

E/ETST 438: Native American Literature

Professor Leif Sorensen

Eddy 8

Office: Eddy Hall 327

Office Hours: In Person T 2-3:30 Virtual: Th 11:00-12:30 and by appointment

Fall 2021

Email: Leif.Sorensen@colostate.edu

T/R: 5:00-6:15

Course Description:

In this course we will study novels, non-fiction, poetry, and other texts created by Native American artists. The readings are arranged into three thematic units. The borders between these units are necessarily porous, meaning that a text from one unit might have a great deal to say about the topics of the other units as well. This design is intended to focus but not to place artificial limits on our conversations about each set of texts. Unit 1, Storytelling and Tradition, is designed to help us think about how Indigenous creators draw from a range of storytelling traditions in their works while also creating innovative modes suited to their moment. Unit 2, Land and Environment, centers on the way that Indigenous creators engage with place to anchor both political aesthetic projects that resist settler colonialism and ecological art that imagines forms of mutualistic interdependent relationships with a range of nonhuman relations. Unit 3, Kinship and Intimacy, explores how different artists model desire, belonging, and community in their works. Over the semester we will read excerpts from scholarship by major figures in Native American studies which will help us to connect our work in class to larger conversations in and beyond academia.

Note to students: the documents that we will be reading for this course contain descriptions of sexual activities, violence, drug use and other behaviors that may be offensive or disturbing to you. We will treat these representations as material worthy of serious and complex literary analysis. While we will certainly address the significance of representing transgressive social behavior in fiction, we will refrain from speculating about the morality of such behavior and from judging the texts based on our own moral or political convictions.

Important information for students: All students are expected and required to report any COVID-19 symptoms to the university immediately, as well as exposures or positive tests from a non-CSU testing location.

If you suspect you have symptoms, or if you know you have been exposed to a positive person or have tested positive for COVID, you are required to fill out the COVID Reporter (<https://covid.colostate.edu/reporter/>). If you know or believe you have been exposed, including living with someone known to be COVID positive, or are symptomatic, it is important for the health of yourself and others that you complete the online COVID Reporter. Do not ask your instructor to report for you. If you do not have internet access to fill out the online COVID-19 Reporter, please call (970) 491-4600. You may also report concerns in your academic or living spaces regarding COVID exposures through the COVID Reporter. You will not be penalized in any way for reporting. When you complete the COVID Reporter for any reason, the CSU Public Health office is notified. Once notified, that office will contact you and, depending upon each situation, will conduct contact tracing, initiate any necessary public health requirements and notify you if you need to take any steps.

For the latest information about the University's COVID resources and information, please visit the **CSU COVID-19 site**: <https://covid.colostate.edu/>.

Required Texts:

Christopher B. Teuton (Cherokee), *Cherokee Stories of the Turtle Island Liars' Club*

N. Scott Momaday (Kiowa), *The Way to Rainy Mountain*

Leslie Marmon Silko (Laguna Pueblo), *Ceremony*

Layli Long Soldier (Oglala Lakota), *Whereas*
Craig Santos Perez, (Chamorro), *Habitat Threshold*
Thomas King (Cherokee), *Green Grass, Running Water*
LeAnne Howe (Choctaw), *Shell Shaker*
Ella Cara Deloria (Yankton Dakota), *Waterlily*
Craig S. Womack (Oklahoma Creek-Cherokee), *Drowning in Fire*
Billy-Ray Belcourt (Driftpile Cree), *This Wound Is a World*
Natalie Diaz (Gila River Mojave), *Postcolonial Love Poem*
Additional materials on Canvas

Recommended Text:

The Red Nation, *The Red Deal: Indigenous Action to Save Our Earth*

Assignments:

3 Short Papers (25%)
Discussion Questions and Online Facilitation (10%)
8 Discussion Posts (25%)
Final Project Proposal (5%)
Final Project (25%)
Participation (10%)

Schedule of Classes and Readings (note: all readings listed on a day are the readings we will cover in that class session; to get the most out of each session and to prepare yourself to contribute to our discussions you should schedule your reading so that you are familiar with the materials in advance of the class session):

Aug 24: Introduction

Critical Orientation

Aug 26:

Sam McKegney, "Strategies for Ethical Engagement: An Open Letter Concerning Non-Native Scholars of Native Literatures" *Studies in American Indian Literature* 20.4 (Winter 2008): 56-67

Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, "Decolonization Is not a Metaphor" *Decolonization* 1.1 (2012): 1-40

Daniel Heath Justice, excerpt from *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2018), 1-32

Rebecca Roanhorse, "Welcome to Your Authentic Indian Experience" *Apex Magazine* (August 2017)

(All on Canvas)

Unit I: Storytelling and Tradition

Aug 31: Christopher Teuton, *Cherokee Stories of the Turtle Island Liars' Club* 1-131

Sept 2: Christopher Teuton, *Cherokee Stories of the Turtle Island Liars' Club* 133-250

Presentation of *Liars' Club* Discussion Questions

Sept 7: N. Scott Momaday, *The Way to Rainy Mountain* ix-40

Christopher Teuton, "Theorizing American Indian Literature: Applying Oral Concepts to Written Traditions" from Craig Womack et al, eds., *Reasoning Together: The Native Critics Collective* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008) 193-215 (pdf on Canvas)

***Liars' Club* Responses Due**

Sept 9: N. Scott Momaday, *The Way to Rainy Mountain* 41-88

Presentation of *Rainy Mountain* Discussion Questions

Sept 14: Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony* (1-153)

Rainy Mountain Responses Due

Sept 14: *Ceremony* (153-262)

Presentation of *Ceremony* Discussion Questions

Sept 21: Laila Long Soldier, *Whereas* (1-54)

Erika Wurth, "The Fourth Wave" *Waxwing Magazine* (link on Canvas)

Ceremony Responses Due

Sept 23: *Whereas* (55-101)

Presentation of *Whereas* Discussion Questions

Unit 2: Land and Environment

Sept 28: Dana Gilio-Whitaker excerpt from *As Long as Grass Grows* (on Canvas)

Robin Wall Kimmerer, "Learning the Language of Animacy" from *Braiding Sweetgrass* (on Canvas)

The Red Nation, *The Red Deal* Part III: Heal our Planet skim 1-19, read 20-44 (on Canvas or in recommended e-text)

Whereas Responses Due

Sept 30: LeAnne Howe, *Shell Shaker* 1-126

Unit 1 Short Paper Due

Oct 5: LeAnne Howe, *Shell Shaker* 127-227

Presentation of *Shell Shaker* Discussion Questions

Oct 7: Thomas King, *Green Grass, Running Water*, 1-124

Shell Shaker Responses Due

Oct 12: *Green Grass, Running Water*, 125-250

Oct 14: **No Class English Dept Reading Days**

Oct 19 *Green Grass, Running Water*, 251-361

Oct 21 *Green Grass, Running Water*, 362-469

Presentation of *Green Grass, Running Water* Discussion Questions

Oct 26 Craig Santos Perez, *Habitat Threshold* 1-45

Green Grass, Running Water Responses Due

Oct 28: *Habitat Threshold* 46-72

Presentation of *Habitat Threshold* Discussion Questions

Unit III: Kinship and Intimacy

11/2: Podcast: All My Relations "Love in the Time of Blood Quantum" (on Canvas)

Mark Rifkin, "The Erotics of Sovereignty" (on Canvas)

Scott Morgensen, "Settler Homonationalism" (on Canvas)

Habitat Threshold Responses Due

11/4 No Class: Work on Final Project Proposal
Unit 2 Short Paper Due

11/9 Ella Cara Deloria, *Waterlily* (Introduction and chapters 1-12, pages v-134)
Project Proposal Due

Nov 11: *Waterlily* 134-227
Presentation of *Waterlily* Discussion Questions

Nov 16: Craig Womack, *Drowning in Fire* (Chapters 1-7, pages 1-160)
***Waterlily* Responses Due**

Nov 18: *Drowning in Fire* (Chapters 8-12, pages 161-294)
Presentation of *Drowning in Fire* Discussion Questions

Nov 22-26: **Fall Break**

Nov 30: Natalie Diaz, *Postcolonial Love Poem*, 1-52
***Drowning in Fire* Responses Due**

Dec 2: *Postcolonial Love Poem*, 53-94

Dec 7: Billy-Rae Belcourt, *This Wound Is a World* 1-57

Dec 9: Conclusion
Unit III Short Paper Due

12/15: Final Project Due by 5:00 PM

Academic Policies

Grading Philosophy: This course asks you to write in a range of different styles and for different purposes. In all cases I will be grading your work on its clarity, organization, analytic insight, and originality. I take everything from the sophistication of your ideas to your use of correct grammar into account when assigning a grade.

Due Dates: All assignments are to be submitted to the appropriate Canvas portal by midnight on the date that they are due. **Late work will receive a 1/3 of a grade penalty for each 24-hour period that it is late beginning at 12:01 AM. (For example an assignment due at Midnight on Tuesday that is turned in on Thursday at 8 AM would receive 2 deductions).** Extensions may be arranged as long as you contact me in advance of the deadline; if you suspect that you may need an extension or notice a conflict with a University approved event contact me as soon as possible.

Discussion Questions and Online Facilitation: You will sign up to write discussion questions and present them to the class once during the semester. Barring the most extreme circumstances, missing a class meeting when you are scheduled to present your question will lead to a failing grade for the assignment.

Materials Covered: All students are responsible for material covered from the first day of class.

Expectations Outside of Class: You should expect to spend between 2 and 3 hours of work for each hour of our class meetings. That work includes keeping up with reading, writing Canvas responses, meeting with me in office hours, and working on the short papers for each unit. That being said, some weeks will be lighter than others while others will be more demanding. If you are having difficulties managing the workload for the class please contact me as soon as possible to discuss strategies and methods for keeping up with the course.

Participation: Discussion in class and on Canvas will be a crucial part of the interpretive work that we will be doing during the semester; excessive absences or disengagement from virtual discussions will affect your performance and your grade will fall accordingly.

Grading: Your final grades will be computed according to CSU's 4 point scale in which A/A+ = 4.0; A- = 3.667; B+ = 3.334; B = 3.00; B- = 2.667; C+ = 2.334; C = 2.00; D = 1.00; F = 0.00.

Academic Honesty: This course will adhere to the Academic Integrity Policy of the Colorado State University [General Catalog](#) and the [Student Conduct Code](#). Plagiarism is a serious offense. It occurs when one passes off as one's work the ideas or words of someone else. This can happen whether the ideas or words come from the internet, a printed source (books, journals, magazines, etc.), a spoken source (such as class lecture and discussion), or another student's paper (whether bought, borrowed, or stolen). You are plagiarizing whether the ideas or words that you take are substantial and multiple, or merely bits and pieces you believe to be unimportant. Since responsibility for one's own intellectual work, and the respect for one another's, is the very foundation of a university community, I take plagiarism very seriously. I am aware of just how many papers are on the web and I am vigilant about detecting internet plagiarism. Plagiarism is grounds for failing the course. We will discuss correct techniques for attribution to avoid any unintentional plagiarism. If you ever have any question if you are plagiarizing or not, please come see me. All assignments are to be completed with original work for this class. If you have any questions about adapting work from other classes for the demands of this course consult with me in advance.

Accommodations/Accessibility: Any student who is enrolled at CSU, and who self-identifies with SDC as having a disability, is eligible for support from SDC. Specific accommodations are determined individually for each student and must be supported by appropriate documentation and/or evaluation of

needs consistent with a particular type of disability. SDC reserves the right to ask for any appropriate documentation of disability in order to determine a student's eligibility for accommodations as well as in support for specific accommodative requests. The accommodative process begins once a student meets with an accommodation's specialist in the SDC.

If you are a student who will need accommodations in this class, please make an appointment to see me to discuss your individual needs. Any accommodation must be discussed in a timely manner prior to implementation. A verifying memo from Resources for Disabled Students may be required before any accommodation is provided.

Assignments:

Short Essays: **Three short essays are required for the course (one for each unit).** A schedule with instructions, grading criteria, and a sample short essay are available on the Course Information page on Canvas. The essays are required to show careful analysis of a question developed by the student that discusses one or more texts from the unit. You must explore your question using properly cited textual evidence. The essays should be around 500-750 words (roughly 2-3 pages) in length. Papers that are too short or too long will be returned for revision.

Discussion Questions and Online Facilitation: At the beginning of the semester, students will sign up to collaborate with a group of peers to develop a set of discussion questions on a particular text. The question writers for each week will meet with one another and the instructor to discuss possible topics and develop a set of three or four questions (one for each question writer) to post on Canvas and present to the class on our last day discussing the text. Each question author is responsible for keeping track of student responses on Canvas as they come in and for replying to those responses. The author might reply once to several responses, in which case the response should be longer, or reply individually in which case the responses will be shorter. Your grade will be determined as follows: participation in planning session (30 points), completion and presentation of question (30 points), online facilitation (40 points).

Discussion Posts: All students will complete 8 Canvas discussion posts in response to a question posed by the discussion questions for the text. After the question authors present their questions to the class students will sign up to respond to a particular question. The response of between 200 and 300 words is due before the next class meeting. These responses do not need to include close readings of passages from the text but they should make clear connections between the question and the text. For more detail see the Guidelines for Substantive Discussion Posts on Canvas. The responses will be graded based on the following criteria: addresses the question effectively (25 points), makes concrete references to the text under discussion (25 points), makes appropriate use of lecture, class discussions, and other readings (25 points), detailed and effective textual analysis (15 points); clarity (10 points).

Final Project Proposal: A brief (300-500 word) abstract that proposes a topic for your final project is due on 11/9. You must complete this assignment to proceed with your final project. All proposals for alternatives to a literary research project require instructor approval in advance of submitting the proposal. The proposal is a credit/no-credit assignment.

Final Project: The final project will be a sustained research project that will run between 8 and 10 pages in length. Students are required to submit the proposal and are encouraged to discuss their projects with me as well. The project could take the form of a more involved reading of one of the texts we have covered, or of a further exploration of an idea or topic that we have taken up in the course in works that may not be among the course requirements. You will be expected to situate your argument in a critical context and to show how your ideas add to existing interpretations of the work/ideas you choose to address. Creative and non-traditional projects are welcome. The grade for the project will be determined by how effectively it fulfills the goals you set in the proposal.

University Policies and Resources

Safety, Reporting and Resources: Recently the English Department recommended that faculty increase the visibility of our policies on Title IX reporting and student resources. I am happy to share them here and encourage you to talk with me about any experiences that I might be able to help you find resources for. Here is the official language that CSU has adopted:

All CSU employees, including student employees, and volunteers are designated as Responsible Employees and are required to report any information related to incidents of sex-based discrimination, harassment, interpersonal violence, and/or retaliation disclosed to them by a student or about a student, to the Office of Title IX Programs by calling (970) 491-1715.

Please see the most recent language at the Title IX website: <https://titleix.colostate.edu>
Colorado State University is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming educational and working environment for everyone where sexual misconduct, sexual assault, gender discrimination, and gender-based violence within the CSU community is not tolerated and is promptly addressed.

Any student who may be the victim of sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, relationship violence, stalking or retaliation is encouraged to report to CSU through one or more of the following resources:

- Emergency Response 911
- Deputy Title IX Coordinator/Office of Support and Safety Assessment (970) 491-1350
- Colorado State University Police Department (non-emergency) (970) 491-6425

For counseling support and assistance, please see the CSU Health Network, which includes a variety of counseling services that can be accessed at: <http://www.health.colostate.edu/>.

The Sexual Assault Victim Assistance Team is a confidential student resource that does not have a reporting requirement. You can contact an advocate by calling the VAT Hotline: 970-492-4242 which is available 24/7, 365 days a year. You can also drop in or make an in person appointment at their office in 112 Student Services.

Undocumented Student Support

Any CSU student who faces challenges or hardships due to their legal status in the United States and believes that it may impact their academic performance in this course is encouraged to visit [Student Support Services for Undocumented, DACA & ASSET](#) for resources and support. Additionally, only if you feel comfortable, please notify your professor so they may pass along any additional resources they may possess.

Food Insecurity

Any CSU student who is experiencing food insecurity can receive support from the Rams Against Hunger program. Services include a food pantry, a meal-swipe program, pocket pantries, and in-person assistance with navigating federal aid eligibility. The [RAH page](#) includes numerous resources as well as county, state and federal programs which are described and linked.

Student Case Management

[Student case management](#) is available to help students with extenuating life circumstances and connect them with resources. In some cases, after you and I discuss your situation, I may request [verifiable documentation for class absences](#) from the SCM office if you request considerations for absences or missed coursework.

Mental Health and Wellness

Your student fees provide access to a wide range of support services. To consult with a trained professional through the CSU Health Network, call Counseling Services at (970) 491-6053, and they will work together with you to find out which services are right for you.

Visit <https://health.colostate.edu/about-counseling-services> to learn more and <https://health.colostate.edu/mental-health-resources/> for additional student mental health and well-being resources. An extensive set of mental health resources is available to CSU students:

<https://health.colostate.edu/mental-health-resources/>

If you are concerned about a friend or peer, use **Tell Someone** by calling (970) 491-1350 or visiting <https://supportandsafety.colostate.edu/tell-someone/> to share your concerns with a professional who can discreetly connect the distressed individual with the proper resources. Rams Take Care of Rams. Reach out and ask for help if you or someone you know is having a difficult time.

Religious Observances

CSU does not discriminate on the basis of religion. Reasonable accommodation should be made to allow individuals to observe their established religious holidays.

Please see [CSU's Religious Observances Calendar](#).

Students seeking an exemption from attending class or completing assigned course work for a religious holiday will need to fill out [the Religious Accommodation Request Form](#) and turn it in to the Division of Student Affairs, located on the second level of the Administration building.

Once turned in, the Division of Student Affairs will review the request and contact the student accordingly. If approved, the student will receive a memo from the Dean of Students to give to their professor or course instructor.

Students are asked to turn in the request forms as soon as the conflict is noticed. Similarly, unanticipated conflicts requiring a religious observance, such as a death in the family, can also be reviewed.