

**Carleton University  
Fall 2013  
Department of English**

**ENGL4960A: Studies in Aboriginal Literatures I:  
The Oral Tradition & Life Writing**

**Time: Tuesday, 11:35 – 2:35**

**Location: 374 UC (Please confirm on Carleton Central)**

**Instructor: Armand Garnet Ruffo**

**Email: armand\_ruffo@carleton.ca**

**Course Description: Seminar**

This course examines Aboriginal Literature in Canada from the perspective of the oral tradition and life writing. Our examination of these two broad areas of First Nations, Metis and Inuit traditions of storytelling will consider a diverse range of texts and other forms of discourse and may include a selection of orally transmitted stories, written autobiography, memoirs, histories, dramatic poetry, novels, drama, and current adaptations of traditional modes of orature, which include spoken word and film. We will therefore begin with early examples of the oral tradition in order to arrive at some understanding of the world-view of Aboriginal peoples and extend our examination to the contemporary period. To broaden our critical approach, and to fully appreciate culturally specific perspectives and ‘Indigenous ways of knowing,’ we will consider Aboriginal theorists and educators, such as Elders, to help us interpret what these cultural commentators are saying about their experiences in “Native North America.” This course will also necessarily consider the processes of colonialism and the Aboriginal responses to it.

Texts may include the following (depending upon availability):

1. Lena Olma Oman Kianna Lela, *The Epic of Qayaq*, McGill-Queens.
2. Harry Robinson, *Write it On Your Heart*, Theytus/Talon Books.
3. E. Pauline Johnson, *Pauline Johnson: Selected Poetry and Prose*, Dundurn.
4. Isabel Knockwood, *Out of the Depths*, Roseway.
5. Tomson Highway, *Kiss of the Fur Queen*, Doubleday.
6. Gregory Scofield, Kipocihân: *Poems New & Selected*, Nightwood Editions.
7. Daniel David Moses, *Almighty Voice and His Wife*, Theatre Books.