

Carleton University
Department of English Language and Literature
English 3960A Fall 2014

Studies in Aboriginal Literatures



Mon. 6:05-8:55 pm

238 Tory (Please confirm location on Carleton Central)

Instructor: Dr. David Stymeist

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Office Phone: TBA

Email: dstymeist@yahoo.ca

Office Hours: Weds. 12:30-1:30, or by appointment.

Course Description

This course investigates a wide range of literary writing, including poetry, novels, drama, and short-fiction, produced by First Nations, Metis and Native American writers. Introductory classes will provide historical and cultural context for the development of Aboriginal literatures by examining traditional legends and stories as well as colonial and post-colonial constructions of Native Americans. Then, through the investigation of some of the best writing by contemporary Aboriginal writers, the course will look at how these authors represent self-identity, nationhood, the residential school experience, gender, homosexuality, social and economic disparity, healing, diaspora, reconciliation, and self-determination.

Classes will consist of a combination of lectures and discussion. I expect every student to attend lectures and come prepared to engage in a lively discussion of the literary works. As this is a third year course, classes will emphasize active learning. The more you are willing to put into the class, the more you will get out of it!

Course Texts:

Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony* (Penguin)
Joseph Boyden, *Three Day Road* (Penguin)
Tomson Highway, *The Rez Sisters* (Fifth House)
Armand Garnet Ruffo, *Grey Owl* (Coteau)

E-texts
Texts on Reserve at Carleton Library

* [Textbooks will be available at Haven Books, 43 Seneca Street (613-730-9888)]

Required Term Assignments

In-class Passage/Poem Analysis (60 min)		15%
Research Essay	2250 wds	45%
Participation		10%
Final Exam		30%

Tentative Schedule (subject to change):

Sept. 8 Course introduction

Sept. 15 Colonial constructions and stereotypes of Native peoples
 Inuit Testimony of the 1845 Franklin Expedition
 Sacred Lore and Legend: traditional stories and storytelling

[Sept. 17 Last day to change courses for fall/winter courses]

Sept. 22 & 29 Gender
 Pauline Johnson, “A Cry from an Indian Wife,” “The Song my Paddle Sings,”
 “The Corn Husker”

Spirituality & Healing
 Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony*

Oct. 6 In-class Passage/Poem Analysis

[October 27-31 Fall break, no classes.]

- Oct. 13 Thanksgiving (Stat. Holiday)
- Oct, 20, Nov. 3 Identities
 Joseph Boyden, *Three Day Road*
- Nov. 10, 17 Author visit and reading (dependent on scheduling)
 Armand Garnet Ruffo, *Grey Owl*
- Nov. 17, 24 Tomson Highway, “The Rez Sisters” (drama)
 Marilyn Dumont “Squaw Poems”
- Dec. 1 Trauma, Sexualities, Two-spirit experience, Nation-hood
 Gregory Scofield, Poems
 Thomas King, “Borders”
- Dec. 8 Reserve Class, Exam Preparation.

[Dec. 8 Last Day to Withdraw from Fall Classes]

Course Regulations

The mark distribution for the year will be Term Grade: 70%, exam: 30%. Class participation marks will include participation in class discussion, response to written comments on graded assignments, consistent attendance, and full reading preparation for each assigned text. The exam will cover material from the entire course. As consistent attendance is expected in this class, students are required to attend an absolute minimum of 50% of the classes; students failing to meet this minimum requirement will be barred from the final exam and will receive an automatic failure.

All assignments must be handed in on the date specified unless cleared previously with the professor. Papers must be handed to me in person or to the drop box in the English department office (1812 Dunton Tower) on the due date. If you choose to use the drop box, you must be prepared to incur any late penalties that may accumulate due to the unlikely occurrence of the paper’s loss or misfiling.

Late papers will be penalized 2% per day that the assignment is overdue. Papers without medical extension will not be accepted after two weeks of the due date. No faxes or emails of essays will be accepted. Please keep a copy of your assignment in case of loss by any cause. Students can expect to receive graded feedback in a timely manner; the instructor reserves the right to limit commentary on late essays. Students are required to submit all major assignments (essay, passage analysis, and exam) in order to pass the course as a whole.

Class etiquette: Turn off cell phones during class time. Text messaging is not allowed during class.

Grading System:

Assignments in this course will be graded using the letter grading system: A-, A, A+ (Excellent); B-, B, B+ (Good); C-, C, C+ (Satisfactory); D, D+ (Minimal pass); F (Failure). Percentage conversion: A+ (90-100%), A (85-89), A- (80-84), B+ (77-79), B (73-76), B- (70-72), C+ (67-69), C (63-66), C- (60-62), D+ (57-59), D (53-56), D (50-52), F (0-49).

For Student with Disabilities	Contact Paul Menton Centre (6608) to obtain <i>letters of accommodations</i> .
For Religious Observance	To be worked out on individual basis with instructor. Consult Equity Services Website or an Equity Advisor (ext. 5622) for Policy and list of Holy Days (www.carleton.ca/equity)
For Pregnancy	Contact Equity Services (ext. 5622) to obtain <i>letters of accommodation</i> .

Plagiarism:

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possible suspension or expulsion from the university.

Academic regulations and schedules:

Consult the calendar for course information, university and faculty regulations, dates, deadlines and schedules, student, faculty and university rights and responsibilities.

Academic Accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term because of disability, pregnancy or religious obligations. Please review the course outline promptly and write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist.

Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Documented disabilities could include but are not limited to mobility/physical impairments, specific Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/psychological disabilities, sensory disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and chronic medical conditions. Registered PMC students are required to contact the PMC, 613-520-6608, every term to ensure that your Instructor receives your Letter of Accommodation, no later than two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations. If you only require accommodations for your formally scheduled exam(s) in this course, please submit your request for accommodations to PMC by Nov. 9, 2012 for the Fall term and March 8, 2013 for the Winter term.

You can visit the Equity Services website to view the policies and to obtain more detailed information on academic accommodation at <http://carleton.ca/equity/accommodation>.