

ENGL 389.001/HONR 311.043  
MW 3:00-4:40  
Honors House 105  
Fall 2015

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### **Topics in Native American Literature/Interdisciplinary Seminar Identity and (Self) Representation in Native American Literature & Art**

**Course Description:** This course focuses on very contemporary—from the 1980s to today—Native American literature and art, occasionally even art within the literature itself. Students will explore how Native artists working in the literary and visual arts present themselves, their communities, their worldview, and the contemporary dilemmas in Indian Country. The class draws from fiction, nonfiction, poetry, paintings, sculpture, film/cinema, and performance art to better understand these issues.

**Texts:** Thomas King (Cherokee), *The Truth about Stories* and *Truth & Bright Water*  
Eric Gansworth (Onondaga), *Mending Skins*  
Richard Van Camp (Dogrib), *The Lesser Blessed*  
Karenne Wood (Monacan), *Markings on Earth*  
Leslie Marmon Silko (Laguna), *Storyteller*  
Louise Erdrich (Turtle Mountain Band Chippewa), *The Painted Drum*  
Susan Power (Standing Rock Sioux), *Sacred Wilderness*

**Course Objectives:** The objectives of the course include:

- 1) to acquaint students with the works of contemporary Native American literary and visual artists;
- 2) to help students understand some of the historical, sociological, and philosophical background of the issues of these literary and visual texts;
- 3) to introduce students to the fundamental differences between Native peoples' worldview and the common "American" one (especially with regard to relationship with family, community, the natural and spiritual world, ceremony and story);
- 4) to help students read written and visual texts actively, critically, and meaningfully;
- 5) to familiarize students with the vocabulary and critical tools required in order to discuss and write about literature and art successfully; and
- 6) to foster interest in additional works by these and other Native writers and artists.

**Course Requirements:** You will need to read all assignments **before** coming to class and come to class prepared to discuss them. For each day's reading (except the first one), you will write a one page analytical response. You must bring the text we are reading and discussing and your written analysis to class each day.

<b>Grading:</b>	Class Preparation (Analytical Response Avg.)	100 points possible
	Class Participation	100 points possible
	Identity/Representation Issue/Problem Essay	100 points possible
	Group Art Presentation & Essay	100 points possible
	Additional Text Presentation	100 points possible
	Artist Essay	100 points possible
	Comparative Analysis Essay	200 points possible
	Comparative Analysis Essay Presentation	100 points possible

810-900 = A; 720-809 = B; 630-719 = C; 540-629 = D

**Please note:** Failure to complete any of the course requirements may mean failing the course. None of these **requirements** is optional.

**Class Preparation/Participation:** The best ways in which to illustrate that you are an active, engaged, and interested student are by 1) reading all assignments before coming to class, 2) preparing your required one page analytical response, and 3) contributing regularly to class discussions.

**Analytical Responses:** For each assigned reading (except for the first one), you need to prepare a one page (minimum and maximum) analytical response. "One page" means one double-spaced typed page, with inch margins, written in a 12 pt. font. The crucial question each analysis should address in a focused and thoughtful way is "**What is the most significant aspect of this reading?**" Please **do not** write plot summaries or emotional reactions. When we meet to discuss the readings, I will frequently call on students at random to share with the rest of the class what they have identified as significant in their responses as a means of beginning our class discussion. Quite often, I will collect, respond to, and grade these responses, but whether I collect them or not, these writings are part of your class preparation. A separate handout explains this requirement in more detail.

**Literature Essays:** The first 4-5 page essay, due on Monday, October 5, will describe and analyze a specific problem, issue, dilemma or conflict regarding identity and/or representation as depicted in one of the first two novels—*Mending Skins* or *The Lesser Blessed*. A separate handout will explain this assignment more fully.

The second essay, which is due on Wednesday, December 9, will consist of a comparative analysis of some significant shared commonality you discover between the additional novel (or non-fiction text) you read independently (see below) and one of the texts we'll be reading in common. Later in the semester, Dr. Kalb will offer more details and examples of paper topics for this particular assignment. This paper will be 7-10 pages in length and will require some library/literary research as well. This assignment will also require a properly formatted Works Cited page as well as a one page précis (i.e., concise summary) of the central idea of your comparative analysis essay.

**Literature Presentations:** Soon, you will be given a list of texts to choose from to read and study independently. On Monday, November 9 (and the following class session if necessary), you will give a 5-6 minute presentation on this additional text. This will consist of a "book talk," in which you introduce your classmates to this text and place it into context with texts we have read together.

Your second presentation, during our final exam period on December 18, will consist of your reading (with interest and enthusiasm) the précis of your comparative analysis essay. You will receive additional details about these presentations in separate handouts when appropriate.

**Group Art Presentation and Paper:** Early in the semester, Dr. Buss will provide you with a list of contemporary (and living) Native American artists from which you choose in pairs. On October 26 and 28, students will give 8-10 minute presentations on their artist that contextualize the artist's work and explain themes and messages that resonate in their art. You will also select a single piece of art from the artist to analyze at the end of the presentation. Your presentation should be based on more than cursory research into the person. Instead, you should utilize library resources (and those provided by Dr. Buss in the Honors House) to craft both the presentation and a 3-5 page paper that summarizes your presentation and includes references to sources.

**Artist Essay:** Using the same artist from your partner presentations, you will compose an individual paper that takes that artist and connects the themes of their work to larger themes from one of our class readings. In other words, how does the work of your artist illustrate larger themes of identity and contemporary issues in Indian Country that also appear in our class readings. Your 4-5 page essay should raise larger questions about the connectedness between contemporary Native American art, literature, poetry, etc. The essay is due in class on November 23.

**Global Essay Rules:** All of the essays you submit must be typed, double-spaced, with inch margins

on all sides, and stapled (once) in the upper left hand corner. (**PLEASE: No folders, paper clips, ripped and folded corners, or other "fancy" methods of binding.**) These papers should be as error free as possible. Please carefully **proofread** your papers before you turn them in. I prefer that you correct the typos in pen or pencil yourself rather than leave that task to me.

**Late papers will be graded 10 points lower for each day they are late.** Failure to turn in a paper means failing the course.

The numerous writing activities--both informal and formal--indicate that the instructor is a firm supporter of writing as a means of learning and of SU's Writing Across the Curriculum policy.

**Special Note:** All students taking this course to fulfill their English/Secondary Education [or TESOL] requirement must begin a technology portfolio and must include at least one paper/project from this course in the portfolio.

**Turnitin:** Salisbury University contracts with Turnitin for plagiarism detection and deterrence in support of The Salisbury Promise and academic integrity policy. As a condition of participating in this course, all required formal papers will be subject to submission for textual similarity review and plagiarism detection through Turnitin (through MyClasses). All papers submitted to Turnitin will be included as source documents in the Turnitin reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism consistent with fair use principles under federal copyright law.

**Plagiarism:** The English Department and Honors take plagiarism, the unacknowledged use of other people's ideas, very seriously indeed. As outlined in the Student Handbook under the "Policy on Student Academic Integrity," plagiarism may receive such penalties as failure on a paper or failure in the course. The English Department recognizes that plagiarism is a very serious offense and professors make their decisions regarding sanctions accordingly. Each of the following constitutes plagiarism:

1. Turning in as your own work a paper or part of a paper that anyone other than you wrote. This would include but is not limited to work taken from another student, from a published author, or from an Internet contributor.
2. Turning in a paper that includes unquoted and / or undocumented passages someone else wrote.
3. Including in a paper someone else's original ideas, opinions or research results without attribution.
4. Paraphrasing without attribution.
5. Turning in the same paper for credit in more than one class.

A few changes in wording do not make a passage your property. As a precaution, if you are in doubt, cite the source. Moreover, if you have gone to the trouble to investigate secondary sources, you should give yourself credit for having done so by citing those sources in your essay and by providing a list of Works Cited or Works Consulted at the conclusion of the essay. In any case, failure to provide proper attribution could result in a severe penalty and is never worth the risk.

**Attendance:** Your success in the course will be contingent upon your preparation for and participation in class sessions. You may miss three class meetings (for whatever reason) without direct penalty. For each day you are absent beyond those three "freebies," you will lose 25 points per day. If you have a schedule conflict with this class, you should select a course that better fits your schedule. **Remember that YOU are responsible for meeting deadlines. There is no such thing as an "excused absence."**

We will, of course, also expect you to arrive promptly for class and stay for the duration of each session. **Three "lates" will constitute an absence.** Schedule your other activities around this course, not vice versa. In addition, students who come to class ill-prepared (i.e., without the text we are discussing, having not read the assignment) may be asked to leave the classroom and invited to return another day on which they are better prepared.

**Courtesy and Respect:** Students treat their fellow students and professors with courtesy and respect. Please abide by the following:

- # Turn stow and silence your cell phones and other electronic devices during class.

- # Take care of your dietary and eliminatory needs PRIOR to entering the classroom.
- # Should you absolutely need to arrive late or leave early for a class session, sit as near to the door as possible and avoid disrupting class by drawing attention to your entry or exit.
- # Listen attentively to what your professor and fellow classmates contribute to our discussions.
- # Raise your hand and wait to be acknowledged before you enter the discussion.

**Office Hours:** Both of us are available by appointment. Dr. Kalb has scheduled, open office hours Monday and Wednesday 1-2:45 p.m. and Friday 1-2:00 p.m. Both of us encourage students to take full advantage of our availability outside of regular class time.

### Assignment Calendar

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|-------|-----|---|
| Aug.  | 31: | Introduction to course  |
| Sept. | 2:  | What is Native American Literature? What is Native American Art?  |
|       | 7:  | Labor Day – No Class  |
|       | 9:  | Thomas King, <i>The Truth About Stories</i> (through Chapter III, 89)   |
|       | 14: | <i>The Truth About Stories</i> (to end)<br>Distribution of Artist and Additional Text Lists                         |
|       | 16: | Eric Gansworth, <i>Mending Skins</i> (to Part Two “Cutting Patterns”)   |
|       | 21: | <i>Mending Skins</i> (to Part Three “Hiding Seams”)   |
|       | 23: | <i>Mending Skins</i> (to end)   |
|       | 28: | Richard Van Camp, <i>The Lesser Blessed</i> (to end)<br><b>Be prepared to pick your artist(s) and text(s) today</b> |
|       | 30: | <i>Winter in the Blood</i> (video)  |
| Oct.  | 5:  | Karenne Wood, <i>Markings on Earth</i> (to “hard times,” 31)<br><b>Identity/Representation Issue Essay Due</b>      |
|       | 7:  | <i>Markings on Earth</i> (to “first light,” 49)   |
|       | 12: | <i>Markings on Earth</i> (to end)   |
|       | 14: | Leslie Marmon Silko, <i>Storyteller</i> (through 76 [or 79])  |
|       | 19: | <i>Storyteller</i> (through “The Man to Send Rain Clouds,” 179 [or 187])  |
|       | 21: | <i>Storyteller</i> (to end)   |
|       | 26: | <b>Group Art Presentations and Papers Due</b>   |
|       | 28: | <b>Group Art Presentations ctd.</b><br>Thomas King, <i>Truth &amp; Bright Water</i> (to Chapter Nine; 62)           |
| Nov.  | 2:  | <i>Truth &amp; Bright Water</i> (to Chapter Twenty-Three; through 180)  |
|       | 4:  | <i>Truth &amp; Bright Water</i> (to end)  |
|       | 9:  | <b>Additional Text Presentations</b>  |
|       | 11: | <i>Reel Injun</i> (video)   |
|       | 16: | Louise Erdrich, <i>The Painted Drum</i> (to Part Two, 95)   |
|       | 18: | <i>The Painted Drum</i> (to Part Three, 187)  |
|       | 23: | <i>The Painted Drum</i> (to end)<br><b>Artist Essay Due</b>   |
|       | 25: | Thanksgiving Break – No Class   |

- 30: *Sacred Wilderness* (to “Clan Mother of the Present,” 82)  
Dec. 2: *Sacred Wilderness* (to “Clan Mother of Regret,” 194)
- 7: *Sacred Wilderness* (to end)  
9: Wrap up and odds and ends  
**Comparative Essay & Précis Due**

Final Exam period. Although we won't have a final exam, we will meet for Final Essay Presentations during this time: Friday, December 18, 4:15-6:45 p.m.

**This schedule of assignments is, of course, subject to change.**

**Statement from the Writing Center:** At the University Writing Center (directly above the Fireside Lounge in the Guerrieri University Center), trained consultants are ready to help you at any stage of the writing process. It is often helpful for writers to share their work with an attentive reader, and consultations allow writers to test and refine their ideas before having to hand papers in or to release documents to the public. In addition to the important writing instruction that occurs in the classroom and during teachers' office hours, the center offers another site for learning about writing. **All students are encouraged to make use of this important service.** For more information about the writing center's hours and policies, visit the writing center or its website at [www.salisbury.edu/uwc](http://www.salisbury.edu/uwc).