ENGLISH 494A (5801): NATIVE AMERICAN LITERATURE
SYLLABUS

University of Nevada, Reno
Wintermester 2014 (3 cr.)
MTWR 9:00am – 1:00pm, FH107
Instructor: Kyle Bladow
Email: kbladow@unr.edu
Office: FH 024

Course Description: What is American Indian literature? Who are its major figures? How does American Indian literature intersect with other kinds of American literature and art? These are some of the questions posed by this course. Considering a variety of Native writers from different tribal nations, we will engage in enriching conversations as we cultivate a deeper understanding of America’s literary diversity. Our extended meeting time grants us space for a suite of activities, and we will depend on each other in order to maximize the learning experiences. Complementing our literary study, we will bolster our understanding of the texts by examining both historical and political contexts surrounding them as well as our assumptions and actions as scholars. Throughout the course, students will:

• critically examine ways in which American Indian oral and written traditions operate in various literary and cultural contexts;
• develop a vocabulary of key terms enabling them to better explore Native literature;
• explore the works of several major writers within contemporary American Indian literature;
• consider critical theory Native literary theories and arguments about canon and disciplinary formation;
• cultivate their critical writing and thinking skills by analyzing and responding to texts.

From the UNR Bulletin: Contemporary and traditional Native American literature. Emphasis on relationships between oral and written traditions. Different regional focus each semester. (Diversity course.) (Formerly ENG494/694; implemented Fall 2005).

Required Texts/Materials:

• Ceremony by Leslie Marmon Silko (ISBN: 0140086838)
• The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven by Sherman Alexie (ISBN: 0802141676)
• The Round House by Louise Erdrich (ISBN: 0062065254)
• Walking with Ghosts by Qwo-li Driskill (ISBN: 1844711137)
• Additional Course Readings posted in WebCampus

Course Activities and Requirements:

• Reading Responses (25%) – Reading responses serve as extensions to in-class discussion, as further writing practice, and as preparation for other assignments. You will complete six responses to assigned readings, 650-750 words each. There are nine opportunities to submit reading responses; you may skip any three you like (suggestion: skip the days when you’re leading discussion and presenting your author report). For each response, include:
- a brief (a few sentence or two) summary of the main argument of the text, the author’s purpose or major themes;
- a personal response or free-write about your reading experience, and any connections you see with other readings;
- supporting your observations with a close reading of a passage/textual evidence, using MLA format and providing a Works Cited;
- directions in which critics or scholars might take this text;
- questions you had while reading, potential discussion questions.

Reading responses are graded on a five-point scale:
5 points = strong work; accurate citation; insightful and illuminating ideas; every component of the assignment has been completed; you teach us something new about the text(s).
4 points = good work; there may be a mistake or two in the bibliographic citation; fine start on ideas but could use more development; some component of the assignment seems a bit weak.
3 points = satisfactory work; some noticeable mistakes; seems like response was written without much reflection; hazy grasp of the text(s), its arguments and components; not all aspects of assignment are addressed in a satisfactory manner.
2 points = weak work; major mistakes in citation or absent altogether; poor understanding of text(s) and its significance; assignment incomplete.

- **Participation and Leading Discussion (10%)** – Participation involves coming to class prepared and contributing constructively to discussion. To help keep discussions lively, each student will also serve a turn as a leader for getting us started. When it is your turn, spend extra time with the text(s) assigned, selecting important passages and looking for secondary criticism, book reviews, and other materials that might lend further insight. For the class meeting, you’re invited to prepare a handout, devise a group activity, share a video clip, etc.; at minimum, all leaders must prepare three discussion questions. During the discussion, the leader should guide the class through summarizing the text, at some point turning to the questions. You’re invited to meet with me as you prepare to lead discussion.

- **Author Report (10%)** – Each student will sign up to deliver a report on a Native American author not covered in our primary readings. For your report, you should prepare a simple presentation (5-10 minutes) presenting the author’s background, major works, and connection to course themes. Simple here does not mean cobbling together a few random facts from one Google search; look for information that complements our discussions and illuminates your chosen author. Handouts, slides, and other media welcome.

- **Service Learning Project at Pyramid Lake Museum (20%)** – On Wednesday, January 8th, we will head to the Pyramid Lake museum in Nixon to visit with Paiute elder Ralph Burns and to partake in a service-learning project. To receive credit for this activity, you need to participate in this trip and complete a brief reflective essay (600 words minimum).

- **Final Project (25%)** – (1500-3000 words, excluding Works Cited) paper to be developed throughout the term. We will meet in conferences to develop your final project.

- **Final Presentation (10%)** – A brief presentation to the class on your final project. You’re invited to use multimedia, handouts, or class activities.
Grading Scale:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>D</td>
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<td>D-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>0-59</td>
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Attendance & Participation Policy: Student attendance and participation is crucial to success in this course, given that the majority of class time consists of discussions of texts, workshops, and other group activities. Thus, students are allowed one absence without penalty. Additional absences may result in a lowered grade or failure in the course. You are further expected to arrive on time for all class meetings; persistent tardiness may result in your being counted absent.

Late Work: In general, late work will not be accepted. If you believe you have an extenuating circumstance, contact me as soon as possible.

Classroom Etiquette: Consider your enrollment in this course as your entry into a community of learners in which we strive to be more cooperative than competitive. Courteous disagreement in discussion and construction criticism on assignments is welcome, but inappropriate remarks and personal attacks will not be tolerated. During class, please keep all cell phones silent and refrain from using them (texting distracts everyone!) All other electronics should be kept off and stored away unless you have my permission to use them.

Academic Honesty: All work you submit must be your own and written during the course. According to UNR policies, plagiarism involves using the words, work, or thoughts of another without properly crediting her or him. Plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty (e.g., willingly allowing someone to plagiarize you) will not be tolerated and may result in failure of the course with an “F” on your transcript. Unintentional plagiarism is still plagiarism—if you are unsure about citing a source, see me! For more information, please visit:

http://www.unr.edu/student-conduct/policies/university-policies-and-guidelines/academic-standards/policy

Videotaping: Surreptitious or covert videotaping of class or unauthorized audio recording of class is prohibited by law and by Board of Regents policy. This class may be videotaped or audio recorded only with the written permission of the instructor. In order to accommodate students with disabilities, some students may have been given permission to record class lectures and discussions. Therefore, students should understand that their comments during class may be recorded.

Accommodations: UNR is committed to equal access and is in full compliance with the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act). If you need any accommodations, please see me or contact the Disability Resource Center (Thompson Building, Suite 100) as soon as possible.
# English 494A: Native American Literature

**Instructor:** Kyle Bladow

## Course Schedule (tentative)

*Available on WebCampus*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Work Due Today</th>
<th>Readings for Next Class</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>M 12/30</td>
<td>Course Introduction</td>
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<td>Parker, Invention, Preface* and Ch. 1*</td>
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<tr>
<td>T 12/31</td>
<td>Oral Tradition(s)</td>
<td>Reading Response 1</td>
<td>Silko, Ceremony, 1-262</td>
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<tr>
<td>W 1/1</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
<td>HAPPY NEW YEAR</td>
<td>Treuer, “How to Hate/Love an Indian” and “The Myth of Myth” (109-152)</td>
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<td>R 1/2</td>
<td>Silko and Ceremony</td>
<td>Reading Response 2</td>
<td>Alexie, Lone Ranger &amp; Tonto Fistfight in Heaven</td>
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<td><strong>Week 2</strong></td>
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<td>Native Critics Collective, Reasoning Together*</td>
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<td>M 1/6</td>
<td>Lone Ranger &amp; Tonto</td>
<td>Reading Response 3</td>
<td>Treuer, “Indian/Not Indian Literature,” 159-193</td>
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<td>T 1/7</td>
<td>Ortiz and literary nationalisms</td>
<td>Reading Response 4</td>
<td>Ortiz, American Indian Literary Nationalisms*</td>
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<td>W 1/8</td>
<td>PYRAMID LAKE MUSEUM VISIT</td>
<td>Reading Response 5</td>
<td>Ortiz, Woven Stone* and To Change*</td>
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<td><strong>Week 3</strong></td>
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<td>M 1/13</td>
<td>Louise Erdrich</td>
<td>Reading Response 7</td>
<td>Driskill, Walking with Ghosts</td>
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<td>T 1/14</td>
<td>Expanding the canon</td>
<td>Reading Response 8</td>
<td>Womack, “The King of the Tie-snakes”*</td>
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<td>W 1/15</td>
<td>Research and repatriation</td>
<td>Reading Response 9</td>
<td>Vizenor, Ishi &amp; The Wood Ducks*</td>
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<td>R 1/16</td>
<td>Final project presentations</td>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>Harry, “One of the Greatest Challenges”*</td>
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<td>Evaluations</td>
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<td>Treuer, “Some Final Thoughts,” 195-203</td>
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<td>Closing Remarks</td>
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### Some Key Terms

- All My Relations
- American Indian Movement (AIM)
- Authenticity
- Boarding Schools
- Dawes/General Allotment Act (1887)
- Ecological Indian
- Ghost Dance
- Hybridity
- Indian Reorganization Act (1934)
- Indigeneity
- NAGPRA Act (1990)
- Neocolonialism
- Oral Tradition
- Pantribalism
- Resurgence
- Settler Colonialism
- Sovereignty
- Trickster
- Two-spirit
- Vanishing Indian
- White Shamanism
- Neocolonialism
- Vanishing Indian
- White Shamanism