

AML 3285 (26092 Section 1SH1)

Native American Literature

Spring 2026

MEETINGS: Tuesdays period 4 (10:40-11:30), Thursdays periods 4-5 (10:40-12:35) in Matherly 0003

INSTRUCTOR: Prof. Susan Hegeman ("HEGG-a-man")

Department of English

EMAIL: shegeman@ufl.edu

OFFICE HOURS: Thursdays, 1-3 pm in Turlington 4119 or at other times by appointment, either in person or via Zoom. Zoom meeting room <https://ufl.zoom.us/j/3087752224> [Links to an external site.](#) [\(Links to an external site.\)](#)

Course Description

This course will provide an introduction to literature, especially novels, created by native North American authors of the 20th and 21st centuries. We will consider Native American and First Nations literature as a postcolonial literature and as a creative and collective interpretation of history and culture. We will also examine how contemporary literature addresses issues of concern to Indigenous people, including cultural and political sovereignty, cultural survival, representations of Indigenous people in non-native communities, and issues of environmental stewardship.

Course Objectives

Through genuine and persistent engagement with course materials, activities, and discussions, you will:

- gain knowledge of the histories, literatures, and cultures of Indigenous North Americans
- gain knowledge of classic and contemporary texts and critical issues in the field of Native American literary studies
- develop skills in reading, analyzing, discussing, and writing about complex literary texts
- develop skills in using contextual cultural, historical, and other information in literary analysis
- apply knowledge of the issues and contexts of Native American literature in written analysis of literary works

Required Course Materials

The following novels are required for the course (listed in the order in which we will read them):

- Tommy Orange, *There There* (Vintage) 290 pages
- D'Arcy McNickle, *The Surrounded* (U Oklahoma Press) 315 pages
- N. Scott Momaday, *House Made of Dawn* 208 pages
- Tomson Highway, *Kiss of the Fur Queen* (U Oklahoma Press) 306 pages
- Le Anne Howe, *Shell Shaker* (Aunt Lute Books) 216 pages
- Louise Erdrich, *The Round House* (Harper Perennial) 336 pages

We will also be watching and discussing the following film, available as a DVD in UF Libraries course reserves, and via streaming services such as Amazon, Tubi, Apple TV.

- *Reel Injun: On the Trail of the Hollywood Indian* (d. Neil Diamond 2009)

All other course materials—supplementary readings, syllabus, documents, assignments, schedule of assignments and lecture/discussion topics—are posted on the course's Canvas e-learning website.

Course Content Note

The study of the history and literature of Native Americans and First Nations people necessitates occasionally reading about and discussing disturbing topics, including violence, racism, and sexual abuse. If you ever feel the need to leave a class discussion, either for a short time or for the rest of the class session, you may do so without academic penalty. You will, however, be responsible for any material you miss. If you do leave the room for a significant time, please make arrangements to get notes from another student or see me individually. You are welcome to discuss your personal reactions to the course material with me in office hours. If you or a friend are in distress, please contact [U Matter, We Care](#) or the Counseling and Wellness Center at 352 392-1575.

Students are encouraged to employ critical thinking and to rely on data and verifiable sources to interrogate all assigned readings and subject matter in this course as a way of determining whether they agree with their classmates and/or their instructor. No lesson is intended to espouse, promote, advance, inculcate, or compel a particular feeling, perception, viewpoint, or belief.

Course and University Policies

This course complies with all UF academic policies. Those policies--including Class Attendance, Accommodations for Disabilities, Grading, Course Evaluation, Academic

Honesty, and In-Class Recording--as well as Academic and Campus Health and Wellness Resources for students are available here: [Academic Policies and ResourcesLinks to an external site.https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/Links to an external site.](https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/Links%20to%20an%20external%20site)

Course-Specific Policies

Class Comportment Expectations

Respectful interactions among students are expected. Participation grades will be negatively affected by a failure to adhere to professional, polite, scholarly, and respectful communication in all formats, both written and oral.

Academic Honesty and use of Generative AI

According to the [Student Conduct CodeLinks to an external site.](#),

"Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

1. Stealing, misquoting, insufficiently paraphrasing, or patch-writing.
2. Self-plagiarism, which is the reuse of the Student's own submitted work, or the simultaneous submission of the Student's own work, without the full and clear acknowledgment and permission of the Faculty to whom it is submitted.
3. Submitting materials from any source without proper attribution.
4. Submitting a document, assignment, or material that, in whole or in part, is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment the Student did not author."

Do not use Generative AI (LLMs such as ChatGPT, etc.) for your writing, research, or other work for this class. LLM outputs, simulations of training data found on the internet, are inaccurate and often biased. Using LLMs makes your work bland, vague, and wrong, and impedes the development of skills. Building skills as a thinker, reader, and writer equips you for success as a professional, for participation as a citizen, and for fulfillment as a human. That development only happens with effort, practice, errors, time, and revision. Your work in this course should be entirely made by you, and work not made by you will be considered an academic integrity violation and evaluated accordingly. Similarly, all assignments, feedback, and grades will be made by me without Generative AI. Ideas are social, so let's make them together.

Course Requirements and Grading

GRADING SCALE

A 4.0	94-100	940-1000	C 2.0	73-76	730-769
A- 3.67	90-93	900-939	C- 1.67	70-72	700-729
B+ 3.33	87-89	870-899	D+ 1.33	67-69	670-699
B 3.0	83-86	830-869	D 1.0	63-66	630-669
B- 2.67	80-82	800-829	D- 0.67	60-62	600-629
C+ 2.33	77-79	770-799	E 0.00	0-59	0-599

BREAKDOWN OF FINAL GRADE

Attendance and Participation	200 points; 20% of final grade
Discussion posts	200 points; 20% of final grade
Formal Paper 1	300 points; 30% of final grade
Formal Paper 2	300 points; 30% of final grade

Attendance and participation (20% of final grade)

Attendance will be taken by roll call. [University policy](#)[Links to an external site.](#) specifies acceptable reasons for absence from class, including sponsored events (e.g., athletics), religious holidays, and illness. If you are absent or plan to be absent from class for an acceptable reason please email the instructor. Documentation may be required.

Students who are ill with a potentially contagious condition are expected to be considerate of others and self-quarantine. Students' grades will not be adversely affected by this if you inform the instructor of your medical situation. Students are expected to contact the instructor if they anticipate extended absences so that we can work on a plan to keep up with the class.

In this class, we will all learn by respectfully listening to, reading, and engaging with each others' ideas. It is therefore expected that students come to class prepared to discuss the material assigned for that day. Students will be graded on their attendance and on the quality of their oral and written contributions to classroom exercises and discussion. The best grades will be given to those who offer informed, incisive, and relevant comments regarding the course readings and related discussions. Poor attendance will adversely affect students' participation grade.

We will actively practice professional, polite, scholarly, and respectful communication in all formats, both written and oral. Participation grades will be negatively affected by a failure to adhere to these expectations.

Discussion posts (200 points; 20% of final grade)

Students will be asked to write weekly responses to prompts related to the reading. Some of these prompts may require research or additional reading to complete. They are designed to help students prepare for class discussions and develop further contexts for understanding the assigned works of literature.

Formal Papers (300 points each; 30% of final grade each)

Students will write two formal academic papers, of 1800-2400 words each. The paper assignments, including topics and guidelines, will be announced on Canvas well in advance of the due dates of March 22 and April 27, respectively.

Papers will be graded holistically on the following criteria, in general order of emphasis:

- Argumentation: clear thesis, logical sequence of argument, logical conclusions
- Use of appropriate evidence from the texts
- Demonstrated understanding of contextual issues in relation to works discussed (accurate explication of concepts and arguments; accurate use of terminology and historical information; accurate application to texts)
- Mechanics: punctuation, spelling, word choice and usage, sentence construction, paragraphing
- Proofreading and citations

Schedule of Readings and Discussions

As we go through the semester, this schedule may be modified based on the interests and needs of the class as a whole. Any such changes will be communicated early, in class and via Canvas. Students are responsible for staying informed about any changes in the class schedule by regularly consulting the Canvas course page.

WEEK 1

Tuesday, January 13: Course overview

Thursday, January 15: American Indian/First Nations/Native American/Inuit/Indigenous: what's in a name? What is a land acknowledgment?

READING:

- [Native Land Digital map](#)
- [Analysis: How well-meaning Land Acknowledgments can erase Indigenous People and sanitize history](#)

WEEK 2

Tuesday, January 20: Some poems about identity and literature

READING:

- ["we acknowledge ourselves" by Aisa Akootchook Warden \(l̓n̓upiak\)](#)
- ["How to Write the Great American Indian Novel" by Sherman Alexie \(Spokane\)](#)

Thursday, Jan. 22 Discuss *Reel Injun* (2009, d. Neil Diamond)

WEEK 3

Tuesday, Jan. 27 Tommy Orange, *There There*

Thursday, Jan. 29 Continue Orange, *There There*

WEEK 4

Tuesday, February 3: Continue Orange, *There There*

Thursday, Feb. 5 Conclude discussion of Orange, *There There*

WEEK 5

Tuesday, Feb. 10 Begin D'Arcy McNickle, *The Surrounded*

Thursday, Feb. 12 continue McNickle, *The Surrounded*

WEEK 6

Tuesday, Feb. 17 continue McNickle, *The Surrounded*

Thursday, Feb. 19 Conclude *The Surrounded*; begin discussing Momaday's *House Made of Dawn*

WEEK 7

Tuesday, Feb. 24 Momaday, *House Made of Dawn*

Thursday Feb. 26 Momaday, *House Made of Dawn*

WEEK 8

Tuesday, March 3 Conclude *House Made of Dawn*

Thursday, March 5 begin Highway, *Kiss of the Fur Queen*

WEEK 9

Tuesday, March 10 Highway, *Kiss of the Fur Queen*

Thursday, March 12 Highway, *Kiss of the Fur Queen*

WEEK 10

March 16-20: no classes; spring break

WEEK 11

Tuesday, March 24 Le Anne Howe, *Shell Shaker*

Thursday, March 26 continue Howe, *Shell Shaker*

WEEK 12

Tuesday, March 31 Howe, *Shell Shaker*

Thursday, April 2 Conclude *Shell Shaker*

WEEK 13

Tuesday, April 7 Erdrich, *The Round House*

Thursday, April 9 Erdrich, *The Round House*

WEEK 14

Tuesday, April 14 Erdrich, *The Round House*

Thursday, April 16 Erdrich, *The Round House*

WEEK 15

Tuesday, April 21 Course conclusion