

Carleton University  
Winter 2025 **Preliminary** Course Outline  
Department of English

**ENGL 4961A: Indigenous Literatures II**

**Prerequisites:** Fourth-year standing or permission of the department

**Highly Recommended:** Experience in university-level literary analysis

**Instructor: Dr S. Birkwood**

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*Carleton University is located on the traditional and unceded territory of the Algonquin Nation*

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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:** This course will focus on texts by Indigenous writers from the continent known as Turtle Island within Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee communities—more specifically, from regions located within its northern half. We will consider matters related to Indigenous epistemologies and histories but also the resistance to categories associated with European forms, traditions, and worldviews. As Leanne Betasamosake Simpson observes, “acts of resurgence are taking place as they always have, on both individual and collective scales on Indigenous lands irrespective of whether those lands are urban, rural, or reserve” (*As We Have Always Done* 102).

**General Learning Objectives** (with thanks to colleague Professor Jennifer Henderson for much of the wording):

Through this course, students will develop their ability to do the following:

- Recognize alternate Indigenous mappings of the part of the continent known as Canada and some of the land-language relationships specific to these geographies
- Recognize the specific status and function of Indigenous storytelling as a place-based practice of articulating and reinforcing relationships and responsibilities
- Read literary texts in terms of both their formal features and their signification within historical, political, legal, literary, and cultural contexts (including Indigenous epistemologies)
- Analyse cultural interaction and literary relations in the context of settler-colonialism
- Discern and discuss literary strategies of resistance, complexity and ambiguity in signification, and ethical issues in interpretation.

### Required Texts

- The list of required texts will likely be available in **August**.
- The following list provides examples of texts studied in a previous year and does NOT reflect a confirmed selection for Winter 2025.
  - Eden Robinson, *Monkey Beach* (2001), Penguin
  - Waubgeshig Rice, *Moon of the Crusted Snow* (2018), ECW
  - Drew Hayden Taylor, *Cottagers and Indians* (2019), Talon
  - Leanne Simpson, *Noopiming* (2020), House of Anansi
  - Zoe Leigh Hopkins, *Run Woman Run* (2021), Level Film

### Evaluation

Seminar on course text	25%
Close-reading assignments (may not be on the seminar text)	15%
Discussion of supplementary reading	10%
Response / Reflection on experiential component (e.g., CUAG visit)	10%
Engagement & peer support	15%
Research essay / alternative but equivalent project	25%

### Please note:

- You must attend regularly and complete all the term work to be eligible to pass the course.
  - Should you find yourself in circumstances that threaten to preclude your successful completion of any assignment, please contact me before the relevant deadline. I would much rather work with you to find a solution than have you face the possibility of an unsuccessful outcome.