

**Carleton University
Fall 2017
Department of English**

ENGL 3960A: Studies in Indigenous Literature

Prerequisite: third-year standing or permission of the department

Time: Thursdays 11:30 – 2:30

Location: 505 SA

Instructor: Jennifer Henderson

Email: jennifer.henderson@carleton.ca

Office: 1911 DT

Office Hours: Thursdays 2:30 – 4pm or by appointment

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 story. The course proceeds through sections on: Stories; Language; Colonialism and Gender Violence; Sovereignty; Land, Spirituality and Struggle; Residential Schools; 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 'Indigenous' versus nation-centred criticism; storytelling as theory and practice of land- and community-based knowledge and responsibility; transcription of the oral; 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 by Jeff Barnaby, *Rhymes for Young Ghouls*, 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 collaborative building of textual analyses through discussion.

Reading list*:

Erdrich, Louise. *Tracks*.

Halfe, Louise Bernice. *Blue Marrow*.

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

Robinson, Eden. *Traplines*.

*These books will be available at Octopus Books, 116 Third Avenue, 613-233-2589. Shorter readings will be in a coursepack, also available at Octopus. Please try to purchase the coursepack before our first class so that you can bring it with you on Sept. 7th.

MEANS OF EVALUATION:

- 3 Reading Responses (15% each) 45%
 - Deadlines: Thurs. Sept. 28, Thurs. Nov. 9, Thurs. Dec. 7
- Take-home examination, due Fri. Dec. 22nd 45%
- Attendance and participation 10%

Reading Responses:

Writing: 1.5 to 2-page responses to readings. I will provide prompts in the form of discussion questions, posted on CULearn 4 days before our class. I am looking for thoughtful, not rushed, reflection on one text and your response to it as a reader. What do you find striking, interesting, intriguing, puzzling about it? What do you think is a central idea? What question(s) does this text raise for you? Can you make connections to other texts we have read? Write in complete paragraphs and try, as much as possible, to give your response coherence by developing a particular angle or insight.

How to submit your response: Submit your reading response on CULearn before 10am on the day we meet. You may submit your response any time prior to that. Responses will not be accepted after the class in which we have covered the material. In order to space out your writing of these responses, I have established these deadlines:

First response: on or before Thurs. Sept. 28

Second: on or before Thurs. Nov. 9

Third: on or before Thurs. Dec. 7

Take-home examination:

This exam will be roughly equivalent to the kind of exam you would write during a regular 3-hour sit-down exam. As it is a take-home, you will be allowed (and indeed expected) to consult your course notes and the texts we've read so that you can provide detailed and precise answers. The questions will include short answers, two passage analyses, and two essays. The exam questions will be posted on CULearn on Dec. 7th and you will have until Dec. 22nd at 5pm to submit your answers, in electronic form, on CULearn.

Attendance and participation:

Attendance for the full three hours of our weekly meetings is mandatory. Attendance will be taken and partial attendance in a class will not count. If you miss 4 classes, you will not be permitted to write the take-home examination.

Participation points require you to come to class prepared, that is, with the assigned readings done and brought with you to class. Read carefully and thoughtfully, thinking about observations you might share in class. Listen to classmates respectfully and with tolerance for different views. Be willing to share your ideas and questions. Try to be tuned in to appropriate timing. I prefer that you do not bring a laptop to class; however, if that is the way you wish to take notes, be sure that you are only using the laptop for notetaking. Cell phones must be put away.

REQUEST FOR ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION:

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation: 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. For more details see the [Student Guide](#).

Religious obligation: 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. For more details see the [Student Guide](#).

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your **Letter of Accommodation** at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (*if applicable*). **Requests made within two weeks will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.** After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website (www.carleton.ca/pmc) for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (*if applicable*).

Plagiarism

The University Senate defines plagiarism as “*presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.*” This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one's own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another's data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another's works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in "substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs."

Plagiarism is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly by the course's instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of "F" for the course. For more information please go to: <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>.

READING SCHEDULE

Sept. 7: Introduction

- Jeanette Armstrong (Okanagan), "History Lesson"
- Leanne Simpson (Anishinaabe), "Kwezens makes a lovely discovery"

Sept. 14: Stories I

- Basil Johnson (Ojibwa), "Is That All There Is? Tribal Literature"
- Jeanette Armstrong, "Land Speaking"
- Brian Maracle (Mohawk), "The First Words"
- Kahente Horn-Miller (Kanien'kéha), "Distortion and Healing: Finding Balance and a 'Good Mind' Through the Rearticulation of Sky Woman's Journey"

Sept. 21: Stories II

- Niigonwedom James Sinclair (Anishinaabe), "Trickster Reflections"
- Leanne Simpson, "Resurgence, wiindigo, and gezhizhwah"
- Simpson, "gezhizhwah"
- Richard Van Camp (Dogrib), "Why Ravens Smile to Little Old Ladies as They Walk By"
- Jennifer Kelly, excerpt from "Gasps, Snickers, Narrative Tricks, Deceptive Ideologies"
- Eden Robinson (Haisla/Heiltsuk), "1"

Sept. 28: Language

- Basil Johnson, "One Generation from Extinction"
- Tomson Highway (Cree), "Why Cree is the Sexiest of All Languages"
- Rita Joe (Mi'kmaq), "I Lost My Talk"
- Gregory Scofield (Métis), "Policy of the Dispossessed"
- Maria Campbell (Métis), "Jacob"
- Neal McCloud (Cree), selections from *Cree Narrative Memory*

- [optional reading: McCloud, *One Hundred Days of Cree* (available electronically through library) See pages on: "Place Names," "Kinship," "Cree Narrative Memory," "Star Wars," "Tim Hortons," "Buildings," "Funny Cree Expressions," "Songs to Kill a Wíhtikow," "Cree-English Slang," "Buffalo," "Literary Theory," "Giving Strength," "Guide to Cree Pronunciation"]

Oct. 5: Colonialism and Gender Violence

- Louise Bernice Halfe (Cree), *Blue Marrow*
- Gregory Scofield, "Ayahkwêw's Lodge," "How Many White People Noticed (and recounted the scene over dinner)"

Oct. 12: Sovereignty

- Pauline Johnson (Mohawk), "A Red Girl's Reasoning"
- Leanne Simpson, "nogojiwanong"

Oct. 19: Land, Spirituality, and Struggle

- Louise Erdrich (Anishinaabe), *Tracks*

Oct. 26: READING BREAK**Nov. 2: Land, Spirituality, and Struggle**

- *Tracks*

Nov. 9: Residential Schools I

- Tomson Highway (Cree), *Kiss of the Fur Queen*

Nov. 16: Residential Schools II

- *Kiss of the Fur Queen*
- Gerald Vizenor (Anishinaabe), from "Postindian Warriors"

Nov. 23: Residential Schools III

(Please note: this class takes place in 1811 Dunton Tower)

- Read assigned excerpts from the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada at <http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=890>
- David Garneau (Métis), "Imaginary Spaces of Conciliation and Reconciliation"
- Jeff Barnaby (Mi'kmaq), dir. *Rhymes for Young Ghouls* (feature film)

Nov. 30: Indigenous Gothic

- Eden Robinson, *Traplines* (read "Contact Sports")
- Scofield, "Conversation with the Poet Who Didn't Know My Aunty," *Measures of Astonishment* 207-226

Dec. 7: Indigenous Fantasy or "Wonderworks"

- Richard Van Camp, "On the Wings of This Prayer"
- Daniel Heath Justice (Cherokee), "Anders Awakening"

- Optional: Interview with Van Camp: <http://rabble.ca/blogs/bloggers/bound-not-gagged/2013/07/im-counting-on-myself-to-tell-truth-discussion-richard-van-c>
- Warren Cariou, "Tarhands: A Messy Manifesto," *imaginations* 3.2 (2012) [find via internet search]