

This syllabus has been provided as a reference tool for students considering this course. It has been modified to follow Senate regulations. Current students enrolled in any undergraduate course must obtain the most recent syllabus from their course instructor or from their course website. This is not the latest version.



Department of English & Writing Studies

First Nations Literature English 3880G (001) Winter 2014

Instructor: Prof. Pauline Wakeham

Date/Time: Tuesday 1:30pm-2:20pm
Thursday 1:30pm-3:20pm

Location: University College 59

Prerequisites

At least 60% in 1.0 of English 1020E or 1022E or 1024E or 1035E or 1036E or both English 1027F/G and 1028F/G, or permission of the Department.

Antirequisite(s): First Nations Studies 3880F/G.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Course Description

Welcome to First Nations Literature! This course will provide students with an opportunity to engage with Indigenous concepts and practices of storytelling and to consider the many shapes that Indigenous storytelling takes, including oral narratives, writings, song, and visual and performance arts. Studying the work of Indigenous artists from across Canada, we will learn about the diversity of Indigenous communities and cultures as well as the particular lands and socio-historical contexts that inform their work. In so doing, we will consider how Indigenous artistic practices express the complexity and vitality of First Peoples' cultural imaginations and ways of knowing.

Objectives:

Successful students who complete the course will be better able to:

- Enrich their knowledge of First Nations literary and cultural production in Canada;
- Consider how the study of First Nations literary and cultural production benefits from an attention to Indigenous ways of knowing and, in particular, Indigenous practices of storytelling and their vital importance to many Indigenous communities;
- Consider the relationship between socio-historical contexts and Indigenous literary and cultural production;
- Hone their critical thinking and writing skills through in-class application of such skills to readings of literary and cultural texts;
- Develop distinctive intellectual voices through the practice of engaged listening and thoughtful class participation as well as through the provision of feedback on written work.

Course Materials

Required Texts:

Thomas King, *Truth and Bright Water*

Christy Jordan-Fenton and Margaret Pokiak-Fenton, *Fatty Legs: A True Story*

Custom Course Book (Available at the University Bookstore)

Please note that all texts listed on the syllabus with web links are not included in the Course Book. These texts may be accessed directly online.

Methods of Evaluation

Response Paper (3 pages)	Due Feb 27	20%
Final Essay (8 pages)	Due Apr 1	35%
Participation (Ongoing)		10%
Final Exam (TBA)		35%

A student must receive a passing grade for both term work and the final examination in order to receive a passing grade for the course. This applies to all courses in all programs offered by the department. Students whose term and final exam grades average 50% or above, even though one of the two is a failure, shall receive a default grade of 48%. **Please note:** The department of English & Writing Studies does not release final grades. All undergraduate grade reports will be available online from the Office of the Registrar.

Students are fully responsible for looking at and being familiar with the information posted on the department website at <http://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/info%20for%20students.html#grade>.

Timetable:

January 7	Welcome and Introduction
January 9	Indigenous Cultures of Storytelling Brian Maracle, "The First Words" Thomas King, "'You'll Never Believe What Happened' is Always a Great Way to Start" (from <i>The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative</i>) Note: You can also listen to an audio recording of King telling this story on the CBC's website (select "Part 1": http://www.cbc.ca/ideas/masseychives/2003/11/07/masseychives-2003-the-truth-about-stories-a-native-narrative)
January 14	Storytelling Across Time Lee Maracle, "First Wives Club: Coast Salish Style"
January 16	What Shapes Can Stories Take? Indigenous Orature/ Indigenous Literature Taqralik Partridge, "Eskimo Chick" and "After an Argument" (listen to Taqralik performing these songs: http://www.myspace.com/tagralikpartridge/music/songs/) Miss Christie Lee, "Experience" Ostwele, "B. Medicine/ Baphela Bantu" Note: The last two songs can be heard Via the Beat Nation website at: www.beatnation.org
January 21	Border-Crossing Stories Thomas King, <i>Truth and Bright Water</i>
January 23	Stories that Remake the World

- Thomas King, *Truth and Bright Water*
- January 28 **Storied Communities**
Thomas King, *Truth and Bright Water*
- January 30 **Storied Communities: Indigenous Literary Nationalism**
Thomas King, *Truth and Bright Water*
- February 4 **In What Languages Can Stories Be Told?**
Maria Campbell, "Jacob"
- February 6 **In What Languages Can Stories be Told?**
Marilyn Dumont, "The Devil's Language" and "Acimowina"
Gregory Scofield, "Prayer Song for the Returning of Names and Sons"
Neal McLeod, "Cree Poetic Discourse"
- February 11 **Re-Writing Gender**
From *The Indian Act*
Lenore Keeshig-Tobias, "(a found poem)"
Jeannette Armstrong, "Indian Woman"
- February 13 **Remembering the Disappeared**
Christine Welsh, dir. *Finding Dawn* (Please note: this film will be viewed in class).
- February 18-20: Reading Week, No Classes
- February 25 **Contexts for Reading Settler Colonialism in Canada**
Alanis Obomsawin, *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance* (available for viewing in UC's film library as well as online at: http://www.nfb.ca/film/kanehsatake_270_years_of_resistance/).
Please note: This film should be viewed prior to attending class. It will not be shown during class time.
Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, "Colonialism"
Beth Cuthand, "Post-Oka Kinda Woman"
- February 27 **Writing Land Claims**
Drew Hayden Taylor, "A Blurry Image on the Six O'Clock News"
Response Paper Due
- March 4 **Telling Stories Through Poetry**
Preparing for Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm's Visit
Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm, "poem without end #3," "stray bullets (oka re/vision)," "the book you left: in memory," and "indian enough"
- March 6 **A Class Visit with Kateri Akiwenzie Damm**

- March 11 **The Residential School System in Canada and the Question of Reconciliation**
Visit the website for Truth and Reconciliation Canada at <http://www.trc.ca/>
Prime Minister Stephen Harper's 2008 Residential Schools Apology:
<https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100015644/1100100015649>
J.R. Miller, "Residential Schools and Reconciliation":
<http://activehistory.ca/papers/history-papers-13/>
Roland Chrisjohn and Tanya Wasacase, "Half-Truths and Whole Lies: Rhetoric in the 'Apology' and The Truth and Reconciliation Commission"
- March 13 **Residential Schools: Writing as Resurgence**
Rita Joe, "I Lost My Talk" and "Hated Structure: Indian Residential School"
- March 18 **Reading the Child through Children's Literature**
Christy Jordan-Fenton and Margaret Pokiak-Fenton, *Fatty Legs: A True Story*
- March 20 **Reading the Child through Children's Literature**
Christy Jordan-Fenton and Margaret Pokiak-Fenton, *Fatty Legs: A True Story*
Please also spend time examining the *Where are the Children?* online exhibition at: <http://www.wherearethekidscanada/en/>
- March 25 **Final Novel: TBA by Class Vote**
- March 27 **Final Novel: TBA by Class Vote**
- April 1 **Final Novel: TBA by Class Vote**
- April 3 **Storied Resistance: Idle No More**
Pam Palmater, "Idle No More: What do we want and where are we headed?":
<http://rabble.ca/blogs/bloggers/pamela-palmater/ZO13/01fwhat-idle-no-more-1novement-really>
Glen Coulthard: "Idle No More in Historical Context":
<http://decolonizatiOH.wordpress.com/ZO12/12/24/idlenomore-in-historical-context/>
Read Idle No More's Manifesto: <http://idlenomore.ca/manifesto>
The Music of Idle No More: <http://id1enomore.ca/about-us/music> (Listen to @DREZUS' "Red Winter" and Reddnation and Asani's "Take a Stand (Idle No More Tribute)")
- April 8 **Class Review and Examination Preparation**

Assignments:

Response Paper Assignment: This assignment can be submitted to the Professor at any time during the semester, up until February 27th, 2014. After that date, late assignments will be assessed the standard late penalties outlined on this syllabus.

In order to provide students with feedback on their written work prior to the formal essay assignment for the course, students are asked to write a 3-page response to a text of their choosing from the course readings.

This assignment is also designed to provide students with practicing the skills of close reading and critical analysis that will be central to the final essay assignment for the course. Students are allowed to build upon their response paper-to revise, hone, and extend it-for their final paper for the course. In other words, this response paper assignment can be a starting point or a first draft for the final essay. That said, if students opt to build upon their response paper work for their final essay assignment, they must substantially work with the feedback they have received on the response paper assignment. Failure to address the feedback offered on the response paper could result in a lower grade on the final essay.

If students wish to pursue a new topic distinct from their response papers for their final essay, that is also acceptable. The response paper may be thought of as laying the ground-work for a longer, more detailed essay on the same topic.

Key components of the assignment:

1. The response paper should be written in proper paragraph form. An introductory paragraph should identify the text being studied as well as the central topic for the paper. Then, the paper should move to a few “body paragraphs” where close readings of at least one substantial passage from the text is performed. The final paragraph of the response paper should be a brief conclusion that addresses why the chosen topic for the paper is important to the literary text being studied. The conclusion can also gesture toward further questions about this same topic.
2. The response paper does not need to have a thesis statement (although that is welcome), but it should have a **clear statement identifying the one key topic or theme about a text** that will be discussed in detail in the paper.
3. The response paper **must also devote at least one full page of space to performing a close reading of a selected passage from the text** that relates to the key topic for the response paper. The passage should be photocopied, highlighted, and appended to the end of the assignment for grading clarity. As a result, the passage need not be quoted in full in the body of the response paper.
Students are welcome to refer to more than one passage from the text, but they should focus on one primary, substantial passage and devote at least one page to discussion of that passage alone.
4. The close reading should connect the analysis of textual details (word choice, literary devices, narrative framing, etc.) to the overarching topic you have identified as your focus for the paper. Explain what this passage suggests about the topic you are interested in and formulate an interpretation of the passage substantiated by textual evidence.
Effective close readings should quote from the text to identify particular words or phrases that are significant and explain why. Close readings can also identify literary devices (i.e. metaphor, onomatopoeia, anaphora, etc.) and consider how these devices help shape the meaning of the passage.

Essay Assignment:

1. This assignment must be an argumentative and analytic scholarly essay that demonstrates strong critical thinking skills, the development of an original argument, and the careful utilization of textual details or “evidence” to support the contentions made in the thesis statement. Essays should include a clear and focused thesis statement followed by the coherent and sustained development of the argument throughout the paper.

2. Students are not required to consult secondary sources for this paper but they are welcome to do so should they want to. If secondary sources are consulted, however, they must be acknowledged and cited properly and a Works Cited must accompany the essay. For further details regarding formatting and correct citation, please refer to the instructions listed in the following section of this syllabus.

Please Note: The Professor will consider proposals for alternative forms of written final assignments. In order to pursue this option, the student must provide the Professor with a 300-word written proposal regarding the alternative assignment, describing what the assignment would entail, what its topic would be, and what the rationale for pursuing such an assignment would be. Proposals for alternative assignments must be submitted in hard copy at any point during the semester up until the beginning of class on March 4th, 2014. After that time, proposals for alternative assignments will no longer be considered. The Professor reserves the right to not grant permission for an alternative assignment if the proposal is deemed unsuitable.

Important Information Regarding Assignments:

- All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the scheduled due date. Assignments handed in after the commencement of class on the scheduled due date will be assessed a late penalty of 1%. Any assignments submitted after the due date will be assessed a late penalty (2% per day, including weekends). Assignments must be submitted either directly to the Professor at the beginning of class or submitted as late and handed in to the secure essay drop-off box outside the English Department office.
- Extensions will only be granted with medical certification or under other extenuating circumstances and should, when possible, be arranged with the Professor in advance. For further information, please see the section on “Academic Accommodation” in this syllabus.
- All assignments should be submitted on 8.5 x 11” paper, with 1” margins, double spaced, and in Times New Roman 12-point font. Please do not use extra spaces between each paragraph. Please staple your essay pages together rather than using binders or plastic report covers. Essays must be submitted in paper copy. Email, computer disks, and faxes will not be accepted.
- All bibliographic notation should follow the MLA method of parenthetical citation. All assignments that use secondary sources should be accompanied with a “Works Cited” page. For information regarding correct MLA formatting, please consult the Power Point Presentation placed on the course WebCT site. As well, students may consult *The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, which is available in the reference section of the DB Weldon Library.
- Please retain one hard copy and one electronic version of every assignment you submit in this class. As well, please retain all returned, marked assignments until you receive your final grade for the course.

Final Examination: The final exam will feature two types of questions:

1. **Identifying Quotations:** Students will be asked to identify short quotations excerpted from texts studied throughout the term. In proper paragraph form, students should provide the title of the text as well as the full name of the author. Following that, the written response should explain the significance of the particular quotation to the key themes, concepts, and/or arguments developed in the text. Marks will be assigned for the clarity, detail, and insight of the response, as well as attention to spelling and grammar.

2. **Formal Essay Responses:** Essays must have a clear thesis statement and structure consisting of an introduction, multiple body paragraphs, and a conclusion. Marks will be awarded for the strength and originality of the argument; for the ability to mobilize textual evidence to support the argument; and for clarity, coherence, style, and grammar.

A Note on Class Participation:

- Attendance is required at all lectures. Repeated absences from class may result in a formal request to be debarred from writing the final exam, as set out in the Western Academic Calendar: "Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class ... will be reported to the Dean (after due warning has been given). On the recommendation of the Department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination." Debarment from writing the final exam automatically results in failure of the course.
- The course participation mark will be based on students' attendance and punctuality, thoughtful engagement with course readings, relevant and insightful contributions to class discussion, and respectful engagement with the ideas of other classmates. Adequate preparation for each class involves reading all assigned materials at least once and preferably twice before class, making notes about these texts (underlining or marking key passages, reflecting on your responses to the texts, etc.), and preparing potential questions or comments to raise in class.
- A key part of being prepared for and ready to participate in class is bringing hard copies of the assigned readings for the week. We will be working with these texts closely in class discussion, so it is vital that you bring them with you.

Accommodation

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. The UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and further information regarding this policy can be found at http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf.

Downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC):

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf

Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Plagiarism:

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

Plagiarism Checking:

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

Support Services

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western:
<http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.