COURSE POLICIES & SYLLABUS

We remember it all.
We remember, though we are just skeletons
whose organs and flesh
hold us in.
We have stories
as old as the great seas
breaking through the chest,
fly out the mouth,
noisy tongues that once were silenced,
all the oceans we contain
coming to light.
—Linda Hogan (Chickasaw), “To Light”

This course will introduce students to 20th- and 21st-century American Indian literatures, in a variety of genres and media, and to relevant ways of understanding Indigenous self-representation in its historical, cultural, and political contexts. We will examine works of prose fiction (short stories and novels), poetry, memoir, drama, nonfiction (lectures, essays, and scholarship), and film (documentary, feature, and experimental), as well as relevant web-based materials. To help focus our study, we will read, view, and listen to texts produced primarily since the 1960s and maintain a loose focus on American Indian “performance” and American Indian engagements with “history.”

Required Texts

Diane Glancy, *Pushing the Bear: A Novel of the Trail of Tears* (Harvest) [novel]
Theda Purdue and Michael Green, eds., *The Cherokee Removal* (Bedford) [history]
Blake Hausman, *Riding the Trail of Tears* (Bison Books) [novel]
Allison Hedge Coke, *Blood Run: Free Verse Play* (Salt Publishing) [poetry/drama]
LeAnne Howe, *Shell Shaker* (Aunt Lute) [novel]
Thomas King, *The Truth About Stories* (University of Minnesota Press) [lectures]

Additional short primary texts, critical articles, and chapters are available on Carmen. We will also view several short films in class.

Books available from SBX, 1806 N. High Street (291-9528).

NOTE: This syllabus is subject to minor adjustments over the course of the semester. It is each student’s responsibility to keep up with changes announced in class.
Course Policies

Attendance. You should plan to attend every meeting of this class. Regular attendance is required, and I will take attendance every class period. Students who miss more than two class meetings without providing an excuse recognized by the university as legitimate (such as documented proof of a serious illness, or participation in a university-sponsored event) will have their final course grades lowered by one third of a letter grade for each unexcused absence over two. **Five or more unexcused absences are grounds for failure of the course.**

Preparing Essays. When you turn in your essays (described below) you are required to 1) type or word process your essay in a readable, 12 point font, 2) double-space your text and provide one-inch margins, 3) place your name and the course number on the first page, 4) number your pages after page one and place your last name next to the number on each page, 5) title your essay, 6) use MLA style parenthetical citations, and 7) edit and proofread your work. Please do not create a separate title page. And please do not create a separate Works Cited page *unless you cite sources beyond what has been assigned in class.*

Late Essays. Late essays will lose a letter grade for every day late. Plan accordingly, especially if you are prone to computer problems. Please speak to me ahead of time if you anticipate problems meeting essay deadlines.

Academic Integrity. The basic idea of academic integrity is that the university holds you accountable for the work you hand in for assessment. All work is expected to be your own. When quoting, paraphrasing, or summarizing the work of others (including information from the internet), you are expected to cite your sources. The university considers plagiarism—using someone else’s words or ideas as if they were your own—a serious and punishable act of academic misconduct. It is also an act of academic misconduct to hand in recycled or revised work originally produced for another course without the explicit permission of both instructors. All cases of suspected plagiarism, in accordance with university rules, will be reported to the Committee on Academic Misconduct.

Students With Disabilities. The Office for Disability Services, 150 Pomerene Hall, offers services for students with documented disabilities. Contact ODS at 292-3307.

Useful Addresses

Department of English, Main Office, 421 Denney Hall, 292-6065, www.english.osu.edu
Writing Center, 475 Mendenhall Lab, 688-4291, www.cstw.org (on-line appointment scheduling and on-line tutorials)
Assignments

1. **Class Participation. 10%**
   Each student will receive a grade for participation at midterm and at the end of the course. Here is the rubric I follow in grading participation:

   *An “A” student comes to class having read all the assigned reading and having prepared a set of questions and comments to bring up in class. The “A” student is a leader in class who volunteers to speak in response to the professor's questions and also to other students' contributions. Never dominating the conversation, the “A” student listens carefully and responds to what others are saying. The “A” student may disagree vigorously (but politely) with the professor, and always cites specific passages in the text to back up opinions."

   *A “B” student has read all the material assigned for the day and makes at least one contribution to the conversation in each class meeting, showing good familiarity with the reading and good comprehension of the discussion.

   *A “C” student does not speak up consistently, makes comments or raises questions that are peripheral to the reading assignment, and/or does not cite the reading assignment while speaking.

2. **Discussion Leader. 20%**
   Each student will serve as a designated discussion leader once during the semester. Please sign up on the class Carmen site.

   When you are a discussion leader, prior to class you are responsible for 1) preparing 3 – 5 well thought out questions designed to help spur class discussion, which you will post on the class Carmen site no later than 5:00 p.m. the evening before class, and 2) preparing a detailed answer (1 – 2 double-spaced pages) to one of the posted questions, either one of your own, or one posted by another discussion leader, which you will turn in during class. On the day you serve as a discussion leader, in class you are responsible for 1) pointing the class to relevant passages or scenes in the assigned text(s) for close reading and discussion, and 2) suggesting connections among the assigned texts and previous readings or films. Discussion leaders will be graded individually; however, it is a good idea to consult with the other discussion leaders for your day to avoid repetition.

3. **Three Short Essays. 70%**

   Essay #1 due Wednesday, 9/26. 20%

   Essay #2 due Thursday, 11/8. 25%

   Essay #3 due Friday, 12/7. 25%

   See the Daily Syllabus for specific essay prompts.
**Daily Syllabus**

**Week 1**
Th 8/23  Introduction to course and syllabus.

**Week 2**
Tu 8/28  Read Roemer, “Introduction” and “Timeline: literary, historical, and cultural Conjunctions,” and Porter, “Historical and cultural contexts to Native American Literature.”
In-class screening of DVD *James Luna: Emendatio, a Performance Rehearsal at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian.*
**Sign up for discussion leaders online at the class Carmen site.**


**Week 3**
Tu 9/4  Read King, *The Truth about Stories.*  
Discussion leaders #1:__________________________________________

Discussion leaders #2:______________________

**Week 4**
Discussion leaders #3:__________________________________________

Discussion leaders #4:__________________________________________

**Week 5**
Tu 9/18  Read Howe, “The Story of America: A Tribalography” [essay], and Howe, “Chocotalking on Other Realities” [story] (Carmen).  
Discussion leaders #5:__________________________________________

No discussion leaders.
In-class listening to Santa Fe Indian School Spoken Word Team, “Long Walk” [spoken word performance].
**Week 6**


Wed 9/26  **Essay #1 due. Turn in hard copy at 421 Denney by 3:00 p.m.**

**Prompt:** Engage one or more of the nonfiction pieces we have read—by King, Highway, Momaday, or Howe—to inform a close reading and analysis of one or more of the stories and/or poems we have read thus far (Momaday, Alexie, King, Rose, Howe, Tapahonso, or Tohe).  5 double-spaced pages.

Th 9/27  Watch the documentary film *Reel Injun* online (Carmen link). Read Chaat Smith, “The Big Movie” [essay] (Carmen).  In-class screening of Native short films and video.  No discussion leaders.

**Week 7**


Th 10/4  Read Howe, *Shell Shaker*, through chapter 2 (page 29).  Discussion leaders #8:____________________________

**Week 8**

Tu 10/9  Read Howe, *Shell Shaker*, through chapter 9 (page 143).  Explore web sites for Choctaw Nation and the Nanih Waiya (Carmen links).  Discussion leaders #9:____________________________

Th 10/11  Read Howe, *Shell Shaker*, through end.  Discussion leaders #10:____________________________

**Week 9**

Tu 10/16  Review *Shell Shaker*. Read Siebert, “Repugnant Aboriginality: LeAnne Howe’s *Shell Shaker* and Indigenous Representation in the Age of Multiculturalism” [essay] (Carmen).  Discussion leaders #11:____________________________

In-class viewing of excerpts from film *Earthworks of Southern Ohio* and CD-Rom *EarthWorks: Virtual Explorations of the ANCIENT OHIO VALLEY*. Bring *Blood Run* to class.
No discussion leaders.

**Week 10**

Tu 10/23  Read Hedge Coke, *Blood Run*.
Explore web sites for earthworks sites (Carmen links)
Discussion leaders #12: ____________________________________________

Discussion leaders #13: ____________________________________________

**Week 11**

Discussion leaders #14: ____________________________________________

Th 11/1  Class visit by Allison Hedge Coke.

**Week 12**

Discussion leaders #15: ____________________________________________

Th 11/8  **Essay #2 due in class.**

**Prompt:** For this essay, you may focus exclusively on either *Shell Shaker* or *Blood Run* or you may develop a focused comparison of these two works. You should also engage one of the nonfiction pieces we have read thus far, including King, Highway, Momaday, and Howe from the early part of the semester as well as the critical articles about *Blood Run* and *Shell Shaker*. You may shape and develop your essay as you like, but your essay must include 1) close reading and analysis of some portion of the text or texts, and 2) a clear argument that in some way engages or responds to issues raised in the nonfiction readings.
5 double-spaced pages.

**Week 13**

Discussion leaders #16: ____________________________________________
Th 11/15  Bring *Pushing the Bear* to class. In-class screening of documentary about Cherokee removal.
In-class writing exercise.

**Week 14**  
Tu 11/20  Read Glancy, *Pushing the Bear*, through end (including notes).
Discussion leaders #17:________________________________________

Th 11/22  **Thanksgiving holiday—no class meeting.**

**Week 15**  
Tu 11/27  Read Hausman, *Riding the Trail of Tears*, through chapter 10 (page 170).
Discussion leaders #18:________________________________________

Th 11/29  Read Hausman, *Riding the Trail of Tears*, through chapter 16 (page 265).
Discussion leaders #19:______________________

**Week 16**  
Tu 12/4  Read Hausman, *Riding the Trail of Tears*, through the end.
Visit web site for the novel, especially the “Background” section (Carmen link).
No discussion leaders.
Final class meeting.

Fr 12/7  **Essay #3 due at 421 Denney by 5:00 p.m.**

**Prompt:** For your final essay, focus on the work of Glancy and/or Hausman, either singly or in focused comparison. (You may also bring in other relevant texts from the semester, though the essay’s central focus should be Glancy, Hausman, or the two combined). As in Essay #2, you may shape and develop your essay as you like, but it must include 1) close reading and analysis of some portion of the text or texts, and 2) a clear argument that in some way engages or responds to issues raised in the nonfiction readings. 5 double-spaced pages.