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Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Robert Gunn, Dept. of English
Spring 2022

Independent Study: Native American Literature
Course Syllabus

Course Introduction:

The decolonization of the Indigenous narrative is a continual effort by many Indigenous writers. Years of having others tell our stories have resulted in a variety of Native American written literature pushing back to change the racist and simplified narrative. While many of these Indigenous writers have worked to make themselves known in the larger American Literature, they 're goal is often to give voice to the thoughts and circumstances of fellow indigenous people. In this class, I want look at a wide variety of Indigenous Literature. In consideration of the de-colonial approach; the structure of my syllabus will be based on a larger theme of Knowledge progression. To understand these writings, I have included my own Diné specific cultural approach to bring about a unique understanding.

Ha'a'aah	Shádi'ááh	E'e'aah	Náhook-s
East	South	West	North
Infancy, Spirit, and Thinking	Adolescence, Emotion, and Planning	Adulthood, Physical, and Life	Elder, Mind, and Hope

For the Diné, the four cardinal directions hold many meanings. They represent the cycle of the day, seasons, life, and ones progression of knowledge and personhood. With this in consideration, this class will be broken up into four sections, each section associated with a direction.

Ha'a'aah

As the first stage in the class, the readings will discuss why Indigenous literature matters and the lessons of creation stories and history. From this I hope to gain a place of beginning to move forward into the next section.

Shádi'ááh

In this second stage dealing with emotion and planning, the readings will reflect the more politically charged world of Native American Literature, Indigenous temporalities and the very internal yet ubiquitous issue of tradition/modernity struggles among many Indigenous groups. Both these topics carry with them a lot of emotional growth and an overall message for change and awareness to the Native and Non-native reader.

E'e'aah

For the third stage, the readings will be examples of how Indigenous writers can express their culture physically through the structure of their pieces. Through the use of language, non-linear storytelling, or reconnecting to traditional knowledge, these writing go beyond calling for change, because they themselves are the change.

Náhook-s

Lastly, the final stage will represent the complication yet continuation of the cycle by pairing a controversial older writing with a controversial newer writing. Both represent an important step in Native American Literature, and through reading them, we can discuss how they reflect change over time and the progression from one to the other.

By working in this manner, my goal is to look at each section in the larger theme of knowledge progression, not only in relation to the genre of Native American Literature, but personal approaches to my own writing moving forward.

Required Readings:

From the Glittering World: a Navajo Story by Irvin Morris
Why Indigenous Literature Matter by Daniel Heath Justice
The Way to Rainy Mountain by N. Scott Momaday
Selections from *Beyond Settler Time: Temporal Sovereignty and Indigenous Self-Determination* by Mark Rifkin
Lifting Hearts off the Ground: Declaring Indigenous Rights in Poetry by Lyla June Johnston and Joy De Vito
The Only Good Indians by Stephen Graham Jones
Jonny Appleseed by Joshua Whitehead
Sáanii Dataal/The Women Are Singing by Luci Tapahonso
Braiding Sweetgrass by Robin Wall Kimmerer
Son of Old Man Hat by Left Handed and Walter Dyk
Black Sun by Rebecca Roanhorse

Course Requirements:

Reflective Reading Journal: 1 to 2 pages of weekly journal/log entries to track the course of the readings. This could be personally reflective prose written in the first person, more formally academic argument building, to more experimental forms of writing like poetry and storytelling. (40% of totally grade.)

Class Presentations: These are 2 presentations given to the Undergraduate Native American Literature class during the 3rd and 4th stages. These will focus on a specific nonfiction topic or idea to be determined based on completed readings and discussed with the professor. (15% of total grade each. Total of 2)

Final Paper: This final paper will be a 15 to 18 page of either a larger class analysis or a creative piece that includes an evaluation of how it relates to the lessons in class. (30% of total grade)

Regularly Scheduled Meetings with Faculty Advisor to discuss weekly reading assignments, reading journal, and consultations for Final Paper assignment.

Weekly Schedule

Stage 1: Ha'a'aah	
Week 1 (Jan 18 – 21)	Why Indigenous Literature Matters
Week 2 (Jan 24 – 28)	Why Indigenous Literature Matters cont.
Week 3 (Jan 31 - Feb 4)	From the Glittering World
Week 4 (Feb 7 – 11)	From the Glittering World cont.

Stage 2: Shádi'ááh	
Week 5 (Feb 14 - 18)	Beyond Settler Time selections and Way to Rainy Mountain
Week 6 (Feb 21 - 25)	Rainy Mtn cont & Lifting Hearts off the Ground
Week 7 (Feb 28- Mar 4)	Ground cont & The Only Good Indians
Week 8 (Mar 7 - 11)	The Only Good Indians cont
Class Presentation 1 due this section	

Stage 3: E'e'aah	
Week 9 (Mar 21 – 24)	Spring Break
Week 10 (Mar 28 – April 1)	Jonny Appleseed & Sáanii Dataal
Week 11 (Apr 4 – 8)	Dataal cont & Braiding Sweetgrass
Week 12 (Apr 11-15)	Braiding Sweetgrass cont
Class Presentation 2 due this section	

Stage 4: Náhook-s	
Week 13 (Apr 18 – 22)	Son of Old Man Hat
Week 14 (Apr 25 - 29)	Son of Old Man Hat cont & Black Sun
Week 15 (May 2 – 5)	Black Sun Cont
Week 16 (May 9 - 13)	Finals Week
	Final Paper Due