

Carleton University
Winter 2024 Preliminary Course Outline
Department of English

ENGL 3960B: Studies in Indigenous Literature

Prerequisites: third year standing or permission of the department

Time: Fridays 11:35-2:25pm

Format: In-person, not suitable for online students

Instructor: Jennifer Henderson

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*****This is a preliminary syllabus only—texts and assignments are subject to change. A complete version will be available closer to the start of the term.*****

Course description: The texts for this course are by Indigenous writers of Turtle Island, or North America. We will read the work of writers of various nations, focussing on contemporary writing in forms which range from the novel to the essay, the creation story to the zombie narrative. The course proceeds through sections on: Stories; Language; Colonialism and Gender Violence; Sovereignty; Land, Spirituality and Struggle; Residential Schools; Genres of Gothic and Fantasy. The goal is to provide you with an introduction to the diversity of Indigenous literature today, as well as a consciousness of the questions involved in engaging with it. We'll consider concepts of nation-centred criticism; storytelling as theory and practice of land- and community-based knowledge and responsibility; writing and orality; writing in the wake of language loss; narrative memory; syncretism and 'survivance'; the politics of authenticity; the representation of residential schools; and genre adaptation. We'll view a recent feature film and several short videos in class. In addition to the four required texts by Erdrich, Halfe, Highway, and Robinson, we'll use a coursepack. Our classes will involve a combination of lecture and discussion.

Learning Outcomes:

Think critically and contextually about the terms "Indigenous" and "literature"; identify and analyze textual strategies of Indigenous authors in connection with the course's topics; discuss one's subject position in relation to Indigenous territory and settler-colonial history, and connect this to practices of reading; relate Indigenous literature to current political and land-based struggles.

Texts:

Many readings will be available on Brightspace but students must purchase the following four texts, available at the Carleton University bookstore.

Erdrich, Louise. *Tracks*.

Halfe, Louise Bernice. *Blue Marrow*.

Highway, Tomson. *Kiss of the Fur Queen*.

Robinson, Eden. *Traplines*.

Evaluation:

Attendance, participation (informed by completing assigned readings before class)	10%
Writing and Place assignment	10%
3 Reading Responses	45%
Final examination	35%