

Western University
First Nations Studies Program and the Department of English and Writing Studies
English/First Nations Studies 3880G, Winter 2015
First Nations Literature

Class Meetings:

Tuesdays from 1:30 – 2:20 p.m. and Thursdays from 1:30 – 3:20 p.m. in UCC 53

Contact Information:

Professor: Pauline Wakeham

Office: 3G10 Arts and Humanities Building

Email: pwakeham@uwo.ca

Telephone: (519) 661-2111 x. 85815

Office Hours: Tuesdays from 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. and 2:30 – 3:30 p.m.

Course Teaching Assistant: Ikshaa Pai

Email: ipai@uwo.ca

Course Description: *Welcome to First Nations Literature!*

the diversity of Indigenous communities and cultures as well as the particular lands and socio-historical contexts that inform their work. In so doing, we will consider how Indigenous artistic practices express the complexity and vitality of First Peoples' cultural imaginations and ways of knowing.

Course Objectives:

To introduce students to and/or enrich their knowledge of First Nations literary and cultural production in Canada.

To consider how the study of First Nations literary and cultural production is enhanced by an attention to Indigenous ways of knowing and, in particular, Indigenous practices of storytelling and their vital importance to many Indigenous communities.

To consider the relationship between socio-historical contexts and Indigenous literary and cultural production.

To assist students in honing their critical thinking and writing skills through in-class application of such skills to readings of literary and cultural texts.

To foster the development of students' distinctive intellectual voices through the practice of engaged listening and thoughtful class participation as well as through the provision of feedback on written work.

Required Texts:

Eden Robinson, *Monkey Beach*

Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas, *Red: A Haida Manga*

Custom Course Book (Available at the University Bookstore)

Please note that all texts listed on the syllabus with weblinks are not included in the Course Book. These texts may be accessed directly online.

Assignments and Grade Distributions

Assignment	% of Grade	Due Date	Length
Response Paper	20%	February 24 th	3 pages
Final Essay	35%	March 31 st	8 pages
Participation	10%	Ongoing	
Final Exam	35%	T.B.A.	3 hours

Final Grades: English Department policy stipulates that a student must earn a passing grade for both term work and the final exam in order to receive a passing grade in a course. Students who earn a failing grade in either the term or final exam grades (even if the average of these two grades is participation

- Students are not required to consult secondary sources for this paper but they are welcome to do so should they want to. If secondary sources are consulted, however, they must be acknowledged and cited properly and a Works Cited must accompany the essay. For further details regarding formatting and correct citation, please refer to the instructions listed in the following section of this syllabus.

- **Please Note:** The Professor will consider proposals for alternative forms of written final assignments. In order to pursue this option, the student must provide the Professor with a 300-word written proposal regarding the alternative assignment, describing what the assignment would entail, what its topic would be, and what the rationale for pursuing such an assignment would be. Proposals for alternative assignments must be submitted in hard copy at any point during the semester up until the beginning of class on March 3rd, 2014. After that time, proposals for alternative assignments will no longer be considered. The Professor reserves the right to not grant permission for an alternative assignment if the proposal is deemed unsuitable.

Important Information Regarding Assignments:

- All assignments are due at the **beginning of class** on the scheduled due date. Assignments handed in after the commencement of class on the scheduled due date will be assessed a late penalty of 1%. Any assignments submitted after the due date will be assessed a late penalty (2% per day, including weekends). Assignments must be submitted **either directly to the Professor** at the beginning of class or submitted as late and handed in to the secure essay drop-off box outside the English Department office (Arts and Humanities Building Room 2G02).

- Extensions will only be granted with medical certification or under other extenuating circumstances and should, when possible, be arranged with the Professor in advance. For further information, please see the section on “Academic Accommodation” in this syllabus.

- All assignments should be submitted on 8.5 x 11” paper, with 1” marg

awarded for the strength and originality of the argument; for the ability to mobilize textual evidence to support the argument; and for clarity, coherence, style, and grammar.

Academic Offences:

- It is crucial that students create all assignments (both written and oral) using their own ideas and their own words. If you use a concept, idea, or phrasing from another source, it is imperative to signal the direct borrowing of words with quotation marks and to register the borrowing of ideas and concepts via the use of explanatory footnotes and parenthetical citations. When in doubt, please cite your source rather than leaving it out! Please also note that the same standards of proper crediting of sources apply to oral presentations. Plagiarism is a serious academic offence.

- Students are directed to read the University's policies on scholastic offences at:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

- All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Additional Information for Students:

Class Schedule

Please Note: The Professor reserves the right to make minor changes to the reading list during the semester. Any changes will be announced in class in advance of the date.

January 6: Welcome and Introduction

January 8: Class Cancelled (Professor at the Modern Languages Association Conference)

January 13: Indigenous Cultures of Storytelling

Brian Maracle, "The First Words"

January 15: Indigenous Cultures of Storytelling (continued)

Thomas King, "'You'll Never Believe What Happened' is Always a Great Way to Start" (from *The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative*)

Note: You can also listen to an audio recording of King telling this story on the CBC's website (select "Part 1": <http://www.cbc.ca/ideas/massey-archives/2003/11/07/massey-lectures-2003-the-truth-about-stories-a-native-narrative/>)

January 20: In What Languages Can Stories be Told?

Neal McLeod, "Cree Poetic Discourse"

Marilyn Dumont, "The Devil's Language" and "Acimowina"

January 22: In What Languages Can Stories be Told? (continued)

Maria Campbell, "Jacob"

Gregory Scofield, "Prayer Song for the Returning of Names and Sons"

January 27: What Shapes Can Stories Take?

Mils and Eekwol, "The Gauntlet": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uv1C8FMaLPc>

Lindsay "Eekwol" Knight, "Revitalizing Indigenous Swagger: Poetics from a Plains Cree Perspective"

Please also view the Beat Nation website: <http://www.beatnation.org/>

January 29: Narrating Kinship and Community

Eden Robinson, *Monkey Beach*

February 3: Storytelling and Memory

Eden Robinson, *Monkey Beach*

Eden Robinson, Chapter Two from *The Sasquatch At Home: Traditional Protocols and Modern Storytelling*

February 5: Storytelling and Memory (continued)

Eden Robinson, *Monkey Beach*

February 10: Re-Writing Gender

From *The Indian Act*

Lenore Keeshig-Tobias, "(a found poem)"

February 12: Remembering the Disappeared

Rebecca Belmore, "Vigil" (this performance art piece can be viewed online at:

<http://www.rebeccabelmore.com/video/Vigil.html>)

The Redress Project (this art installation can be viewed online at:

<http://www.cbc.ca/8thfire/2011/12/reddress-project.html>)

February 17 and 19: Reading Week, No Classes**February 24: Indigeneity and Sexuality**

Gregory Scofield, "You Can Always Count on an Anthropologist (To Set You Straight, Crooked, or Somewhere In-between)"

February 26: Indigeneity and Sexuality (continued)

Beth Brant, "A Simple Act" and "This Place"

March 3: Indigeneity and Sexuality (continued)

Beth Brant, "A Simple Act" and "This Place"

March 5: Class Cancelled (Professor serving on an adjudication committee for the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada)

March 10: Indigenous Graphic Storytelling

Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas, *Red: A Haida Manga*

March 12: Indigenous Graphic Storytelling (continued)

Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas, *Red: A Haida Manga*

March 17: The Residential School System in Canada and the Question of Reconciliation

- Visit the website for Truth and Reconciliation Canada at <http://www.trc.ca/>

J.R. Miller, "Residential Schools and Reconciliation" (available at:

<http://activehistory.ca/papers/history-papers-13/>)

Roland Chrisjohn and Tanya Wasacase, "Half-Truths and Whole Lies: Rhetoric in the 'Apology' and The Truth and Reconciliation Commission"

March 19: Residential Schools: Writing as Resurgence

Rita Joe, "I Lost My Talk"

March 24: Residential Schools (continued)**March 26: Final Novel: TBA by Class Vote****March 31: Final Novel: TBA by Class Vote****April 2: Final Novel: TBA by Class Vote****April 7: Class Review and Examination Preparation**