COURSE DESCRIPTION

There is perhaps no image more widely recognized yet more grossly misunderstood in American popular culture than the “Indian.” Represented as everything from irredeemable savages and impediments to progress to idealized possessors of primitive innocence and arbiters of new-age spiritualism, “the Indian” stands as an anachronistic relic of a bygone era whose sacrifice on the altar of modernity and progress, while perhaps tragic, is both inevitable and necessary to the maintenance of narratives of US exceptionalism and political legitimacy in the Americas. Though such images have a long history in a variety of discursive forms, the emergence of cinematic technologies in the early twentieth century and the explosion of film production and distribution in the ensuing decades solidified the Noble Savage/Vanishing American as indelible, if contradictory, threads in the fabric of the US national story.

Of course, the Reel Indians produced by Hollywood say very little about Real Native peoples who not only refuse to vanish but who consistently reject their prescribed roles in the US national imaginary, insisting instead on rights to rhetorical and representational sovereignty. Through a juxtaposition of literary, critical, and cinematic texts, the first half of the course will explore the construction of “Reel Indians” from early ethnographic documentaries and Hollywood Westerns to their recuperation as countercultural anti-heroes in the 60s, 70s and 80s. The last half of the course will examine the various ways in which Native-produced films of the late 1990s to the present contest—if not outright refuse!—narrative, generic, and representational constructions of “the white man’s Indian” on the way to imagining more complex possibilities for “Real Indians” in the twenty-first century.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Read critical and cinematic texts with discernment and comprehension, paying particular attention to the intersections of race, representation, cinematic/narrative conventions and form.
2. Situate course content in its relevant historical, cultural, intellectual, and cinematic contexts in Indian Country and the US.
3. Interrogate the relationship between cultural production, popular attitudes, and federal policy.
4. Examine popular and scholarly engagements with course material, and critically evaluate the ways in which cultural and intellectual assumptions, values, and beliefs frame engagements with and understandings of course material.
5. Produce focused, critical, formal analyses/close readings of literary and cinematic texts in clear, grammatical prose.
6. Generate original research utilizing primary and secondary sources with proper attribution per disciplinary conventions.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Aleiss, Angela. The Making of the White Man’s Indian: Native Americans and Hollywood Movies.
Alexie, Sherman. The Toughest Indian in the World.
Singer, Beverly. Wiping the War Paint Off the Lens: Native American Film and Video.
Modern Language Association. MLA Handbook

All other readings available on Blackboard

**All required texts and films are on reserve in the Knight Library**

FILMS
PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE
You are expected to attend class regularly, bring assigned texts to class and make substantial contributions to
class discussions. This requires that you keep up with the reading assignments, make observations and take
careful notes for each text, and bring thoughtful questions or concerns to class. Always remain civil and on
point in your discussion of texts and ideas.

Missing class more than twice in the term will result in reduction of your final grade by 1/3 of a letter grade for
each absence beyond the two permitted. There is no distinction between excused and unexcused absences. If
you miss class, it is your responsibility entirely 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 daily reading/viewing journals,
weekly informal online blog posts/responses, two film reviews from a list of my choosing, and a final research
project. Late assignments will be accepted under no circumstances.

Reading/Viewing Journals
You are required to keep a daily reading/viewing journal in which to take notes, ask questions, make
observations, and sketch out preliminary and ongoing thoughts about the readings for the week. These journals
will be evaluated throughout the term on a credit/half-credit/no credit basis. To receive full credit, you must
demonstrate legitimate engagement of at least two full pages for each assigned text/film.

Class Blog (Blackboard)
Blog Discussions and Responses are your opportunity to engage critically with a primary text, essay, idea or
concept as well as respond thoughtfully to the thoughts, arguments and analyses of your peers. Each student
will be required to submit one original post and reply to two others at least four times throughout the term.

Blog posts should be focused and substantive (500-700 words) and synthesize ideas from your reading journal,
course notes, and class discussions by critically exploring a specific issue, problem or question of form elicited
by the text(s) (i.e. I want to see you wrestling with the text/film). They should be clearly written; advance a
clearly-articulated, interpretive claim (i.e. thesis statement); present evidence from the text that illustrates that
claim; and, most importantly, interpret that evidence for your readers (i.e. an explanation of how the
text/illustration functions as you claim it does).

Responses will substantively engage (~250 words) the issues, problems or questions posed in TWO blog posts
in an informal yet respectful and sophisticated way (i.e. I want to see you wrestling with the ideas and
arguments of your peers).

Film Reviews
You are required to submit **TWO** double-spaced, formally written film reviews of selections from a list of my choosing that speak in some way to the films/critical contexts we’ve discussed in class. One will examine a single film in 3-4 pages, while the second review of 5-6 pages will be comparative in nature. Explicit instructions are available on Blackboard.

**Final Research Project**

The project can be an extension of one of your reviews, a discussion you’ve begun in your journals and on the course blog, or a new project entirely. Regardless, it must in some way engage one or more of the texts/films, critical issues, or historical contexts we’ve discussed in class. It can take the form of a traditional research paper (8-10 page, double-spaced for undergraduates, 10-12 page double-spaced for graduate students) or can employ various technologies and forms (visual culture, material culture, new media; film, music, television; graphic novels, comics, gaming). You need to work out the logistics directly with me well ahead of time. A draft presentation should be prepared by week 8 or 9 for discussion and feedback. Final drafts will be due on the scheduled day of our final exam and will be posted to the final exam assignment listing on Blackboard.

**Please note** that undergraduates are required to consult at **least 4** outside sources **not on the syllabus**; graduates should consult at **least 6** outside sources **not on the syllabus** (you may, of course, include sources on the syllabus, but you’ll need to consult the requisite number of **additional** sources listed here). At least two of these should be **hard copy sources** from the library or Special Collections.

**GRADING**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Reading/Viewing Journal</td>
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<td>Course Blog</td>
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<td>Film Review #1 (single film, 3-4 pgs)</td>
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<td>Film Review #2 (comparative, 5-6 pgs)</td>
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<td>Final Research Project (7-8 pgs)</td>
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**NOTE:** Meeting the minimum requirements for the course (attending consistently, regular participation, and meeting minimum assignment criteria) will typically result in an average grade, or a **C** on the college scale. Higher grades are awarded based upon exceeding minimum expectations.

**GRADE POINT DISTRIBUTION**

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<td>A+</td>
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**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. I highly recommend trying to contact me via email rather than telephone as I check it regularly and am thus able to respond more quickly, generally within two working days. **Also 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
If inclement weather makes traveling to campus difficult, I will notify you by email and/or voice mail about whether we are holding class. If the weather is bad, check your email for a message from me, and check my voice mail (541-346-1314) if there are electrical outages around town that might prevent my emailing you. 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. 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 student’s 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 www.libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students.

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COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK 1: SETTING THE SCENE: LITERARY, PERFORMATIVE AND CINEMATIC CONTEXTS
Tuesday, January 6th
- **Discussion:** Course logistics, Central Questions, Film Viewing

Thursday, January 8th
- **Viewing:** Finish *Reel Injun* (85 min). 2009.
- **Reading:**
  - Singer, Wiping the War Paint Off the Lens (vii-13)
  - Aleiss, “Hollywood and the Silent American” from *Making the White Man’s Indian* (1-17)

Friday, January 9th
- **Assignment:** Blog Posts (Group 1, 5pm)
**Week 2: U.S. Imperial Designs and the Ethnographic Gaze: Jack London’s Alaska Short Stories and Robert Flaherty’s Nanook of the North**

Monday, January 12th
- **Assignment:** Blog Responses (Group 2, 5pm)

Tuesday, January 13th
- **Readings:**
- **Viewing:** Flaherty, Robert J. *Nanook of the North: A Story of Life and Love in the Actual Arctic* (79 min). 1922.

Thursday, January 15th
- **Viewing:** Finish *Nanook of the North: A Story of Life and Love in the Actual Arctic* (79 min). 1922.
- **Reading:**

Friday, January 16th
- **Assignment:** Blog Posts (Group 2)

**Week 3: Pulp Westerns, Hollywood Translations: The Case of Ernest Haycox and John Ford**

Monday, January 19th
- **Assignment:** Blog Responses (Group 1)

Tuesday, January 20th
- **Reading:** Haycox, Ernest. “A Question of Blood” (1937), “Stage to Lordsburg” (1937), “Stage Station” (1939)

Thursday, January 22nd
- **Viewing:** Finish *Stagecoach.* (96 min). 1939.
- **Readings:**
  - Singer, “The War Painted Years” from *Wiping the War Paint Off the Lens* (14-22).
- **Suggested Reading:**
  - Kilpatrick, Jacquelyn. “The Cowboy Talkies of the 1930s, 40s and 50s.” *Celluloid Indians: Native Americans and Film.* Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1999. 36-64. (Blackboard)
Friday, January 23rd
- **Assignment:** Blog Posts (Group 1)

**WEEK 4: MORAL AMBIGUITIES AND SAVAGE ANXIETIES IN JOHN FORD’S THE SEARCHERS**

Monday, January 26th
- **Assignment:** Blog Responses (Group 2)

Tuesday, January 27th
- **Viewing:** Ford, John. *The Searchers* (119 min). 1956
- **Reading:**
  - Aleiss, “Shattered Illusions” from *Making the White Man’s Indian* (101-118)

Thursday, January 29th
- **Discussion:** Continue discussion of *The Searchers*
- **Readings:**

**WEEK 5: RECUPERATING “THE INDIAN” AS COUNTERCULTURE HERO**

Monday, February 2nd
- **Assignment:** 488: FILM REVIEW #1 DUE (SINGLE FILM)
  588: FILM COURSE PROPOSAL (RATIONALE/LEARNING OBJECTIVES/STRUCTURE)

Tuesday, February 3rd
- **Reading:**
  - Aleiss, “Savagery on the Frontier” from *Making the White Man’s Indian*. 119-140.

Thursday, February 5th
- **Viewing:** Finish *Little Big Man*
- **Reading:**
o Singer, “Toward Independence” and “Native Filmmakers, Programs, and Institutions” from Wiping the War Paint Off the Lens (23-32, 33-44)

Friday, February 6th
  • **Assignment:** Blog Post (Group 2)

**WEEK 6: REPRESENTING TRAUMA: RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS, ALLOTMENT, AND THE POLITICS OF SENTIMENTALITY AND SUSPENSE**
Monday, February 9th
  • **Assignment:** Blog Response (Group 1)

Tuesday, February 10th
  • **Readings:**
    o Zitkala-Sa (Gertrude Bonnin). American Indian Stories. 1-43, 72-83
  • **Viewing:** Begin Older Than America (102 mins)

Thursday, February 12th
  • **Viewing:** Finish and discuss Older Than America
  • **Readings:**
    o Singer, “Chapter 5: On the Road to Smoke Signals” from Wiping the War Paint Off the Lens (61-91).

Friday, February 13th
  • **Assignment:** Blog Posts (Group 1)

**WEEK 7: TERMINATION, RELOCATION, AND THE (R)PRESENTATION OF URBAN INDIAN EXPERIENCES**
Monday, February 16th
  • **Assignment:** Blog Responses (Group 2)

Tuesday, February 17th
  • **Viewing:** MacKenzie, Kent. The Exiles (72 min). 1961.
  • **Readings:**

Thursday, February 19th
  • **Discussion:** Finish The Exiles and explore contemporary photographic representation
  • **Readings:**
Friday, February 20th

- **Assignment:** Blog Posts (Group 2)

**Week 8: Gender and Sexuality in the Short Fiction and Films of Sherman Alexie**

Monday, February 23rd

- **Assignment:** Blog Responses (Group 1)

**588: MOCK SYLLABUS (REQUIRED TEXTS/FILMS W/RATIONALES FOR EACH)**

Tuesday, February 24th

- **Viewing:** Begin Chris Eyre’s *Smoke Signals* (89 min). Narrative Film. 1998.

Thursday, February 26th

- **Viewing:** Finish Chris Eyre’s *Smoke Signals* (89 min). Narrative Film. 1998.

**Week 9: Gender and Sexuality in the Short Fiction and Films of Sherman Alexie**

Monday, March 2nd

- **Assignment:** 488: FILM REVIEW #2 DUE (COMPARATIVE)

Tuesday, March 3rd

- **Readings:**
- **Viewing:** Begin Sherman Alexie’s *The Business of Fancy Dancing* (103 min). 2002.

Thursday, March 5th

- **Viewing:** Finish *The Business of Fancy Dancing*

**Week 10: Romance, Love, and the Politics/Ethics of Indigenous Romantic Comedy**

Tuesday, March 10th

- **Viewing:** Begin Kate Montgomery’s *Christmas in the Clouds* (96 min). 2001.

Wednesday, June 4th

- **Viewing:** Finish *Christmas in the Clouds* (96 min). 2001.
- **Reading:** Singer, “Conclusion” from *Wiping the War Paint Off the Lens* (92-99).
- **Course Wrap Up**
SELECTED LIST OF FILMS FOR REVIEW/RESEARCH

Non-Native Films
The Vanishing American (1925) / Could be paired with Leslie Marmon Silko’s Ceremony
The Silent Enemy (1930) / Could be paired with London short fiction, Nanook, and Atarnajuat, The Fast Runner
Broken Arrow (1950) / Could be paired with Dances With Wolves (1990) or Avatar (2009)
Arrowhead (1953) / Could be paired with Zitkala-Sa’s American Indian Stories and/or Older Than America
Run of the Arrow (1957) / Could be paired with Dances with Wolves and Avatar
Cheyenne Autumn (1964) / Could be paired with Cooper’s Last of the Mohican and its various film incarnations
Soldier Blue (1970) / Could be paired with The Plainsman (1937) or Stagecoach (1939)
Man Called Horse (1970s-80s) series / Could be paired with Cheyenne Autumn, Dances With Wolves or Avatar
Billy Jack series (1970s)
One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest (1975) / Could be paired with the Ken Kesey novel of the same title
Dances With Wolves (1990) / See potential pairings above
Last of the Mohicans (1992) / Could be paired with Cooper novel of the same title or any of the numerous filmic translations
The Unforgiven (1992)
Pocahontas (1995) and Pocahontas II: Journey to a New World (1998) / Pair with Run of the Arrow (1957), The New World (2005), Avatar (2009), Naturally Native, Maina, Empire of Dirt
The New World (2005)
Avatar (2009)
Cowboys and Aliens (2011)

Native Films
Powwow Highway (1989)
It Starts with a Whisper (1993)
Medicine River (1994) / Pair w/ the novel by the same name by Thomas King
Grand Avenue (1996) / Pair w/ The Exiles and Urban Rez, Alexie stories
Naturally Native (1998)
Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner (2001) / Pair with London stories, Nanook
Skins (2002) / Pair w/ novel of the same name by Adrian C. Louis
Imprint (2007) / Pair w/ Older Than America
On the Ice (2011) / Pair w/ Nanook, Atanarjuat
Star Wars (1977/2013), translated into Navajo (2013) / Pair w/ Atanarjuat
Empire of Dirt (2013) / Pair w/ Naturally Native, Alexie’s short stories, Pocahontas
Maina (2013) / Pair w/ London stories, Atanarjuat
The Cherokee Word for Water (2013)

SUGGESTED BIBLIOGRAPHY
Useful Studies on the Genealogy and Expression of Indianness in the Non-Indian Imaginary
Berkhofer, Robert F., Jr. The White Man’s Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present. New

**Cinematic Studies on Indianness**