The University of Texas at El Paso Department of English

Native American Literature
English 3316 (CRN: 15156)
T/R, 3:00 – 4:20 p.m., Hudspeth 100

Fall 2024 Office Hrs: T/R, 9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m (in person); and otherwise via Zoom

Dr. Robert Gunn
e-mail: rlgunn@utep.edu
Hudspeth Hall, Rm. 218
Phone: 747-6265

"To imagine the spirit of poetry is much like imagining the shape and size of the knowing. It is a kind of resurrection light; it is the tall ancestor spirit who has been with me since the beginning, or a bear or a hummingbird. It is a hundred horses running the land in a soft mist, or it is a woman undressing for her beloved in firelight. It is none of these things. It is more than anything.

'You're coming with me, poor thing. You don't know how to listen. You don't know how to speak. You don't know ow to sing. I will teach you.'"

--Joy Harjo (Muscogee {Creek}), *Poet Warrior* (2021)

This course offers an introductory survey of Native American literatures through examples of classic Native oratory, poetry, autobiography, songs, traditional legends, short stories and novels. A primary concern of this survey will be to transcend the culturally potent, and remarkably persistent, image of "the Indian" as a singular identity in the American cultural imagination in recognition of the diversity of sovereign Indigenous lifeways, languages, histories, and cultural legacies across lands now included in the geopolitical territory of the United States. Accordingly, in reading closely and thoughtfully works by members of the Kiowa, Cherokee, Sauk, Paiute, Yankton Dakota, Laguna, Acoma, Ojibwe, Muscogee (Creek), and Cheyenne and Arapaho Nations (and several others as well), our first task will be to discern and situate the meanings of literary authorship and cultural representation from a diverse variety of national, cultural, social, and political viewpoints. Topics and themes to be addressed include: literacy, orality, and the relationship of literary innovation to cultural tradition; Indian Removal and the history of land dispossession; treaties and the reservation system; termination, law, and the politics of recognition; tribal identity, assimilation, and difference; AIM, Indian activism, and the Native American Renaissance; contemporary Indigenous politics; the image of "the noble savage" and racial stereotyping; and the strange persistence of the mythical figure historian Robert Berkhofer termed "the White Man's Indian" in the 21st Century.

Required Texts (available at the UTEP bookstore):

Black Hawk, *Life of Black Hawk, or Mà-ka-tai-me-she-kià-kiàk* (Penguin Classics) ISBN: 9780143105398
Sarah Winnemucca, *Life Among the Piutes: Their Wrongs and Claims* (University of Nevada Press) ISBN: 9780874172522
Zitkala-Ša, *American Indian Stories, Legends, and Other Writings* (Penguin Classics) ISBN: 9780142437094
N. Scott Momaday, *The Way to Rainy Mountain* (University of New Mexico Press) ISBN: 9780826304360
Simon Ortiz, *From Sand Creek* (University of Arizona Press) ISBN: 9780816519934
Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony* (Penguin Classics) ISBN: 9780143104919
Louise Erdrich, *Round House* (HarperPerennial) ISBN: 9780062065254
Tommy Orange, *There There* (Knopf) ISBN: 9780525436140
Joy Harjo, *Poet Warrior* ISBN: 9781324022015

Schedule of Readings (to be completed by corresponding date); "(B)" indicates a text posted on Blackboard.

Lsn.	Date	Assignment
1	Aug. 27	Introductions. Daniel Heath Justice, "Stories That Wound, Stories That Heal," From *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter* (B)
2	Aug. 29	**Native American Oratory, Land, and Nationhood** "Indian Eloquence" (B); Pontiac (Ottawa), "The Master of Life" (B), "I am a Frenchman, and I wish to die a Frenchman" (B); James Logan, Tahgahjute (Cayuga), "I appeal to any white man to say…" (B); Red Jacket, Sagoyewatha (Seneca), "You have got our country, but are not satisfied" (B), "We like our religion, and do not want another" (B), "We are determined not to sell our lands" (B), "I am an aged tree and can stand no longer" (B); Tecumseh (Shawnee), "Sleep no longer, O Choctaws and Chickasaws" (B), "Let the white race perish" (B), "When the white men first set foot on our grounds, they were hungry" (B), "Father!—Listen to your children!" (B), Tenskwatawa, "The Prophet" (Shawnee), "It is three years since I first began that system of religion which I now practice" (B); Black Hawk, Makataimeshiekiakiak (Sauk), "I am going to send you back to your chief, though I ought to kill you" (B), "Farewell to Black Hawk" (B), "Your houses are as numerous as the leaves upon the trees" (B)
3	Sep. 3	**Assimilation and Removal: The Cherokee** Elias Boudinot, "An Address to the Whites" (B), "Memorial of the Cherokee Council, November 5, 1829" (B), Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Letter to Martin Van Buren" (April 23, 1838) (B)
4	Sep. 5	**Black Hawk's War and As-Told-To Autobiography** Black Hawk, *Life of Black Hawk, or Mà-ka-tai-me-she-kià-kiàk* (1833) (Introduction-49)
5	Sep. 10	**Native Sovereignty and Political Dissidence** *Life of Black Hawk* (49-end)
6	Sep. 12	**Reversing the Gaze: Ethnology, Performance, and Advocacy** Sarah Winnemucca, *Life Among the Piutes: Their Wrongs and Claims* (1883) (1-75)
7	Sep. 17	**The Bannock War and the Reservation System** Winnemucca, *Life Among the Piutes,* cont'd (76-202)
8	Sep. 19	**Indian Passports** Winnemucca, *Life Among the Piutes*, cont'd (203-end).

9	Sep. 24	**Autobiographical Fictions** Zitkala-Ša, cont'd., *American Indian Stories*, "Impressions of an Indian Childhood," "The School Days of an Indian Girl," "An Indian Teacher Among Indians" (67-114)
10	Sep. 26	**Short Stories, "Bicultural Play," and Indigenous Activism** Zitkala-Ša, cont'd., "The Great Spirit," "The Soft-Hearted Sioux," "A Warrior's Daughter," "A Dream of Her Grandfather," "The Widespread Enigma Concerning Blue-Star Woman," "America's Indian Problem" (115-160)
11	Oct. 1	**Oral Traditions and Literary Form** N. Scott Momaday, *The Way to Rainy Mountain* (all; we'll discuss first half today)
12	Oct. 3	**Journeys Home** Momaday, *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, cont'd. **Paper #1 Due**
13	Oct. 8	**Trauma and the Poetics of Testimony** Simon Ortiz, *From Sand Creek* (all)
14	Oct. 10	**Loss and Becoming** Ortiz, cont'd.
15	Oct. 15	**Midterm**
16	Oct. 17	**Captivity and Homecoming** Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony* (1-81)
17	Oct. 22	**Witcheries** Silko, *Ceremony*, cont'd., (81-166)
18	Oct. 24	**Completing the Ceremony** Silko, *Ceremony*, cont'd., (166-end)
19	Oct. 29	**The Past is Prologue** *Wild Indian*, Written and Directed by Lyle Mitchell Corbine, Jr. (Film to be shown in class)
20	Oct. 31	*Wild Indian*, cont'd & film discussion (Read ahead in *The Round House*)
21	Nov. 5	**Trauma, Innocence, Guilt** Louise Erdrich, *The Round House* (1-83)
22	Nov. 7	**Violent Jurisdictions** Erdrich, *The Round House*, cont'd (84-199)

		Paper #2 Due
23	Nov. 12	**Sovereignty, Law, and Justice** Erdrich, *The Round House* (200-end)
24	Nov. 14	**Urban Diasporas and Dislocations** Tommy Orange, *There There* (1-117)
25	Nov. 19	**Belonging and Unbelonging** Orange, *There There*, cont'd (118-196)
	Nov. 21	**Memory, Sacrifice, and Fate** Orange, *There There*, cont'd (196-end)
26	Nov. 26	**Language, Action, and Knowing** Joy Harjo, *Poet Warrior* (1-95)
27	Nov. 28	**THANKSGIVING**
28	Dec. 3	**Story, Self, and Transcendence: A Postcolonial Tale** Harjo, *Poet Warrior* (95-end)
29	Dec. 5	Final Reckonings
	Dec. 9	**Final Papers Due via Blackboard, 11:59 p.m.**

A Final Exam will be administered on Thursday, December 12th, from 4:00-6:45 p.m..

Course Requirements:

Reading of required texts. The reading load for this course is substantial; it is therefore important that you stay current in your work. Additionally, many of these texts can be quite challenging to read; to really understand them, you will need to read them more than once. As Thoreau said, reading "in a high sense" is "not that which lulls us as a luxury and suffers the nobler faculties to sleep the while, but what we have to stand on tiptoe to read and devote our most alert and wakeful hours to" (*Walden*, "Reading"). Let us be readers on Thoreau's model. Practically speaking, this means re-reading, underlining, making marginal notes, writing provocative questions and observations to bring with you to class, and actively connecting ideas and techniques between the texts we read.

Attendance and Participation (10%): Your ongoing participation is vital to your learning and to the success of the course for all. Come to our sessions prepared to share your questions and observations; the more involved you are on a daily basis, the more you will learn and enjoy. Faithful and on-time attendance is an important component of this, and is expected. Please be advised that, upon your sixth unexcused absence, you risk being dropped from the course (i.e., prior to the University drop deadline of Nov. 3rd), or will fail the course (after Nov. 3rd). Do not assume that I will drop you automatically

prior to the April 1st deadline for reasons of excess absence; if you know you need to drop, it is your responsibility to do so. In keeping with standard departmental policy, absences are only excusable in cases of documented family or medical emergency.

Short Papers (15%; 15%): Two short critical essays, 4-5 pages in length, will be due on October 3rd, and November 7th. Details of assignment to follow.

In-Class Presentations (10%): Each student will offer, in singles or in pairs, a short in-class presentation (10 minutes) on a given day's reading assignment; these presentations are intended to provide a gateway into discussion of the text and are encouraged to enlist relevant information from the author's biography and tribal background. Students will sign up for their preferred presentation dates during the second week of class.

Final Paper (30%): A longer Term Paper (7-8 pages) will be due on Monday, Dec. 8th. I will provide more information on this as the class unfolds, but you may write on any topic that bears relevantly on our work in the course. I will also have suggestions for you, depending on your interests. Please feel free to come talk to me during my office hours to help develop ideas. MLA bibliographical guidelines are to be followed.

Midterm and Final Exams (10%; 10%): Details to follow.

Statement on Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty. Plagiarism, or submitting someone (or something) else's work under your own name, are forms of academic fraud, and I take it very seriously. You will not receive credit for any work that has been plagiarized or for writing that was generated by AI; moreover, any work suspected of academic fraud may be forwarded, as a matter of University Policy, to the Office of the Dean of Students for adjudication. The consequences of academic dishonesty can be very serious, resulting in reduced course grades, course failures, and sometimes in academic suspension. If you are found to have submitted plagiarized work, or writing generated by Chat GPT, I will not write a letter of recommendation for you for future professional use. All that said, I completely understand that citing sources properly can be confusing at times! If you're ever in doubt, just ask me.

Policy on Cell Phones and Electronic Devices:
Smartphones and ill-used electronic devices provide unwelcome distractions to you, me, and your classmates. Out of respect for others, cell phones are to be turned off or silenced during class. Although some of you may have electronic text editions of titles from the syllabus on, say, a kindle app, I ask you to recognize that cell phones are woefully inadequate reading devices for serious intellectual work in a classroom setting. If I see you looking at your phone or texting, or using a tablet or laptop for anything other than legitimate class purposes (e.g., TikTok, Twitter, Instagram, and so on), I may ask you to leave and will mark you as absent for that day. If you have reason to expect an emergency phone call, please inform me of this before class begins and leave your phone on vibrate.

COVID Protocols:
If you are exposed to someone with COVID, please get tested; if you develop symptoms, please stay at home, get tested, and let me know via email. I promise to do what I can to keep you up to date with our course; absences for reason of voluntary quarantine following positive COVID will be fully excused. For more information on COVID at UTEP, including an extensive and regularly-updated FAQ, please click here.

UTEP Land Acknowledgment Statement:

As members of the University of Texas at El Paso community, we acknowledge that we are meeting on unceded Indigenous land. We would like to recognize and pay our respects to the Indigenous people with long ties to the immediate region: Lipan Apache, Mescalero Apache, Piro, Manso, Suma, Jumano, Ysleta del Sur Pueblo, Piro/Manso/Tiwa Indian Tribe of the Pueblo of San Juan de Guadalupe, and Tortugas Pueblo. We also acknowledge the nations whose territories include present day Texas: the Carrizo & Comecrudo, Coahuiltecan, Caddo, Tonkawa, Comanche, Alabama-Coushatta, Kickapoo, and the peoples of Chihuahua and northern Mexico from whom most/many of our students descend, such as the Rarámuri, Tepehuan, Wixarrika and Nahuatlaca peoples. Finally, we recognize all of the American Indian and Indigenous Peoples and communities who have been or have become a part of these lands and territories here in Paso del Norte, on Turtle Island. The University of Texas at El Paso honors your history and cultures and we seek greater awareness of the myriad ways in which your legacy can guide us in fruitful partnerships and mutually fulfilling relationships.