Spring 2-1-2019

**NASX 235X.01: Oral and Written Traditions of Native Americans**

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Native American Studies 235
Oral and Written Traditions
NAC 009, Monday & Wednesday, 2:00 – 3:20
Meets Gen Ed Perspectives V (literary and Artistic) & Lower-division W requirements

Instructors: Marty Lopez, Office: SS 244
Monday 11:30-1:30
Tuesday 10-2
Wednesday 10-1, 3:30-4:30
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Course Description

Within Native American cultures, oral and literary traditions are expressed in many forms: jokes, warning tales, allegories, chants, curses, songs, poems, stories, novels, autobiographies and mythic accounts. We will read from a variety of selected literary works that is by no means inclusive of all traditions. In terms of genre, we will also read both historical and more contemporary pieces and pieces that are cyclic in nature and apply to past, present, and future such as the “Thanksgiving Address.” Students will have the opportunity to write at least four essays of varying length, as well as produce other shorter pieces of writing. We will explore oral traditions and talk about what it is and is not; for example, oral tradition is not about mere rote memorization or unchanging content. We will look at literary expression and how colonization and cultural survival among other key themes play a role in oral and written traditions.

Course Learning Outcomes?

❖ To develop an understanding of and appreciation for types of Native American oral and early written literatures;
❖ To demonstrate an ability to identify some tribally-specific beliefs and practices as reflected in literature;
❖ To be able to identify the general characteristics of several tribal oral and written literary movements;
❖ To increase public speaking skills by learning how to present the results of an interviewing project to the class, with visual, auditory, and other types of aids, as appropriate;
❖ To function within a group to create a coherent presentation of research;
❖ To compose written documents that are appropriate for a given audience or purpose;
❖ To formulate and express opinions and ideas in writing;
❖ To use writing to learn and synthesize new concepts;
❖ To revise written work based on constructive feedback;
❖ To find, evaluate, and use information effectively;
❖ To begin to use discipline-based writing conventions such as MLA style;
❖ To demonstrate appropriate English language usage.
Course Assignments & Requirements  
(DUE DATES FOR ASSIGNMENTS ARE ON DAILY SCHEDULE)

**Assignment #1: Personal Oral History.** Write a first draft of an autobiographical essay, three to four pages long and worth 10%; the rewrite/revision must be increased to five pages (Worth another 10%; with 20% total for Assignment #1). (Details will be available in a "Journeying Toward Home" handout.) First draft is due January 23rd; with the second draft due a week after first draft is handed back.

**Assignments #2: Tribal World View in Stories & Ceremonies.** Write a four-to-five-page essay based on an analysis of *The Stars We Know: Crow Indian Astronomy and Lifeways.* (Worth 20%.) (You will be getting a handout later, "Understanding and Analyzing Oral Traditions.") Due February 11th. Students must rewrite either essay #2 or #3, and increase the essay by one page.

**Assignment #3: **Write a four-to-five-page essay based on *Life's Journey,* Zuya (Worth 20%). (You will be getting a handout explaining more detail of this assignment.) Due March 20th in class.

**Assignment #4:** Write a four- to five-page literary analysis essay of one of the following: 1) Your understanding of "distributed power" as reflect in three things we've read this term; 2) An analysis of one or two poems as they related to the definitions of the Tenets of Indigenous Thought; and 3) An analysis of a contemporary story. More specifics and examples for this assignment will be forthcoming. In class, we will discuss the dynamics of writing a literary analysis essay and the particulars of this assignment. (20%) Due Wednesday of Finals Week.

**Elder Interview Project:** The class will be divided into five or six groups, depending on final enrollment, and each group will develop a protocol and plan for interviewing an elder. Elders will be designated for each group. A thorough explanation of the project will occur during the second or third week of class. The group will be graded through quality of presentation (by class and instructors), a short reflection essay, and by evaluation by group members based on each one's contribution to the whole. Students will be given time in class to work on the project. Reflection essays are due a week after the presentation.

All assignments will be evaluated on both grammatically correct / functional writing and content. I am looking for insightful understandings of the subject matter that are clearly articulated. All papers must be typed, in 12 font Times New Roman, double-spaced and identified by the class, by your name, student ID, assignment #, phone number and/or email address. Throughout the term, we will discuss the principles of good writing and have in-class writing exercises. Other rewriting options as well as extra-credit assignments may be offered. You are required to come to see either of us at least once this term about your writing; bring your graded work or work in draft with you. Also, avail yourself of the services at the UM Writing Center, http://www.umt.edu/writingcenter/

**Extra credit assignments.** From time to time, students may be offered extra-credit options for listening to visiting speakers to UM campus or participating in Native American events on
campus, such as the KyiYo Powwow. For full credit, students must write a two- to three-page response paper, with an opening paragraph that presents the central idea of the lecture or event. That paragraph must contain a strong thesis statement on the student’s position on something the speaker has discussed or that has transpired at the event. (Worth increasing one assignment by a letter grade)

Please keep up with the readings; it makes for a rich, engaged classroom for all. From time to time, I will ask questions of individual students regarding the readings. The due dates of the reading assignments are indicated on the syllabus; they are due to be read in class on those particular days. If you do not, for some reason, have your paper done, please don’t skip class. I’d rather have you there, and I can give some leeway when students have compelling reasons for work not being done; however, you must keep in touch about difficulties you may be having!

Are There Other Expectations?

**Attendance is required.** The purpose of required attendance is to assure that we function as a learning community, in conversation with one another about the subject matter. When a student misses too many classes, for whatever reason, he or she misses a significant amount of material. **Check with a classmate when you plan to be or have been absent** to see if he/she will share his/her notes.

If at all possible, please notify me in advance when you will be absent. I am easiest to reach by email. **Excessive absences** (more than three classes per term) will likely result in your grade being lowered as much as one letter grade. Students who miss more than six classes will be asked to consider dropping the course. Late work is subject to a grade penalty of up to one letter grade per week on the particular assignment, but it’s always best to turn something in rather than not doing so. Keep in good communication about your challenges and struggles!

Out of respect for the Instructor and your classmates, I ask that you not leave class early unless you have a compelling reason, such as a doctor’s appointment, and that you do not otherwise disrupt class by coming and going, early, late or in the middle of class. If you have a childcare problem one day and your child is of the age where he or she can sit and draw quietly, please feel free to bring him/her to class. Quiet babies are also welcome. Heck, noisy babies are welcome, too! **No computers, iPods, ear buds, etc. in class,** and please turn off your cell phone. If you need to listen for buzz alert of a message, for childcare situations or emergency, I will understand. The rules are about respecting others, not about being rigid about rules.

If you have **special needs** of which I should be aware, please do not hesitate to speak with me; let me know early on what special needs you may have and what I can do to help you. If you are registered with Disability Student Services, dss@umontana.edu, please let me know that at the beginning of the term, so that I can assist you in whatever ways possible to ensure your success in the course. I’m here to help you learn.

**Please note:** *The Native American Studies Department does not allow courses to be offered on a pass/no pass basis.*
For important calendar dates:

Please see the Cyberbear website [http://cyberbear.umt.edu/](http://cyberbear.umt.edu/) for important dates such as: last day to add/drop with refund on Cyberbear; last day to drop without refund by drop/add form; last day to withdraw. Incompletes are rarely available. I discourage Incompletes, because many students do not finish them and their grade turns to F.

An Incomplete is generally granted for unforeseen medical, personal, or family emergency that interferes with the end of the semester, so plan your time carefully and keep up with the work as you go.

A word or two about plagiarism:

Please know that plagiarism is defined as using another’s words or ideas (outside of common knowledge) directly or indirectly without citing them. It is appalling, but some students waste their own education and my time by plagiarizing off the Internet. If they can find it online, so can I, and academic deception will not be tolerated. Consequences of plagiarism can lead to your being expelled from the University. Please take this warning seriously. Do not plagiarize. The University’s official warning can be found on pg. 22 of the Catalog, which refers you to the Student Conduct Code (Academic Conduct), available on the web: [http://www.umt.edu/SA/VPSA/index.cfm/page/1321](http://www.umt.edu/SA/VPSA/index.cfm/page/1321). For more information on plagiarism, go to Plagiarism Online Handout: [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_plagiar.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_plagiar.html).

This course might be involved in a university-wide assessment of the efficacy of UM’s writing instruction. Thus, this course requires an electronic submission of an assignment with your personal author information removed, to be used for educational research and assessment of the writing program. Your paper will be stored in a database with no link to your name. A random selection of papers will be assessed by a group of faculty using a rubric that will be shared with you as part of the writing aspect of this course. I require that you submit at least one essay for university assessment.

This syllabus and schedule may be subject to changes, which will be announced in class. Check on Moodle regularly. (Moodle should be available by next week.)

What Readings are Required?

Two books and several articles, poems, articles, and stories will be required. A reading list will be provided; all short pieces will be available on Moodle, and the books will be on reserve at the library.

Please note: All readings assignments should be done by the day they are first listed on the syllabus, please bring these readings to class. Remember: If for some reason you do not have your reading done, come to class anyway!

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**NASX 235x**  
**Spring 2019**
Professor Kate Shanley & Marty Lopez

Please have readings done by the date they are listed on this schedule.

Changes and updates made to the daily schedule will be posted on Moodle.

Week One: It is in the Past (literally)

Week Two: Introduction to Oral Traditions
Monday, January 14:
Introduction of course and each other
Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Prayer
Assignment #1 hand-out

Wednesday, January 16:
Lecture: "Key Questions in the Study of Indigenous Oral Literatures."

Readings:
Office of Public Instruction, Indian Education: "Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians." (Seven Essential Understandings) **We will provide a link to a copy of this reading.**

Week Three: Origins and Definitions: What it means to be Human
Monday, January 21
MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY (No Class)

Wednesday, January 23

>>Assignment #1 Due<<

Week Four: Oral Traditions and Ceremonies
Monday, January 28
Reading: The Stars We Know: Crow Indian Astronomy and Lifeways, Prologue – Chap. 2., pp. xvii – 30.

Wednesday, January 30
Reading: The Stars We Know: Crow Indian Astronomy and Lifeways, Chap. 3 – 5, pp. 31-66.

Week Five: Oral Traditions and Ceremonies
Monday, February 4
Reading: The Stars We Know: Crow Indian Astronomy and Lifeways, Chap. 6-7, pp. 67-100.

Wednesday, February 6
Reading: The Stars We Know: Crow Indian Astronomy and Lifeways, Chap. 8-Appendix, 101-118.
**Week Six: Early Fiction and Autobiography**

Monday Tuesday, February 11
Readings:

>>Assignment #2 Due<<

Wednesday, February 13
Readings:

**Week Seven: Fiction and Autobiography**

Monday, February 18
PRESIDENTS DAY (No class)

Wednesday, February 20
Group Meetings

Reading: Absolon, Kathleen E. *Kaandossiwin: How We Come to Know* (Selections TBA)

**Week Eight: Public Oratory—Past and Present**

Monday, February 25
Reading: Winona LaDuke. (TBA)

Winona LaDuke (Out of Class Assignment)

Wednesday, February 27
Readings: Contemporary Poetry and Stories (TBA)

Groups Elder Project Meeting

**Week Nine: Preserving Knowledge, Oral History**

Monday, March 4
Guest Speaker: Kevin Kicking Woman, "Songs as an Expression of the Sacred."

Wednesday, March 6

(David Treuer—Sunday, March 10, 5 P.M.)

**Week Ten: Preserving Knowledge, Oral History**

Monday March 11
Guest Speaker: David Treuer

**Wednesday, March 13**

**Week Eleven: Preserving Knowledge, Oral History**
Monday, March 18

**Wednesday, March 20**

Group discussion/preparation: Elder Interview Project

>>Assignment #3 Due<<

**Week Twelve: Preserving Knowledge, Oral History**

**Monday, March 25 — SPRING BREAK (No Class)**

**Wednesday, March 27 — SPRING BREAK (No Class)**

**Week Thirteen: Intergenerational Storytelling**
Monday, April 1
Reading: Contemporary Poetry — (TBA)

**Wednesday, April 3**
Reading: Contemporary Fiction — (TBA)

**Week Fourteen: Intergenerational Storytelling**
Monday, April 8
Elder Project Presentation, Group #1
Elder Project Presentation, Group #2

**Wednesday, April 10**
Elder Project Presentation, Group #3
Elder Project Presentation, Group #4

**Week Fifteen: Intergenerational Storytelling**
Monday, April 15
Elder Project Presentation, Group #5
Elder Project Presentation, Group #6

**Wednesday, April 17**
Discuss projects and McNally article.
Week Sixteen: Contemporary Indigeneity

Monday, April 22
Contemporary Fiction and Issues in Native American Writing (TBA)

Wednesday, April 24
Last Day of Class. Attendance Mandatory. Evaluations.

Finals Week:
April 29 through May 3

>>Assignment #4 Due<<

SATURDAY, MAY 4, COMMENCEMENT

Have a great summer!