

Medicine Hat College honours and acknowledges that we are situated on Treaty 7 and neighbour to Treaty 4 territory, traditional lands of the Siksika (Blackfoot), Kainai (Blood), Piikani (Peigan), Stoney-Nakoda, and Tsuut’ina (Sarcee) as well as the Cree, Sioux, and the Saulteaux bands of the Ojibwa peoples. We also honour and acknowledge that we are on the homelands of the Métis Nation within Region III.

ENGL 353/3353

**North American Indigenous Literature**

**Tues./Thurs. 10:50 – 12:05**

**Dr. Geoff Hamilton**

**Office Hours (rm S129): Tues./Thurs., 1-3:30pm (or by appointment)**

This course examines a selection of North American Indigenous writing. Among the authors explored here are Zitkala-Ša (Yankton Sioux), Thomas King (Cherokee), Louise Erdrich (Turtle Mountain Chippewa), and Tommy Orange (Cheyenne/Arapaho). Our discussions will engage a group of overlapping topics: the political, philosophical, and spiritual challenges facing contemporary Indigenous peoples; the relevance of traditional tribal beliefs to contemporary environmental ethics; the distinctiveness of Indigenous literary aesthetics; and the relationship of North American Indigenous literature to Western literature more broadly.

**Required Reading**

Print editions

*Old Indian Legends*, *American Indian Stories*, Zitkala-Ša

*The Truth About Stories*, Thomas King

*Green Grass, Running Water*, Thomas King

*There, There*, Tommy Orange

Digital texts available online via Blackboard

“The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis,” Lynn White

“Dear John Wayne,” Louise Erdrich

*Poetry in Voice* (<https://www.poetryinvoice.com/tags/indigenous>)

*Poetry Foundation: Native American Poetry and Culture*

(<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/collections/144560/native-american-poetry-and-culture>)

**Assignments, Weighting, Deadlines**

Reading Responses: 20% (Sept. 12, Oct. 1, Oct. 29, Nov. 14)

Short Essay: 15% (Oct. 10)

Poetry Presentation: 12.5% (Various)

Final Essay Presentation: 12.5% (Various)

Final Essay: 25% (Dec. 9)

Participation: 15% (Ongoing)

***READING & ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE***

*\* This schedule may change in response to the direction and pace of our discussions.*

*TAS* 🡪 *The Truth about Stories*

*BB* 🡪 Blackboard (accessed online)

*AIS* 🡪 *American Indian Stories, Legends, and Other Writings*

*GGRW* 🡪 *Green Grass, Running Water*

*TT* 🡪 *There, There*

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| **DATE** | **TOPICS** | **ASSIGNED READING** | **ASSIGNMENTS** |
| **Sept. 5** | Course Introduction |  |  |
| 10 | Thomas King:  Creation Stories; Narrative & Ideology | *TAS,* “You’ll Never Believe What Happened,” pgs 1-29 |  |
| 12 |  | *BB*: “The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis,” pgs 1-9 | Reading Response #1 |
| 17 | Cultural Stereotyping | *TAS*, “You’re Not the Indian I Had in Mind,” pgs 31-60 |  |
| 19 |  | *TAS*, “Let Me Entertain You,” pgs 61-89 |  |
| 24 | Louise Erdrich:  Cultural Legacies & Survivance | BB: “Dear John Wayne” |  |
| 26 | Orality; Literacy;  Racial Essentialism | *TAS*, “A Million Porcupines Crying in the Dark,” pgs 91-119, “What Is It About Us That You Don’t Like?” pgs 121-151 |  |
| **Oct. 1** | Zitkala-Ša:  Mythic Transplantations | *AIS*, “Old Indian Legends,” pgs 3-26 | Reading Response #2 |
| 3 |  | cont., pgs 27-63 |  |
| 8 | Zitkala-Ša:  Indigenous Pasts and Futures | *AIS*, “American Indian Stories: Impressions of an Indian Childhood, The School Days of an Indian Girl, An Indian Teacher Among Indians,” pgs 67-113 |  |
| 10 | cont. | cont., *AIS*,“The Great Spirit,” pgs 114-117; “A Dream of Her Grandfather,” 141-142 | Short Essay |
| 15 | \*Poetry Presentations\* |  |  |
| 17 | cont. |  |  |
| 22 | cont. |  |  |
| 24 | cont. |  |  |
| 29 | Thomas King:  Mythic Structures & Modern Adaptations | *GGRW*, pgs 1-193 | Reading Response #3 |
| 31 |  | cont. |  |
| **Nov. 5** |  | cont., pgs 194-431 |  |
| 7 |  | cont. |  |
| 12 |  | \* Study Break \* |  |
| 14 | Tommy Orange:  Urban Indigeneity | *TT*, pgs 3-61 | Reading Response #4 |
| 19 |  | cont., pgs 62-186 |  |
| 21 |  | cont., pgs 187-290 |  |
| 26 | \*Final Essay Presentations\* |  |  |
| 28 | cont. |  |  |
| **Dec. 3** | cont. |  |  |
| 5 | cont. |  |  |
|  |  |  | **\*Final Essay Due Dec. 9\*** |