2-4pm; T 11am-12pm, and by email appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In 1968, Kiowa writer N. Scott Momaday’s House Made of Dawn was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for American literature. Momaday's award signaled for many the “arrival” of Native authors to the American literary scene, and ushered in an unprecedented era of Native literary production widely known as the Native American Renaissance. While the explosion of Native writing and the critical tradition that emerged from it carved out much needed cultural and institutional spaces for Native self-representation and Native Studies, it had the unintended effect of privileging contemporary Native novels over writing from other periods and across a variety of genres and forms. This introductory survey of Native American literature widens the net to include an array of native self-representation across genres, regions, periods, forms and tribal nations. We will read cultural critiques and policy debates alongside short stories and novels, as well as juxtapose drama and short films alongside YouTube videos, op-eds, and other media.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Situate conventional literary texts alongside other cultural forms in which Native peoples have exercised self-representation, always being careful to locate writers and texts within their appropriate historical and tribal/cultural contexts.
- Gain a more complicated understanding of and appreciation for the diversity and complexity of Native American intellectual and cultural production
- Develop a historically-nuanced grasp of some of the major issues, questions, and concerns that run throughout Indian Country today, specifically the relationship between cultural production, federal policies, and contemporary movements toward Native sovereignty and self-determination.
- Consistently work to hone close, critical reading skills applicable to a variety of textual forms and intellectual/professional contexts
- Develop capacities to engage in thoughtful, critical debate around questions of race, class, gender, sexuality, nation, citizenship and belonging.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Thomas King (Cherokee), The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative. (TTAS)
Leann Howe (Choctaw), The Miko Kings: An Indian Baseball Story. (MK)
Sherman Alexie (Coeur d’Alene), The Toughest Indian in the World. (TIIW)
Devon Mihesuah (Choctaw), American Indians: Stereotype and Realities (AISR)
Other readings, videos and music via Blackboard

SUPPLEMENTARY TEXTS ON RESERVE IN THE KNIGHT LIBRARY

Colin Calloway, First Peoples: A Documentary Survey of American Indian History, esp. chapters 5-8. This text is an accessible introduction to Native American history which will supplement the historical contexts discussed in class.

PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE

You are expected to attend class regularly, to remain current with reading assignments, to bring assigned texts and writing materials to class, and to make substantial contributions to class discussions. Always remain civil and on point in your discussion of texts and ideas.

Missing class regularly will severely impact your grade due to missed in-class group assignments, free writing assignments, daily/weekly quizzes, and class discussions. If you miss class, it is your responsibility entirely to
approach your fellow classmates to get notes for that day and catch up on any material you missed.

ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENT
This course offers a variety of assignments by which your performance is ultimately assessed so that your final grade is not dependent upon a single skill or performance. These include class participation and group work, weekly reading quizzes, online exercises, short writing assignments, and two exams. All assignments are due at the beginning of the class on which they are due. Late assignments will be docked 1/3 grade point for every day they are late.

GRADING
Reflection Essay 5%
Reading Journal 10% (cr/.5 cr/no cr)
Quizzes/In-class assignments 15%
Course Blog 15%
Midterm Examination 25%
Final Examination 30%

GRADE POINT DISTRIBUTION
F <59.5       B- 79.6-83.5
D- 59.6-63.5  B  83.6-87.5
D  63.6-67.5  B+ 87.6-89.5
D+ 67.6-69.5  A- 89.6-93.5
C- 69.6-73.5  A  93.6-97.5
C  73.6-77.5  A+ 97.6-100+
C+ 77.6-79.5

NOTE: Meeting the minimum requirements for the course (attending consistently, regular participation, meeting deadlines) will typically result in an average grade, or a C on the college scale. Higher grades are awarded based upon exceeding minimum expectations per my discretion.

COURSE CONTENT AND INTELLECTUAL DISCUSSION
Due to the ongoing histories/experiences of settler-colonial violence, racism, dispossession, and genocide that frame both the colonization of the Americas and Indigenous responses to it, this course will openly engage these and related issues without censorship. If content makes attendance and participation impossible, please see me to make alternative arrangements.

CLASS COMMUNICATION AND CONVENTIONS OF ADDRESS
Get in the habit of checking your UO email account regularly as this will be our primary means of communication outside of class. Please be aware that I will not respond to emails sent after 5pm or on the weekend until the next weekday.

Adopting appropriate conventions of address and communication for specific social contexts is crucial for establishing relationships and maintaining respect across communities. Speaking to a professor, instructor, administrator, staff member, employer, manager, or colleague is different (at least initially) from speaking/texting with a friend, family member, or other familiar relation. In a professional, intellectual context like the University, it is conventional to refer to faculty, administrators, staff, GTFs and others by their titles (Doctor, Professor, Instructor, Coach, preferred gender/gender neutral titles, etc.) unless explicitly instructed otherwise. You should also get into the professional habit of including greetings, salutations, and appropriate language/tone in your communications. I will always respectfully refer to you according to your stated preferences and the appropriate context; I expect that you’ll reciprocate in kind.
**INCLEMENT WEATHER**
In the case of inclement weather, please check the UO homepage, UO Alerts Blog, and local weather stations for information on travel, closures and cancelations. If inclement weather makes traveling to campus difficult, I will notify you by email about whether we are holding class. Whether or not I decide to hold class, you should use your own judgment about the safety of traveling to campus.

**DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS**
If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with me soon and request that the Counselor for Students with Disabilities send a letter verifying your disability.

**TITLE IX POLICY AND REPORTING RESPONSIBILITIES**
The UO is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of prohibited discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence and gender-based stalking. Consequently, all UO employees **are required to report** to appropriate authorities (supervisor or Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity) when they have reasonable cause to believe that discrimination, harassment or abuse of any kind has taken, or is taking, place. Employees are NOT required to reveal the names of survivors, however.

**ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT**
The University Student Conduct Code (conduct.uoregon.edu) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. Additional information about a common form of academic misconduct, plagiarism, is available at www.libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Texts</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1</strong></td>
<td><strong>March 30</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Introductions, Logistics, Framing the Course</strong></td>
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<td>TEXTS: Syllabus &amp; Course Schedule; “Strategies for Close Reading”</td>
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<td><strong>April 1</strong></td>
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<td><strong>The Stories We Tell</strong></td>
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<td>TEXTS: King, TTAS, Ch. 1; “What I (Think) I Know About American Indians” Instructions (Blackboard, “Assignments”)</td>
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<td>CONTEXTS: Mihesuah, <em>AISR</em>, “11. Indians are a Vanished Race,”</td>
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<td>“1. Indians are all alike,” &amp; “22. Indians know all the histories”</td>
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<td><strong>April 3</strong></td>
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<td>TEXT: King, TTAS, Ch.3</td>
<td><strong>REFLECTION ESSAY</strong></td>
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<td>CONTEXTS: Mihesuah, <em>AISR</em>, “Afterword: The Effects of Stereotyping”</td>
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<td><strong>Week 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>April 6</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Unit 1: Popular Culture, Representation and Gender</strong></td>
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<td>TEXT: Apess, “Eulogy On King Philip” (Blackboard)</td>
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<td>CONTEXTS: 1491s &amp; Ryan Red Corn, “Bad Indians”</td>
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April 8  TEXTS: “Critical Response Blogs: Rationale, Format, Deadline, Instructions” and “Sample Close Reading/Blog Post” (Blackboard, “Study Aids”);

Johnson, “A Strong Race Opinion: On the Indian Girl in Modern Fiction” and “A Red Girl’s Reasoning” (Blackboard)

CONTEXTS: Mihesuah, AISR, “4. Indians had no civilization…”

April 10  TEXTS: Johnson, “A Red Girl’s Reasoning” (cont.); Green, “The Pocahontas Perplex” (Blackboard)  BLOG POST #1 (1,3,5,7)

Week 3

April 13  TEXTS: Mojica, *Princess Pocahontas and the Blue Spots (PPBS)* (through Trans. 3; Blackboard)  BLOG RESPONSE #1 (2,4,6,8)

CONTEXTS: Mihesuah, AISR, “8. Indians did not value or empower women”

April 15  TEXT: Mojica, *PPBS* (Trans. 4-6)

April 17  TEXT: Mojica, *PPBS* (Trans. 7-10)  BLOG POST #1 (2,4,6,8)

CONTEXTS: Smith, “Sexual Violence as a Tool of Genocide” (Blackboard)

Week 4

April 20  TEXT: Mojica, *PPBS* (Trans 11-13)  BLOG RESPONSE #1 (1,3,5,7)

April 22  TEXTS: Erdrich, “*Rape on the Reservations*”; White Buffalo Calf Women’s Society, “*It Ends Where It Begins*” (Youtube); Rebecca Belmore, “*Fringe*”

April 24  Unit Wrap-up; Midterm Review  BLOG POST #2 (1,3,5,7)

Week 5

April 27  MIDTERM EXAM  JOURNALS DUE

April 29  Unit 2: Assimilation and the Assault on Native Nations, Lands and Families  BLOG RESPONSE #2 (4,6,8,2)

TEXTS: King, *TTAS*, Ch. 5

May 1  Indigenous Philosophies Symposium: Beth Piatote, “Contested Domesticities: Love, Literature, and the Legal Imaginary,” 145 Straub Hall, 1pm. ATTENDANCE MANDATORY.

Week 6

May 4  TEXT: Zitkala Sa/Gertrude Bonnin, “School Days of an Indian Girl” (Blackboard)  BLOG RESPONSE #2 (3,5,7,1)
May 6
TEXT: Oskison, “The Problem of Old Harjo” (Blackboard)
CONTEXTS: Zitkala-Sa, “Why I Am a Pagan” (Blackboard)

May 8
TEXTS: Bronson, “The Serpent” (Blackboard)

Week 7
May 11
TEXT: King, TTAS, Ch. 4, MK 1-26
CONTEXTS: His Last Game (silent film; in-class screening)

May 13
TEXT: Howe, MK, 27-81
CONTEXTS: Howe, “Tribalography: The Power of Native Stories” (Blackboard)

May 15
TEXT: Howe, MK, 82-102
CONTEXT: Howe, “Choctalking on Other Realities” (Blackboard)

Week 8
May 18
TEXT: Howe, MK, 103-128

May 20
TEXT: Howe, Miko Kings, 129-199

May 22
TEXT: Howe, Miko Kings, 200-221
CONTEXT: Howe, “Choctaw Aesthetics”

Week 9
May 25
MEMORIAL DAY; NO CLASS

May 27
Writing Contemporary Native Lives
TEXT: King, TTAS, Ch. 2

May 28
TEXT: Alexie, TTIW, 1-20, 35-56
CONTEXT: King, “I’m Not the Indian You Had in Mind” (short film)

Week 10
June 1
TEXT: Alexie, 21-34, 121-149

ENG 244: Intro to Native American Literature  5
June 3  TEXT: Alexie, 150-188, 209-238

June 5  TEXTs: 1491s, “Man Talk”; “Geronimo, E-KIA”

CONTEXTS: Course Wrap-up; Final Exam Review

Week 11

June 9  TAKE HOME FINAL EXAM DUE VIA BLACKBOARD BY 5PM

JOURNALS DUE