

ENGL 7780 Studies in Race, Gender, and Sexuality:

Early Native American Writing

Mondays 4-6:40
Haley 3187
Spring 2012

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Office Hours: 11:30-12:30

Course Description:

Postcolonial literary theory has often been used as a way to engage with Native American literary production. In recent years, however, Native American intellectuals from throughout the United States and Canada have rejected this model of literary study, arguing that Native Americans are neither postcolonial nor easily understood through Euro-American models of criticism. Theorists like Craig Womack, Robert Warrior, and Jace Weaver have insisted that if we attend to the intellectual traditions of tribal peoples we come up with a very different understanding of “Native American Literature.” In this course we will educate ourselves not only in the extraordinary richness and variety of Native expression, but we will grapple with our assumptions about what, exactly constitutes this category of “Native American Literature,” using recent Native American scholarship to guide us. We will turn our attention to forms of Native textual production from the colonial period through the nineteenth century. Along the way we will sample various Native forms of expression from origin stories to ledger drawings, poems, novels, autobiographies, and critical nonfiction. Our efforts in this class will be collaborative; while we will share core readings, you should expect to do a number of outside readings and oral class reports.

We will move through the course geographically and chronologically, sampling Native forms of expression from origin stories to ledger drawings, focusing on eighteenth and nineteenth-century Native expression. Our point is not to argue about their particular literary merits, but rather to explore and interpret the various meanings available to us through these texts. As we survey this material, we will formulate questions for ourselves about the nature and politics of race, identity, and expression, using relevant critical and theoretical materials to complement our close readings of primary texts.

Texts:

Thomas King, *The Truth about Stories*
Bross and Wyss, *Early Native Literacies in New England*
William Apess, *On Our Own Ground*
Kathryn Zabelle Derounian Stodola, ed. *Women's Indian Captivity Narratives*

Charles Alexander Eastman, *From the Deep Woods to Civilization*

Zitkala-Sa *American Indian Stories*

Michael Green and Theda Perdue, *The Cherokee Removal: A Brief History in Documents*

Native Writers Collective, *Reasoning Together*

Course Requirements:

The primary format of this course will be discussion of common texts and independent research. We will meet each week to discuss a series of texts that illuminate a particular issue in early Native studies; you will use these discussions to identify your own area of interest. Along with various class reports, each student will review one outside book in the course of the semester. For this review you should expect to hand out to the class a short synopsis of the book in question with a brief assessment of its value as a critical or teaching tool; length should be approximately 600-800 words (see attached description of a book review). These assignments will feed into your final project: a “publication-quality” final essay (25 pages)

This is a graduate class and you are on a professional career path; you are expected, therefore, to act like a professional. **You must hand in all assignments on time to pass the course.** You are also expected to attend every class; any unexcused absences will drop your final grade by a full letter grade.

book review.....	20%
participation, class presentations and accompanying materials	20%
Final Project.....	60%

Finally, please feel free to stop by after class or in my office hours to discuss any learning disabilities, physical disabilities, or special circumstances of which you feel I should be aware.

SYLLABUS

Week 1: 1/9 Introductions

1/16 MLK Day—no class

Week 2: 1/23 T. King, *The Truth About Stories* AND *Reasoning Together*, L. Brooks “Digging at the Roots” P. 234-264

Optional: Paul Chaad Smith, *Everything You Think You Know about Indians is Wrong*

Week 3: 1/30 *Early Native Literacies in New England*

Week 4: 2/6 Report #1 on one early Native American writer from *Early Native Literacies*

Week 5: 2/13 William Apess

Optional: Robert Warrior, *The People and the Word*, “Eulogy on William Apess”

Week 6: 2/20 *Reasoning Together*, C. Womack, “A Single Decade” Pp. 3-104

Week 7: 2/27 Report #2 on one Native theorist cited in that article

Week 8: 3/5 *Women’s Indian Captivity Narratives*, “The Panther Captivity” Pp 81-90 and Mary Jemison, Pp. 117-210

Optional: Christopher Castiglia, *Bound and Determined: Captivity, Culture-Crossing, and White Womanhood from Mary Rowlandson to Patty Hearst*

June Namias, *White Captives: Gender and Ethnicity on the American Frontier*

Spring Break

Week 9: 3/19 Book Review due; also, *The Cherokee Removal*, eds Green and Perdue

Week 10: 3/26 *Reasoning Together*, T. Foster “Of One Blood” Pp. 265-302

Google Books:

Memoir of Catharine Brown by Rufus Anderson

The Little Osage Captive

Online resource:

The Cherokee Phoenix (by date)

<http://neptune3.galib.uga.edu/ssp/cgi-bin/tei-news-idx.pl?sessionId=7f000001&type=years&id=CHRKPHNX>

OR

(by subject) http://www.anpa.uar.edu/indexes/cherokee_phoenix_index/cherokee_phoenix.htm

Week 11: 4/2 Zitkala Sa, *American Indian Stories*

Optional: Laura Donaldson “Writing the Talking Stick”

Week 12: 4/9 Charles Alexander Eastman, *From Deep Woods to Civilization*

Optional: Malea Powell, “Rhetorics of Survivance: How American Indians use Writing”

Week 13: 4/16 Ledger Drawings, boarding schools

http://americanhistory.si.edu/documentgallery/exhibitions/ledger_drawing_1.html

<https://plainsledgerart.org/ledgers/>

Week 14: 4/23 Final papers due

ASSIGNMENTS:

REPORTS 1 & 2:

Both reports should have a spoken component in which you present your findings to the class (each person should expect to speak for **NO MORE THAN 5** minutes) and a written component in which you outline the most important elements of your research in roughly 3 pages of text. Do not forget to include a short bibliography for further research.

Report #1

In collaboration among 2-3 members of the class, you will explore the work of the Native writers currently in print in one of the following collections. You must work together effectively as there are limited quantities of these books, and you will want to divide the reading among yourselves. While we have already been briefly introduced to these texts, your report should give a more comprehensive sense of the work and career of these various figures.

Edited Collections:

Joseph Johnson, *To do Good to My Indian Brethren* (Ed. Laura J. Murray)

Samson Occom, *Collected Writings* (Ed. Joanna Brooks)

The Eliot Tracts (Ed. Michael P. Clark)

Early Native Writings in Massachusetts (Eds Ives Goddard and Kathleen Bragdon)

Experience Mayhew's *Indian Converts* (Ed. Laura Liebman) [NOT IN OUR LIBRARY]

Eleazar Wheelock's Indians (Ed. James Dow McCallum) [See me for a copy]

Report #2

For your second report you will each work independently to find out more about the work of one of the individuals discussed by Craig Womack in his extended article. Again, your task is to extend our brief introduction to this theorist from Womack into a more detailed analysis.

BOOK REVIEW

Writing a book review is a skill that will serve you well throughout your professional career. It requires several things of you:

--synthesis: you must summarize and synthesize the main argument of the book in question and the specific ways the author develops his/her argument. Go through the argument chapter by chapter so that people reading your review will have a clear sense of what the book is actually about and if they might be interested in reading it. This will take up the bulk of the review. In this element of the review you must try to represent as fairly and accurately as you can what the book actually says; your value judgments largely are removed from this part.

--analysis: in this part you must express as clearly as possibly whether or not the book succeeds on its own terms. That is, this is not the opportunity to say how YOU would have written the book, but rather how effectively the author makes his/her argument. Are there gaps in the argument? Is it less than convincing?

Does this book engage effectively with the scholarship in its area? Does it break new ground? In some ways this is the hardest part of the review. Remember, first of all, that you are dealing with a real person whose work has consumed much of the past few years of his/her life. Avoid sounding smug or condescending when reporting the flaws, and find something good to say as well. Remember, too, that as a graduate student you should choose your words wisely; people remember the reviews they get, both positive and negative, and this person could well be in the position to judge your own work down the line...the conventions of our profession are to phrase criticism gently while at the same time providing an accurate assessment of the book at hand. Think of this as a good place to try out this challenge!

Book Review options (see me for any substitutions or alternatives):

Matt Cohen *Networked Wilderness*

Lisa Brooks, *The Common Pot*

Amy E. Den Ouden *Beyond Conquest*

Love, James De Loss, *Samson Occom and the Christian Indians of New England* [modern reprint]

Philip Round *Removable Type*

Daniel Heath Justice *Our Fire Survives the Storm*

Joshua David Bellin *Medicine Bundle*

Theresa Strouth Gaul *To Marry an Indian* [NOT IN OUR LIBRARY]

Scott Lyons *X-Marks* [NOT IN OUR LIBRARY]

Paul Chaat Smith *Everything You Know About Indians is Wrong* [NOT IN OUR LIBRARY]

Birgit Rassmussen, *Queequeg's Coffin* [NOT IN OUR LIBRARY; publication date January 12]

SEMINAR PAPER:

The traditional scholarly essay provides you with the basis for publishable work, and it helps you develop your talents as a researcher and writer of critical work. For this assignment you should develop a thesis that is an original insight into a topic related to early Native American writing. Make sure that your original insight is based in a thorough engagement with primary and secondary sources relevant to your topic. While of course I do not expect you to write an essay that will be publishable right away, I do expect you to work on a draft of something you might one day develop in that direction.

As an academic you are part of a community of scholars. You access their work through their publications, and your own work should be seen as engaging in an on-going conversation with other scholars who share your interests. You should be able to exhibit a mastery of the research relevant to the topic you have chosen, and you should be able to exhibit a clear sense of the most recent directions such scholarship is taking. Be sure to use footnotes to help you indicate the extent of the research you have done.

The expectations for such work:

--an essay of 20-25 written pages (excluding notes)

--an original thesis that is well developed and persuasively argued.

-- a bibliographic apparatus (footnotes, a works cited page) that gives evidence of extensive research in the field and mastery of the relevant materials.