

AMERICAN

INDIAN

LITERARY

MODERNISM



Spring 2006

10:00-10:50 a.m. MWF ■ 4057 Wescoe Hall

Class # 53995

Instructor: Dr. Steve Evans

Office: 1090 Wescoe Hall ■ Office Hours: 8:00-9:00 a.m. M-F, and By Appointment

Office: 785/864-2604 ■ Home: 785/842-5595 ■ E-mail: <write-on@ku.edu>

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Trickster

Oil and mixed media on wood panel

41" tall x 37" wide

Artist: Rebecca Haines

www.westsouthwest.com

Image courtesy the artist.

COURSE DESCRIPTION ■

The title of the course suggests a number of questions that we will consider during the semester. For example, by what characteristics and within what conceptual framework can one define “American Indian literature”? Is it possible, even proper, to attempt to place this diverse body of texts within the “traditional” scheme of American literature? What features of written Indian texts mark them as *literary*, and by whose standards? Perhaps more perplexing, what makes these texts *modern*? Put another way, how does the work of authors such as N. Scott Momaday, Leslie Marmon Silko, and Louise Erdrich compare to the literature now being produced by writers like Sherman Alexie and Luci Tapahonso? Paula Gunn Allen has termed this latter group “the third wave of Native writers”—that is, authors who are “more concerned with articulating contemporary Native experience as it is lived than with busting stereotypes or creating ‘authenticity,’ which were the directives of earlier writings.”

Indeed, the term *American Indian* itself is suggestive of the conflicted nature of modern Indian experience: Can a person be both *American* and *Indian* at once? We will see how certain characters embrace or resist the pull of assimilation into mainstream America, while others strive fervently to maintain tribal traditions and heritage; how questions of identity, or “essence,” are complicated by interrelated notions of blood, culture, and race; how, for many contemporary American Indian writers, the past is inseparable from the present—both literally and literarily. Their variety and differences aside, the works we will study nonetheless comprise a body of literature meant to sustain, in Gerald Vizenor’s fine phrase, “postindian warriors of *survivance*” (emphasis added)—a term that conflates notions of *survival* and *endurance*.

Prerequisite: Completion of English 101 and 102 or their equivalents.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS ■

Alexie, Sherman. *Ten Little Indians: Stories*. New York: Grove Press, 2004.
Department of English, The University of Kansas. *Composition & Literature 2005-2006*. [CAL] *
Erdrich, Louise. *Tracks: A Novel*. New York: HarperPerennial, 2004.
King, Thomas. *Truth & Bright Water*. New York: Grove Press, 2002.
Lunsford, Andrea A. *The Everyday Writer*. 3rd ed. Boston: Bedford / St. Martin’s, 2005. [EW] *
Momaday, N. Scott. *The Man Made of Words: Essays, Stories, Passages*. New York: St. Martin’s Griffin, 1997.
Rosen, Kenneth, ed. *The Man to Send Rain Clouds: Contemporary Stories by American Indians*. New York: Penguin, 1992.
Tapahonso, Luci. *Blue Horses Rush In: Poems and Stories*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1997.

* *CAL* (current edition) and *EW* are required texts for students in all 100- and 200-level English courses. Students are encouraged to retain these texts for use throughout their college careers (and beyond).

An active KU (ku.edu) e-mail account (necessary for Course Distribution List mailings).

Recommended

Griffith, Kelley. *Writing Essays About Literature: A Guide and Style Sheet*. 7th ed. Boston: Thomson Heinle, 2005. **Note:** Any edition of Griffith’s book is acceptable.

A pocket-style folder to contain handouts and course materials.

REQUIRED WORK AND GRADING SYSTEM ■

In order to pass the course a student must complete all major assignments, meet attendance and participation requirements (see under Policies, below), and take the Final Exam. Grades are calculated on an 11-point scale, ranging from 0 points for an *F* to 11 points for an *A*. Evidence of improvement will be considered in determining the student’s grade for the course. Distribution of course requirements is as follows:

Daily Grade (10%)

Based on attendance; class participation; quizzes; and incidental writing assignments. Extra credit opportunities will be available in the form of brief reports or class handouts;

Essays (60%)

Students will write three papers, each worth 20% of the course grade. One of the first two essays may be revised for a higher grade.

Final Exam (30%)

The Final Exam will consist of two parts: (1) *Objective*—which may include definition of terms; matching and identification based on the texts; and brief responses to passages from the readings; (2) *Formal Essay*—a response of about five pages asking students to evaluate one or more texts in terms of major themes of the course. **Note:** The structure and content of the Final Exam is subject to change at the Instructor's discretion; students will know well in advance the exact nature of the exam.

ANNOUNCEMENTS ■

Continued enrollment in the course signifies a student's understanding and acceptance of policies, rules, and regulations set forth in this and other documents relative to the course.

The Office of Disability Resources—22 Strong Hall, 785/864-2620 (v/tty)—coordinates accommodations and services for students in KU courses. If you have a disability for which you may request accommodation and have not yet contacted ODR, please do so as soon as possible (<<http://www.disability.ku.edu>>). Also see the Instructor privately with regard to this course.

Promptness: Students are expected to arrive at class on time. Except for a good reason, arriving later than five minutes will be considered an absence (see Attendance, under Policies, below). On the rare occasion when you must arrive late, please take your seat as quietly as possible. If you cannot make class on time regularly, please find a course that better fits your schedule.

Classroom Atmosphere: For our classroom to succeed as a learning environment, everyone must maintain the highest standards of behavior, including respect for and tolerance of others and their opinions and ideas. Try always, therefore, to maintain a spirit of intellectual flexibility. For obvious reasons, electronic communication devices must be turned off during class. Beverages, but not food, are acceptable in our room; please remember to use waste containers before you leave.

Contacting the Instructor: The Instructor asks that students use e-mail or home telephone—rather than office voice-mail—preferably before 9:00 p.m. Avoid using e-mail to explain an absence; instead, discuss the matter in person with the Instructor. **Note:** The Instructor cannot discuss student matters with parents. The proper way for a student or parent to explain a serious illness or emergency situation affecting the student's attendance or performance is through services provided by the Academic Achievement and Access Center (22 Strong Hall; 785/864-4064; <<http://www.achievement.ku.edu>>). AAAC will furnish an official letter of explanation to each of the student's instructors.

Writing Help: For additional help with writing I strongly encourage students to contact KU's writing centers, called Writer's Roosts. At a Writer's Roost you can talk about your writing with trained tutors or consult reference materials in a comfortable working environment. You may ask for feedback on your papers, advice and tips on writing (for all your courses), or for guidance on special writing tasks. Please check the website at <<http://www.ukans.edu/~writing>> for current locations and hours. The Writing Center welcomes both drop-ins and appointments, and there is no charge for their services. For more information, call 864-2399 or send an e-mail to writing@ku.edu. The website is loaded with helpful information about writing of all sorts, so even if you consider yourself already a good writer, check it out!

Website: The Instructor's website (see p. 1) is intended to provide students with access to important course materials. Students are responsible for downloading, printing, and bringing to class certain materials for discussion. **Note:** Materials developed by the Instructor (as well as work by other authors) are copyrighted intellectual property and must be cited appropriately in papers.

Always save your work both to disk and your computer's hard drive. For your protection, keep a hard copy of out-of-class assignments as well.

Make it a practice to check your e-mail at least twice daily. Also, please send a brief note of reply to acknowledge receipt of a *personal* message (not Course Distribution List mail) from the Instructor.

POLICIES ■

The Department of English reserves the right to terminate administratively the enrollment of any student who misses two consecutive class meetings during the first two weeks of the semester. Should an emergency situation cause the student to miss two consecutive class meetings, the student should contact the Instructor or the Department of English (864-4520) immediately. Students are expected to submit promptly requests to drop should they decide to disenroll from English classes. (See the Drop Policy at the end of this section.)

Course materials prepared by the Instructor, together with the content of all lectures and review sessions presented by the Instructor are the property of the Instructor. Video or audio recording of lectures and review sessions without the consent of the Instructor is prohibited. On request, the Instructor usually will grant permission for students to audio tape lectures, on the condition that these audio tapes are used only as a study aid by the individual making the recording. Unless explicit permission is obtained from the Instructor, recordings of lectures and review sessions may not be modified and must not be transferred or transmitted to any other person, whether or not that individual is enrolled in the course.

Incompletes: A grade of *I* (Incomplete) will be given only under extraordinary circumstances.

Attendance: Students will be allowed three unexcused absences. *With the fourth unexcused absence, the student's grade for the course will be lowered one full letter.* If a student incurs five or more unexcused absences, the Instructor may ask the student to withdraw or retake the course at another time. (Allowances will be made, of course, for unavoidable absences due to illness, conflicting University obligations, and other valid reasons.) Active participation in the course—in terms of *attendance, clear interest in learning the material, and class participation*—is mandatory in order for a student to earn a passing grade.

Work in Acceptable Form: All essays must be word processed or typed in proper MLA form. **Note:** Papers may be penalized as much as one full letter grade for problems of form (vague title; improper handling of quotations; inaccurate Works Cited page entries; and the like). The Instructor may refuse to accept work that does not meet these criteria.

Late Work: Work is due at the start of the class period for which it is assigned. Plan carefully, therefore, in order to avoid last-minute computer or printer problems. Take late work to the Instructor's mailbox in 3114 Wescoe Hall; after 5:00 p.m., place it in the adjacent mail slot. The Instructor is not responsible for work that is shoved under his office door or delivered in any way other than in person or to his mailbox.

Assignments sent by e-mail are acceptable only in unusual circumstances (illness, for example), and only with the Instructor's permission.

Note: Work that is turned in late (unexcused) may be penalized as much as one letter grade for each *day—not class period*—that it is late.

Plagiarism: Stealing and passing off as your own someone else's ideas or words, or using information from another's work without crediting the source, is called *plagiarism*. Some specific examples of actions that constitute plagiarism include pasting together uncredited information from the Internet or published sources; submitting an entire paper—or part of one—written by someone else; submitting a paper written for another class (and thus not original work); and copying another student's work (even with the student's permission). In order to avoid unintentional plagiarism and to represent your work honestly, you will need to be meticulous about giving credit to any and all sources, whether directly quoted (even a few words) or paraphrased.

Because one of the goals of this course is to help you to improve your writing; plagiarism hurts you as much as it does anyone. If you plagiarize another's work you will not be receiving the feedback necessary for improving your own writing. There will be a zero tolerance policy for any type of plagiarism in this class. All incidents of plagiarism will be penalized, reported, and kept on file at the Department of English and College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Drop Policy: If you are having trouble succeeding in the course, it is especially important that you consult with me so that we can develop a plan of action that may enable you to complete the course. If you decide to drop this class, please refer to this website: <<http://www.registrar.ku.edu/timetable/052adddrop.shtml>>.

RESOURCES ■

Students are encouraged to extend their engagement with the primary texts through the use of additional resources available at Watson Library and online sites. The number of websites pertaining to American Indian literature continues to proliferate, but only certain of them are academically sound and worthy of use in research. Judge the quality of any Internet source carefully. If you do make use of an online source, be certain to cite it properly (consult the MLA section of *EW* and the Instructor).

Among the best sources of information pertaining to American Indian literatures are the following journals (Watson Library Periodicals): *American Indian Quarterly* [E75/.A547]; *Indigenous Nations Studies Journal* [GN/380/.I528]; *Western American Literature* [PS/271/.W46]. Many journals are available electronically and allow you to download articles by logging on with your KU ID. E-Reserve password: **engl203** (lower-case letters, no spaces).

The following scholarly works are available for one-day checkout from Watson Library Reserve. Entries are given in proper MLA form (except for single spacing) and are followed by library call numbers, which you will omit from your Works Cited page, of course. Bibliographical information for works located on E-Reserve are given there.

- Bordewich, Fergus M. *Killing the White Man's Indian: Reinventing Native Americans at the End of the Twentieth Century*. New York: Doubleday, 1996. [E99/.T77/B67/1996]
- Evans, Stephen F. "Indigenous Liaisons: Sex-Gender Variability, Indianness, and Intimacy in Sherman Alexie's *The Toughest Indian in the World*." *Sherman Alexie: A Collection of Critical Essays*. Ed. Jeffrey Berglund and Jan Roush. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2005. [Forthcoming]
- . "'Open Containers': Sherman Alexie's Drunken Indians." *American Indian Quarterly* 25.1 (Winter 2001): 46-72.
- Evers, Lawrence J. "The Killing of a New Mexican State Trooper: Ways of Telling an Historical Event." [In Wiget, *Critical Essays* (246-61) and on E-Reserve]
- Deloria, Philip. *Playing Indian*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998. [E98/.P99/D45/1998]
- Fitz, Brewster E. "Undermining Narrative Stereotypes in Simon Ortiz's 'The Killing of a State Cop.'" *MELUS* 28.2 (2003): 105-20. [E-Reserve]
- Fixico, Donald L. *The Urban Indian Experience in America*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000. [E98/.U72/F57/2000]

- Harjo, Joy. *The Spiral of Memory: Interviews*. Ed. Laura Coltelli. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996. [PS/3558/.A62423/Z466/1996]
- Hirsch, Bernard A. "'Stay Calm, Be Brave, Wait for the Signs': Sign-Offs and Send-Ups in the Fiction of Thomas King." *Western American Literature* 39.2 (2004): 145-75.
- . "'The Telling Which Continues': Oral Tradition and the Written Word in Leslie Marmon Silko's Storyteller." *American Indian Quarterly* 12:1 (Winter 1988): 1-25. [E-Reserve]
- Hoilman, Dennis. "The Ethnic Imagination: A Case History." *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 5.2 (1985): 167-75. [E-Reserve]
- Hogan, Linda. "Aunt Moon's Young Man." *Talking Leaves: Contemporary Native American Short Stories*. Ed. Greg Lesley. New York: Dell, 1991. Rpt. in *Nothing But the Truth: An Anthology of Native American Literature*. Ed. John L. Purdy and James Ruppert. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2001. 266-81. [E-Reserve]
- Huhndorf, Shari M. *Going Native: Indians in the American Cultural Imagination*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001. [E981/.P99/H85/2001]
- Johnston, Basil. *The Manitou: The Spiritual World of the Ojibway*. New York: HarperCollins, 1995. [E99/.C6/J636/1995]
- . *Ojibway Heritage*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1976. [PM/854/.Z95/E5/1976]
- McCoy, Ron. "'I Have a Mysterious Way': Kiowa Shield Designs and Origin Stories Collected by James Mooney, 1891-1906." *American Indian Art Magazine* 29.1 (2003): 64-75. [E-Reserve]
- Mihesuah, Devon A. *American Indians: Stereotypes and Realities*. 1996. Rpt. Atlanta: Clarity Press, 1996 [E98/.P99/M54/1996]
- , ed. *Natives and Academics: Researching and Writing about American Indians*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998. [E76/.8/.N32/1998]
- Owens, Louis. *Mixedblood Messages: Literature, Film, Family, Place*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998. [E98/.M63/09/1998]
- Silko, Leslie Marmon. "Language and Literature from a Pueblo Perspective." *Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit: Essays on Native American Life Today*. By Silko. 1996. Rpt. in *Nothing But the Truth: An Anthology of Native American Literature*. Ed. John L. Purdy and James Ruppert. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2001. 159-65. [E-Reserve]
- Silko, Leslie Marmon. "Rain." [E-Reserve]
- Weaver, Jace. *That the People Might Live: Native American Literatures and Native American Community*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997. [PM/157/.W43/1997]
- Wiget, Andrew. *Critical Essays on Native American Literature*. Boston: G. K. Hall, 1985. [PM/156/.C75/1985]
- , ed. *Handbook of Native American Literature*. New York: Garland, 1994. [PM/155/.D53/1996]
- Womack, Craig S. *Red on Red: Native American Literary Separatism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996. [PS/153/.I52/W66/1996]

SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS ■

The following schedule is tentative and subject to change as the course unfolds. Always bring this Course Guide and assigned texts to class. Read the literature carefully for *detail* and be prepared for a quiz or impromptu in-class writing on any given day. **Note:** Students are responsible for printing and bringing to class certain Study Materials posted on the course website and E-Reserve. The password for E-Reserve is **eng1203** (lower-case letters, no spaces).

MSRC = The Man to Send Rain Clouds

Week 1

F 20 Jan Introduction to the course.

Week 2

M 23 Film: *Last Stand at Little Bighorn*
W 25 N. Scott Momaday: *The Man Made of Words* (“Part One: The Man Made of Words”)
F 27 *The Man Made of Words* (“Part One” continued)

Week 3

M 30 Film: *Native American Novelists 1: N. Scott Momaday*
W 1 Feb *The Man Made of Words* (“Part Two: Essays in Place”)
F 3 *The Man Made of Words* (“Part Three: The Storyteller and His Art”)

Week 4

M 6 Guest Lecturer: Professor Bud Hirsch, “American Indian Oral Tradition and Storytelling”
W 8 “Proper Paper Presentation” (course website); “Paper Revision Checklist” (course website)
F 10 Topic: Language and Literature for Pueblo Authors; Silko: “Rain” (E-Reserve); Robert Nelson: “A Laguna Woman” (course website)

Week 5

M 13 **Essay 1 due at start of class**; reading TBA
W 15 Leslie Marmon Silko: “The Man to Send Rainclouds” (*MSRC*)
F 17 Simon Ortiz: “The Killing of a State Cop” (*MSRC*)

Week 6

M 20 Leslie Marmon Silko: “Tony’s Story” (*MSRC*)
W 22 Lawrence J. Evers: “The Killing of a New Mexican State Trooper: Ways of Telling an Historical Event” (E-Reserve)
F 24 Topic: Comparing the Storytelling Techniques of Silko and Ortiz

Week 7

M 27 Paula Gunn Allen: “Kochinnenako: The Figure of ‘Yellow Woman’” (course website); Leslie Marmon Silko: “Yellow Woman” (*MSRC*)
W 1 Mar Linda Hogan: “Aunt Moon’s Young Man” (E-Reserve)
F 3 Topic: Comparing the Fictional Techniques in Two “Yellow Woman” Stories

Week 8

M 6 Leslie Marmon Silko: “Uncle Tony’s Goat” (*MSRC*)
W 8 Simon Ortiz: “The End of Old Horse” (*MSRC*)
F 10 *MSRC*: Reading TBA

Week 9

M 13 **Essay 2 due at start of class**; *MSRC*: Reading TBA
W 15 “Study Guide for *Tracks*” (course website); Louise Erdrich: *Tracks* (Ch.1)
F 17 *Tracks*: Chs. 2-3

Week 10

M 20 **Spring Break—No Class**
W 22 **Spring Break—No Class**
F 24 **Spring Break—No Class**

Week 11

M 27 *Tracks: Ch. 4*
W 29 *Tracks: Ch. 5*
F 31 *Tracks: Chs. 6-7*

Week 12

M 3 Apr *Tracks: Ch. 8*
W 5 *Tracks (finish)*
F 7 Thomas King: *Truth & Bright Water* (1-49)

Week 13

M 10 *Truth & Bright Water* (50-107)
W 12 *Truth & Bright Water* (108-54)
F 14 *Truth & Bright Water* (155-207)

Week 14

M 17 *Truth & Bright Water* (finish)
W 19 **Essay 3 due at start of class;** Luci Tapahonso: *Blue Horses Rush In* (“Preface”)
F 21 *Blue Horses Rush In* (3-32)

Week 15

M 24 *Blue Horses Rush In* (33-71)
W 26 *Blue Horses Rush In* (finish)
F 28 Sherman Alexie: *Ten Little Indians* (1-68)

Week 16

M 1 May *Ten Little Indians* (69-101)
W 3 *Ten Little Indians* (102-49)
F 5 *Ten Little Indians* (150-94)

Week 17

M 8 *Ten Little Indians* (finish)
W 10 Last day of class; review for Final Exam; course evaluations.

Week 18

R 18 **Final Exam: 7:30-10:00 a.m.**

