Contemporary American Indian Fiction / Summer 2011
Dedicated to the memories of Lee Francis, James Welch, Louis Owens, Vine Deloria, Jr., Michael Dorris, Elaine Jahner, and Paula Gunn Allen

English 3344-001
Dr. Roemer
Office Hrs: T/Th 1:30-3; MWF by apt 405 CH
MTWTH 10:30-12:30; Preston 300
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Goals & Means
1. to introduce students to selected novels and short stories written since 1968 by authors with American Indian heritages and to resources for studying these texts [classes/readings/tapes/Internet, syllabus bibliography]

2. to discuss aesthetic, theoretical, ethical, and political issues raised by the texts (e.g., concepts of identity, place, gender and language; integrations of mainstream and non-mainstream cultures and oral and written literatures) [classes/exams/papers]

3. to examine in particular: (a) canon formation issues (first three novels); (b) redefinitions of representations of American history (second three novels); (c) trends in recent fiction (Howe, Sarris, Alexie, and readings in the course packet)

4. to enhance two types of writing skills: (a) a self-reflective reader-response exercise to explore how each student transforms texts into images and concepts meaningful to him or her [first paper]; (b) an evaluation of a critical article or chapter about one of the assigned texts (second paper)

Assessment & Outcomes
(See also the criteria for "Examinations," "Paper," and "Grading.")
By the end of the semester, students who have successfully completed the in- and out-of-class assignments should (1) know basic biographical and bibliographical information about each of the authors studied; (2) be able to discuss intelligently (a) significant issues raised in the works studied and (b) the general issues indicated in goal #2 above; (3) be able to articulate orally and in writing (a) explanations for their responses to selected works by Native American authors and (b) evaluations of relevant criticism. Progress toward these goals will be assessed in class discussions (goals 1, 2, 3), examinations (goals 1, 2,3), and the papers (goal 4).

Required Readings in Order of Assignment
Course Packet: pp. i-34; Contexts and Criticism
HOUSE MADE OF DAWN, Momaday
WINTER IN THE BLOOD, Welch
CEREMONY, Silko
TRACKS, Erdrich
SOLAR STORMS, Hogan
MIKO KINGS, Howe
LONE RANGER & TONTO . . . , Alexie (selections from)
Course Packet: pp. 35-74
Topics, Readings, Exams, Papers, Tentative Dates
Note: Brief Biographical information is available at: http://www.ipl.org/div/natam

Introductions: The Course & Historical, Cultural Contexts and Controversies

Readings: Handouts & Packet (i-34) 6/6

First Examination (short answer) 6/8

Establishing Legitimacy & an Audience: Novels of the 60s & 70s

A. A (30,000-year) Belated Ground Breaking via Pulitzer

Reading: HOUSE MADE OF DAWN 6/6, 7, 8
(Class includes tape of "Man Made of Words.")

B. NEW YORK TIMES Front-Page Recognition

Reading: WINTER IN THE BLOOD 6/9, 13
(Class includes taped interview)

C. "The" Canonized "Indian" Novel

Reading: CEREMONY 6/14, 15
Internet: http://oncampus.richmond.edu/~nelson/mapping.html

Second Examination 6/16

Historical Reconstructions

A. Early 20th-Century through Trickster & (un)Saintly Eyes

Reading: TRACKS 6/20, 21

First Paper Due 6/24 (Friday)

B. Early 1970s Tribal & National Boarder Crossings

Reading: SOLAR STORMS 6/22, 23, [27]

C. Choctaw Time Travel: 1907 – “the present”

Reading: MIKO KINGS 6/ [27], 28
Film: HIS LAST GAME

Third Examination 6/29
Research for Second Paper  [no class meeting]  6/30

The Diversity of 1990s Short Fiction Forms (Urban, Suburban, Rez, Rural)

July 4th Holiday  7/4
Reading:  LONE RANGER (Selections)  7/5
Readings:  Vizenor, Glancy, Sears, Hill, Power, and Sarris (Packet, 35-74)  7/6, 7

Review for Fourth Examination  7/7
Second Paper Due  7/8 (Friday)

Fourth Examination (10:30-12:30)  7/11

Examinations

Except for the first exam, each exam will consist of two parts: (1) brief identifications and questions taken from the readings and class discussions; and (2) essay questions related to class discussions but representing applications not examined directly in class. During the class before each exam, I will discuss the nature of the questions in detail and distribute study guides. The first exam will be a short-answer exam on the handouts and contexts and criticism packet background readings (i-34). Grading criteria for the essay questions include a demonstrated ability to maintain focus on the questions and to support claims with relevant references to the readings.

Papers

First Paper (Due: 6/24; approximately 4-5 pp., 1000-1250 words.). Each student will select one of the assigned novels. The paper will include (1) a brief general portrait of the student as a reader, (2) descriptions of two important "influences" (transformational associations) that shaped his or her responses to specific parts and/or general motifs or issues in the text, (3) an analyses of the effects of each of the influences, and (4) a statement of how this reading/writing experience either reinforced or modified his or her general assumptions about his or her reading processes. Examination of each of the influences should include a definition of the influence, identification of which part or parts of the text were affected, and a discussion of the resulting response. A good way to begin this paper is to take notes as you read. When you arrive at a particularly strong negative or positive response, note down why you think you responded this way. After finishing the book, see if there are any recurrent patterns that can become the bases for the most important transformative associations discussed.

Grading criteria include the demonstrated ability to fulfill the above-stated requirements of the paper and to write competently (this includes mechanical skills in grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc., as well the ability to invent and construct coherent sentences, paragraphs, and paper sections.) A free writing lab on the fourth floor of the Central Library is available for students who have difficulty writing. Under normal circumstances, no late or e-mailed papers will be accepted.
Second Paper (Due: 7/8; approximately 4-5 pp., 1000-1250 words). Select one of the assigned readings other than the one chosen for the first paper. Select a critical article or chapter about that text (see resources below; you may have to read several articles before you find one you’d like to write about). Describe: (1) the author’s main argument; (2) the critical approach s/he took [e.g., biographical, psychological, feminist, ethnic studies, post colonial criticism, combinations of these and others, etc.]; (3) the appropriateness / validity of the argument and approach as a means of effectively interpreting the text. Grading criteria: same as indicated for the first paper.

Research Resources for the Second Paper

The best library source in the Metroplex, the MultiCultural Collection, is no longer on the Library’s second floor, which is under construction this summer. The MCC books will be available on the 3rd floor. Books especially useful for finding articles for this paper are: the bibliographies in *Native American Writers of the United States*, Ed. Roemer; *The Cambridge Companion to Native American Literature*, Eds. Porter and Roemer; *N. Scott Momaday*, Compiler, Morgan; *Leslie Marmon Silko’s Ceremony*, Ed. Chavlin; *A Reader’s Guide to the Novels of Louise Erdrich*, Revised, Eds. Beidler and Barton. Reference librarians have temporarily moved to the third floor of the Library; they can help you search for articles.

Ethnocriticism; The Turn to the Native; David Murray, Forked Tongues; Brian Swann, ed., Recovering the Word and (with Krupat) New Voices in Native American Literary Criticism; Roger Dunmore, Earth’s Mind; Amelia V. Katanski. Learning to Write “Indian”; Joel Pfister, Individuality Incorporated James Cox, Muting White Noise (regional) Larry Evers, ed. The South Corner of Time (anthology); Eric Gary Anderson, American Indian Literature and the Southwest; Annette Trefzer, Disturbing Indians: The Archeology of Southern Fiction; Lisa Brooks, The Common Pot: Indigenous Writing and the Reconstruction of Native Space in the Northeast; Geary Hobson, et al. The People Who Stayed: Southeastern Indian Writing after Removal. (oral literatures) William M. Clements, Native American Verbal Art; Karl Kroeber, ed., Traditional Literature of the American Indian; Kroeber, Artistry in Native American Myths; Jarold Ramsey, Reading the Fire; Dell Hymes, In Vane I Tried to Tell You; Brian Swann, ed., Smoothing the Ground; Clements, Oratory in Native North America; (life narratives) H. David Brumble, American Indian Autobiography [new ed.]; Arnold Krupat, For Those Who Come After; Hertha Wong, Sending My Heart Back Across the Years; Kay Sands, Telling a Good One; David Carlson, Sovereign Selves; (poetry written in English) Michael Castro, Interpreting the Indian; Kenneth Lincoln, Sing With the Heart of the Bear; Norma Wilson, Native American Poetry, Robin Riley Fast., The Heart as a Drum; Dean Rader and Janice Gould, eds. Speak to me Words: Essays on Contemporary Indian Poetry; Robert Dale Parker, Changing Is Not Vanishing. (drama) Hanay Geiogamah, ed., New Native American Drama; Stories of Our Way; Mimi Gisolfi D’Aponte, ed., An Anthology of Native American Plays; (fiction) Charles Larson, American Indian Fiction, Louis Owens, Other Destinies, Richard Fleck, ed., Critical Perspectives on Native American Fiction, James Ruppert, Mediation in Contemporary Native American Fiction, Catherine Rainwater, Dreams of Fiery Stars, Sid Larsen, Captive in the Middle, Susan Berry Brill de Ramirez, Contemporary American Indian Literatures and the Oral Tradition, Joni Adamson’s American Indian Literature, Environmental Justice and Ethnocriticis; David Treuer, Native American Fiction: A Users manual; Sean Teuton. Red Land, Red Power; (non-fiction) Robert Warrior, Tribal Secrets; The People and the Word; Maureen Kronkle, Writing Indian Nations; (children’s literature) Doris Seale and Beverly Slapin, ed., A Broken Flute. Important journals include: SAIL (Studies in American Indian Literatures), which has its own excellent Web sites (see below), American Indian Culture and Research Journal (AICRJ), American Indian Quarterly (AIQ, Wicazo Sa Review, and Native South, Some excellent articles have also appeared in less specialized journals such as Critical Inquiry, College English, American Literary History, PMLA, Modern Fiction Studies, and American Literature. Surveys of scholarship / the field: Elvira Pulitano, Toward a Native American Critical Theory; Shari Hudendorf, “Literature and Politics of Native American Studies.” PMLA 120 (2005): 1618-26; Philip Deloria, “American Indians, American Studies, and the ASA.” American Quarterly 55 (2003): 669-702; Jace Weaver, “More Light than Heat: The Current State of Native American Studies.” American Indian Quarterly 31.2 (2007): 233-55; Jace Weaver, Craig Womack, Robert Warrior. American Indian Literary Nationalism; Chris Womack, Daniel Heath Justice, and Christopher Teuton. Janice Acoose, Lisa Brooks, Ted Foster, Leanne Howe, eds. Reasoning Together: The Native Critics Collective. Bibliographical guides (see also reference sources above) to articles and books on specific authors can be found in recent issues of American Literary Scholarship, the PMLA Bibliographies, SAIL, AICRJ. Many Web sites can provide information on Native writers in general and on specific authors. Besides the SAIL site
(<http://oncampus.richmond.edu/faculty/ASAIL/>), there is a good Listserv for ASAIL members. One of the best general sites is <www.anpa.ualr.edu>, the American Native Press Archives. Another excellent Web site is the Wordcraft Circle of Native Writers and Storytellers (<www.wordcraftcircle.org/>). For children’s literature oyate@oyate.org. The many Individual author books include the new MLA Approaches to Teaching volume on Erdrich and an earlier volume on Momaday. For a sampling of the hundreds of individual author Web sites, see <www.google.com>. See also: <nativeauthor.com>, <www.ipl.org/ref/native/>, <www.english.uiuc.edu/maps> (e.g., Momaday homepage), and <users.mwci.net/~lapoz/MBio.html>. General Web sites: There is a general "American Indian Resources" Web site: <jupiter.lang.osaka-u.ac.jp/~krkvink/naindex.html>. A more recently created search engine is: http://google.com/coop/cse?cx=012776738606739689892%3Alg7yc_isxlo, The Fall 1998 issue of Wicazo Sa (13.2) offers an outdated but useful overview of Internet resources in Native American studies. For American Indian literatures and the American literature canon, see <www.uta.edu/english/roemer/ctt>.

Grading, Class and University Policies, and Support

Grading: Weights & Numbers: first Exam -10%; second exam – 20%; third exam (20%); fourth exam (15%); first paper (15%); second paper (20%). A(90-100); B(80-89); C(70-79); D(60-69); F (below 60).

Constructive Warnings: (1) Plagiarism will be handled according to University disciplinary procedures. Consult chapter 2 of the MLA Handbook if you are confused about plagiarism. (2) If you plan to withdraw, you must follow University procedures. Professors cannot drop students; if they disappear without dropping, they receive F semester grades. (3) Under normal circumstances, I do not accept late or e-mailed work. (4) For every FIVE unexcused absences the semester grade will be lowered a half grade. I do not have a specific policy for lateness, but I do have an "attitude." Late arrivals disturb students and teacher. If there is a persistent problem with lateness, I will begin to count the tardiness as unexcused absences.

Encouragement: (1) Class participation (especially in the assigned group presentations) and improvement can be important factors in elevating the semester grade. (2) I am very willing to accommodate students with disabilities. These students should identify themselves at the beginning of the semester and provide me with authorized documentation from the appropriate University office (e.g., the Office for Students with Disabilities, 817-272-3364). (3) Students needing academic counseling should consult their Undergraduate Advisor; for other types of counseling, contact the Office of University College programs (817-272-6107).

Course Packet

Contexts & Criticism
1 Roemer “Timeline”
2 Roemer, “American Indian Literatures (Forms & Genres)”
3 Hirschfelder, “Terminology”
5 Harjo, “Watch Your Language”
7 Utter, from American Indians
25 Ruppert, “Fiction: 1968 to the Present”

1990’s Short Fiction
35 Vizenor, “The Last Lecture on the Edge”
40 Glancy, “Aunt Parnetta’s Electric Blisters”
44 Hill, “Taking Care of Business”
49 Power, “Christianity Comes to the Sioux”
55 Sears, “Grace”
64 Sarris, “How I Got to Be Queen”