

Coffeyville Community College

ENGL-200

COURSE SYLLABUS

FOR

NATIVE AMERICAN LITERATURE

Waneta Davis

Instructor

COURSE NUMBER: ENGL-200 **COURSE TITLE:** Native American Literature
CREDIT HOURS: 3
INSTRUCTOR: Waneta Davis
OFFICE LOCATION: 112 Weinberg Hall
PHONE: 620-251-7700 ext. 2025
E-MAIL: wanetad@coffeyville.edu
OFFICE HOURS: See schedule posted on office door
PREREQUISITES: English Composition I or permission of instructor
REQUIRED TEXT: Trout, Lawana, ed. *Native American Literature: An Anthology*.
Lincolnwood (Chicago) Illinois: NTC/Contemporary
Publishing Group, 1999.
Neihardt, John G. *Black Elk Speaks*. Lincoln, NE: University of
Nebraska Press, 1989.

**COURSE
DESCRIPTION:**

Students in this course will explore the literary traditions of American Indians by studying stories, songs, orations, poems, plays and films that reflect the lived experiences of indigenous culture. To emphasize the role of experience, students will have an opportunity to hear guest speakers—storytellers and singers, writers and poets, actors and playwrights—comment upon their art; students will also engage in a variety of classroom activities (often supplemented by various audio/visual resources and multi-media technologies) designed to cultivate an intimacy with the themes of Native American literature; moreover, each student will record his or her experience with the course materials in a creative journal, a project that will be limited only by the imaginative faculties of the individual student. While the creative journal will be the primary means of evaluating student understanding, a number of topical exams will also be administered.

**EXPECTED LEARNER
OUTCOMES:**

Within the context of the educational objectives of Coffeyville Community College, this course seeks to facilitate the general development of student skills in oral/written communication and critical/creative thinking while cultivating student appreciation for the diversity of culture. Specifically, the course seeks to facilitate student achievement of the following learning objectives:

1. Identify the themes underlying American Indian experiences as represented in aboriginal literatures;
2. Relate the historical outlines of American Indian cultures to American Indian literature.
3. Identify the world-views afforded by various American Indian cultural traditions, specially the oral traditions;
4. Distinguish the connections between the themes of American Indian literatures and the creation of American Indian identities;
5. Articulate an understanding of the differences and the similarities between Euro-American and native American cultures;
6. Demonstrate a multicultural perspective accompanied by a more inclusive sense of culture;
7. Demonstrate an ability to read and comprehend American Indian literature in multiple genres;
8. Improve critical thinking skills

**LEARNING TASKS
AND ACTIVITIES:**

Week 1	Introduction and Overview
Week 2	Images and Identities
Week 3	The Oral Tradition
Week 4	The Spirit World
Week 5	Neihardt Book
Week 6	Exam – Crisis in the Homeland
Week 7	The Remembered Earth
Week 8	Journals Due – All My Relations
Week 9	Film
Week 10	Exam – Growing Up
Week 11	Film
Week 12	Affairs of the Heart
Week 13	Language and Learning in “Two Worlds”
Week 14	Journals Due – We Survive
Week 15	Exam – Memory Alive

**ASSESSMENT
OF OUTCOMES:**

Student progress toward the achievement of course objectives will be assessed through the assignment of collaborative learning exercises, the assignment of journal writing, and the administration of topical exams.

Course Assignments:	
Collaborative Learning Exercises	25%
Topical Exams	25%
Journals	25%
Literary Analysis	25%

Grading Legend:

A (100-90) Excellent; B (89-80) Very good; C (79-70) Good; D (69-60) Poor; F (59-0) Failing

Grades may be interpreted according to the following subjective profiles:

- A. Excellent.** Students receiving an “A” undertake assignments with an accomplished sense of intellectual discipline, integrity, and enthusiasm. Students exhibit an ability to exceed conventional frames of reference by communicating multiple perspectives; specifically, students clarify cultural contexts, develop a number of ideas in thematic detail, explore the relationships between key ideas, anticipate intellectual objections, and critically examine their own conclusions. Attendance and participation are exemplary.
- B. Very Good.** Students receiving a “B” usually undertake assignments with a sense of intellectual discipline, integrity and enthusiasm. Students exhibit an ability to employ conventional frames of reference to communicate dual perspectives; specifically, students develop a few ideas in detail and explore the relationships between prominent ideas. Attendance and participation are distinguished.
- C Good.** Students receiving a “C” undertake assignments with a satisfactory sense of intellectual discipline, integrity and enthusiasm. Students exhibit an ability to employ a frame of reference to communicate a single perspective; specifically students accurately recount received ideas. Attendance and participation are satisfactory.
- D Poor.** Students receiving a “D” undertake assignments with little sense of intellectual discipline, integrity and enthusiasm; assignments frequently are submitted late. Students exhibit some ability to employ a frame of reference to communicate a partial perspective; specifically, students inaccurately or incompletely recount received ideas. Attendance and/or participation are unsatisfactory.
- F Failing.** Students receiving an “F” demonstrate no sense of intellectual discipline, integrity or enthusiasm and may not undertake assignments at all. Assignments undertaken may be incomplete or otherwise unacceptable as a measure of student learning. Attendance and participation are unsatisfactory.

**COURSE
REQUIREMENTS:**

To complete the course satisfactorily, students must read all reading assignments, attend class regularly, actively participate in collaborative learning exercises, pass all exams administered, and receive a passing grade on the journal.

Topical Exams: Topical exams may include but not be limited to the following types of questions: textual identifications, short answer definitions/analyses, and brief essays.

Journals: Journals may contemplate, through interrogation and reflection, specific issues of American Indian literature and culture arising during the course of study. While some journal writing will be in response to specific questions posed by the instructor, the content of the journal will be limited only by the imaginative faculties of the individual student. Students are encouraged to include visual components. Journal questions posted by the instructor may require use of web and internet resources.

Literary Analysis: Using some of the seven basic elements of literature: point of view, setting, plot, character, symbolism, irony, and theme, write an analysis using adequate evidence to support the inferences and interpretation.

Collaborative Learning Exercises: Collaborative learning is an instructional mode by which two or more people teach one another; that is to say each person involved is both a student and a teacher. Consequently, collaborative learning is not only an effective form of learning but also an efficient alternative to traditional methods of instruction (ex. Lecture). While such traditional methods will be in prominent use, these methods tend to over-emphasize the relationship between instructors and students (often little more than a producer/consumer relationship), while neglecting the social relationships inherent in thought and learning.

Indeed, mature thought and learning occurs as a social process; knowledge acquisition occurs in relationships with many people, not just a single instructor. Moreover, when a subject requires sophisticated efforts to clarify, analyze, and evaluate, that subject can be learned best in a collaborative setting. Native American literature is just such a subject. For the purposes of this course, then, collaborative learning will occur in the form of group exercises assigned by the instructor; in this way, perhaps full advantage can be taken of multiple relationships.

Students will learn, therefore, *together* as they engage in a problem-solving process that promotes cognitive development and the improvement of critical thinking strategies. Each student will make individual contributions in a collective effort to clarify, analyze, and evaluate important issues the study of Native American literature. Perhaps, equally important students will form temporary “communities” that facilitate their learning.

Late or Missed Assignments: Assignments are due at the beginning of the class meeting on the due date; late work will be penalized 5% of assignment value per day late; no late work will be accepted after one week has elapsed. The responsibility for completing assignments lies with the student.

Exams that are missed without the prior consent and approval of the instructor may not be taken at a later date.

ATTENDANCE:

Students who do not attend class regularly will not succeed in this course. Each class meeting is the equivalent of two class periods. Roll will be taken at the beginning of each class period. Students who attend 90% of their class periods will receive a bonus of two (2) percentage points added to final grade. Students who attend fewer than 85% of the class periods will incur a penalty whereby two (2) points per excessive absence will be subtracted from their final grades. A student who misses two consecutive classes, or three 3 hour class meetings, five 1 hour class meetings overall, should withdraw.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Students are expected to undertake assignments with integrity. Unless otherwise indicated, all assignments are to be completed on an individual student basis; evidence of unauthorized student collaboration will result in a zero (0) for the assignment.

Plagiarism is representing, as one’s own the ideas of another person. To avoid plagiarism, one must ensure that information (arguments, designs, words, ideas, projects, etc.) deriving from other sources is properly acknowledged by appropriate citation(s). For the purpose of this class, use the MLA citation format. Plagiarized work will receive a grade of zero (0).

COMPETENCIES:

IDENTIFY THE THEMES UNDERLYING AMERICAN INDIAN EXPERIENCES AS REPRESENTED BY ABORIGINAL LITERATURES

1. Explain the importance of place in tribal cultures.
2. Explain the importance of tradition in tribal cultures.
3. Explain the importance of language in tribal cultures.
4. Describe the role of the individual in tribal cultures.
5. Describe the role of the family in tribal cultures.
6. Describe the importance of memory in tribal cultures.
7. Summarize the holistic world-view offered by tribal cultures.
8. Explain the concept of orality as found in tribal cultures.
9. Explain the concept of “survivance” as found in tribal cultures.
10. Explain the concept of sovereignty as expressed in tribal cultures.
11. Explain the problem of stereotypes for American Indians.
12. Summarize the impact of the “renaissance” in American Indian literature.

IDENTIFY THE WORLD-VIEWS AFFORDED BY VARIOUS AMERICAN INDIAN CULTURAL TRADITIONS, SPECIFICALLY THE ORAL TRADITIONS

1. Identify the three major elements of the oral tradition.
2. Explain the importance of stories.
3. Explain the importance of song.
4. Explain the importance of oratory.
5. Describe the traditional American Indian concepts of space and time.
6. Define the concept of “holism.”
7. Define the concept of “symbolism.”
8. Explain the importance of the circle.
9. Explain the importance of ceremony.
10. Explain the importance of dance.
11. Explain the Lakota (Sioux) concept of Mitakuye Oyasin.
12. Explain the Cherokee concept of harmony.
13. Explain the role of origin stories.
14. Distinguish between earth-diver origins stories and autochthonous-origin origin stories.
15. Describe the role of the storyteller.
16. Paraphrase the origin stories of selected tribes.

DISTINGUISH THE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE THEMES OF AMERICAN INDIAN LITERATURES AND THE CREATION OF AMERICAN INDIAN IDENTITIES

1. Distinguish the connections between experience and identity.
2. Distinguish the connections between place and identity.
3. Distinguish the connections between tradition and identity.
4. Distinguish the connections between language and identity.
5. Distinguish the connections between family and identity.

6. Distinguish the connections between Euro-American stereotypes of American Indians and identity.
7. Relate the concept of “survivance” to identity.
8. Relate the concept of sovereignty to identity.
9. Describe the role of memory in identity.
10. Explain the importance of American Indian literary “renaissance” for identity.

ARTICULATE AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE DIFFERENCES AND THE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN EURO-AMERICAN AND NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURES

1. Compare concepts of space and time.
2. Compare the concepts of circularity and linearity.
3. Compare orality with textuality.
4. Compare the roles of storytelling in these cultures.
5. Compare selected American Indian origin stories with the Euro-American origin stories.
6. Compare the roles of song in these cultures.
7. Compare selected American Indian songs with Euro-American songs.
8. Compare the roles of oratory in these cultures.
9. Compare selected American Indian orations with Euro-American orations.
10. Contrast the American Indian concept of “give-aways” with the Euro-American concept of saving.
11. Contrast the American Indian respect for age with the Euro-American emphasis on youth.
12. Contrast the American Indian practice of cooperation with the Euro-American practice of competition.
13. Contrast American Indian efforts to work in harmony with the environment with Euro-American efforts to control the environment.
14. Distinguish between American Indian—Euro-American conflict and American Indian—Euro-American misunderstanding.
15. Identify areas “ripe” for dialogue between American Indians and other Americans.

DEMONSTRATE A MULTICULTURAL PERSPECTIVE ACCOMPANIED BY A MORE INCLUSIVE SENSE OF CULTURE

1. Identify prominent American Indian writers by name.
2. Describe the multiple perspectives from which American Indians write.
3. Critique the historical biases against certain types of American Indian literature, particularly the oral “literatures.”
4. Defend the value of American Indian literature for the broader American culture.
5. Critique stereotypes of American Indians.

DEMONSTRATE AN ABILITY TO READ AND COMPREHEND AMERICAN INDIAN LITERATURE IN MULTIPLE GENRES
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1. Summarize selected American Indian stories, essays, short-stories, novels, plays and films.
2. Paraphrase selected American Indian poems.

IMPROVE CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

1. Participate in collaborative learning exercises that facilitate the development of critical thinking skills such as knowledge acquisition, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

NOTE: The procedures of this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances. Students will be notified of any changes.