

# LIT 491.01 Special Topics: Leslie Marmon Silko

Draft/ Syllabus & Schedule – Autumn 2017

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## Some introductory perspectives on animism and pluralism:

“The truth is the Ghost Dance did not end with the murder of Big Foot and one hundred and forty-four Ghost Dance worshipers at Wounded Knee. The Ghost Dance has never ended, it has continued, and the people have never stopped dancing; they may call it by other names, but when they dance, their hearts are reunited with the spirits of beloved ancestors and the loved ones recently lost in the struggle. Throughout the Americas, from Chile to Canada, the people have never stopped dancing; as the living dance, they are joined again with all our ancestors before them, who cry out, who demand justice, and who call the people to take back the Americas!” -- Wilson Weasel Tail in Leslie Silko’s *Almanac of the Dead* 724

My maternal grandmother used to say it was crucial we have a place of our own. Listening intently, I learned that our lives were dependent upon a plethora of animistic factors immersed in ethereal realities. Basically, she instructed that the very ground on which we all stood, Grandmother Earth, was the embodiment of a former Supernatural being. She was all of nature, this Grandmother: She was the foundation for rivers, lakes, fields and forests; she provided homes and sustenance for insects, birds, reptiles, fish, animals, and human beings. She held everything together, including the clouds, stars, sun, and moon. Our sole obligation, my grandmother instructed, in having been created in the first place by the Holy Grandfather, is to maintain the Principal Religion of the Earthlodge clans. (Ray Young Bear *Remnants of the First Earth*, xii)

If we wish to understand the cognitive orientation of the Ojibwa, there is an ethno-linguistic problem to be considered: What is the meaning of animate in Ojibwa thinking? Are such generic properties of objects as responsiveness to outer stimulation--sentience, mobility, self-movement, or even reproduction--primary characteristics attributed to all objects of the animate classes irrespective of their categories as physical subjects in our thinking? . . . Since stones are grammatically animate [in Ojibwa language], I once asked an old man: Are all the stones we see about us here alive? He reflected a long while and then replied, “No! But some are.” This qualified answer made a lasting impression on me. And it is thoroughly consistent with the other data that indicate that the Ojibwa are not animists in the sense that they dogmatically attribute

living souls to inanimate objects such as stones. The hypothesis which suggests itself to me is that the allocation of stones to an animate grammatical category is part of a culturally constituted grammatic set. It does not involve a consciously formulated theory about the nature of stones. It leaves a door open that our orientation on dogmatic grounds keeps shut tight. (A. Irving Hallowell “Ojibwa Ontology, Behavior and World View Culture in History,” 25)

On the undersurface of every leaf a million movable lips are engaged in devouring carbon dioxide and expelling oxygen. All together, 25 million square miles of leaf surface are daily engaged in this miracle of photosynthesis, producing oxygen and food for man and beast. (Peter Tompkins and Christopher Bird, *The Secret Life of Plants*, ix)

The human world is not just a cultural patchwork but also a political one. Tremendous numbers of men and women owe their allegiance not just, and sometimes not principally, to the state but also, or above all, to an entirely different “nation,” one that is often oppressed, maligned, castigated, and sometimes threatened with extinction; for no other reason than the mere fact of existing simultaneously with one or more nation-states.

This community-oriented dimension of human identity and membership, and the monistic tendencies of actual or aspiring nation-states to swallow it up or react to it with violence, has given human rights a global relevance. (Ronald Niezen. *The Origins of Indigenism: Human Rights and the Politics of Identity*, 193)

European civilization’s neglect of the natural world and its needs has clearly been encouraged by a style of awareness that disparages sensorial reality, denigrating the visible and tangible order of things on behalf of some absolute source assumed to exist entirely beyond, or outside of, the bodily world. . . . Each of these two ancient cultures [Hebraic and Greek] seems to have sown the seeds of our contemporary estrangement – one seeming to establish the spiritual or religious ascendancy of humankind over nature, the other effecting a more philosophical or rational dissociation of the human intellect from the organic world. (David Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous*, 94-95)

Thus the evolution of human perception from experiencing nature as “thou” to the objective exploitation of nature as “it” has led us into a world that we are able to manipulate with increasing and even frightening skill, but which is also, for many, increasingly devoid of meaning. It seems to me that the environmental movement of recent decades, at least in part and wearing many different guises, represents an unconscious effort to reestablish “being” in nature. (William H. Eddy, *The Other Side of the World*, 103)

**Prerequisites:**

This is an advanced course in Indigenous cultural studies and ecocriticism. Familiarity with Native American history, cultures, and literatures is necessary. Please talk to me if your grounding in this field is not solid.

**Office hours:**

Wednesday & Thursday, 2-3:30pm, and many other times by appointment. Please note: be sure to confirm an appointment time even during posted office hours. Otherwise I might be with another student or at the copy machine.

**DESCRIPTION**

This seminar in Native American literary studies will focus on a major American and Native American author at the turn of the millennium. Leslie Marmon Silko has been an influential voice in the recent flowering of Native American literature since the publication of her 1977 novel, *Ceremony*.

The course explores Silko's three major novels, *Ceremony*, *Almanac of the Dead*, and *Gardens in the Dunes*, as well as the full body of her work in poetry, essays, short fiction, memoir, film, photography, and other visual art. Some of the additional primary texts will be *Laguna Woman*; *Storyteller*; *The Delicacy and Strength of Lace* (with poet James Wright); *Sacred Water*; *Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit*; *The Turquoise Ledge*; and *Oceanstory*.

Secondary texts will include criticism focusing on Silko, including the professor's recent publications, *Leslie Marmon Silko: Ceremony; Almanac of the Dead; Gardens in the Dunes* (2016) and *That Dream Shall Have a Name: Native Americans Rewriting America* (2013); as well as other essay collections devoted to Silko's work, such as *LMS: A Collection of Critical Essays* (2001); *LMS: A Literary Companion* (2011); and volumes devoted to her specific major titles.

The course maps Silko's place in the broad context of American literary history and her pivotal role in prompting other Indigenous writers to enter the conversations she helped to launch. We engage with her historical themes of land, ethnicity, race, gender, trauma, and healing, while examining her narrative craft and her mythic lyricism.

Open to upper-division undergraduates as well as graduate students, the course's requirements will include short essay responses and analyses, online and in-class discussions, presentations, and a semester project to be developed in close consultation with the professor.

**Here are some contextual questions**, drawing from Indigenous literary expression, research in ecocriticism, Native American cultural studies, and political theory, as they may apply to Silko's oeuvre. Many of these questions derive from my thesis that pluralism is the political expression of animism.

How does academic inquiry combine with experience and "community" to question ancient, modern, postmodern, and postcolonial ideas of nationhood in the political dimension and personhood in the spiritual dimension?

How do Indigenous articulations of animism (for want of a better term), as they resonate with material feminism and quantum physics open a door into reconsiderations of founding structures of Western thought such as mind and matter, civilization and wilderness?

How does ecocriticism's fundamental critique of the nature/ culture divide apply to theoretical questions and to textual questions in Silko? How do literary and theoretical texts in "literature and the

environment," in Indigenous studies, and in political science by writers from diverse backgrounds bear on emerging shifts in modern approaches to nature and nation?

What do Native literary representations of authenticity, identity, community, and sovereignty suggest for approaches to understanding Silko's texts and contexts?

How do Native humor and irony work in those representations?

How does Silko represent Indigenous structures of identity in relation to various definitions of national identity and nationhood in a global culture?

How does Silko represent Indigenous structures of identity related to personhood within human communities and in the more-than-human world?

How does Silko approach contemporary and historical issues in Native American Studies?

How has ecocriticism developed so far, and in what directions do Silko's contributions to Indigenous and general American literature shape ecocritical reading?

What aspects of Indigenous literatures does ecocriticism clarify?

How does Silko represent interrelations of culture and nature, with what significance for ethics of land and literature?

How do Silko's various literary constructs of gender relate to Indigenous and non-Indigenous culture-nature systems?

How does Indigenous literature question the very binary of culture and nature?

What is an ethics of criticism for interpretation and representation of Indigenous cultural property?

How are issues in Indian country of environmental degradation related legally, politically, historically, and ideologically to issues of race, class, and gender in America?

What is the relation between environment and language?

How does the land speak?

If a "sense of place" drives literature as the "environment" drives experience, how does literary study attend to that environment, the ground, in a text? How are tribal sovereignty, community, identity, authenticity, and humor related to the natural environment of Native texts? How would an ecological approach to literature change the way it is written or read? How would ecological scientific insights about the "nature" of humanity and the rest of the animate and inanimate world change literary study? Literary attention to the environment – either its presence or its absence – in a story filters through some

of the same lenses through which more common narrative elements such as character, plot, and setting are represented. For instance, those lenses may include gender in the feminization of the land. They may include race in the identification of the wilderness with Native Americans or earth with African Americans. They may include class in the politics and cultural values of land ownership and of working the land. We can understand stories on or off the land, in “streams” of consciousness, in “natural” and “unnatural” metaphors and analogies, in various mind maps, partly in terms of such ecological lenses. How we represent the land can be as much a projection of our own “nature” as a reflection of nature and the environment, so we can explore those projections as we read the land and its stories. We can explore different representations of the land from writers of different genders and ethnicities. If we begin to look at our representations of nature and of ourselves from an environmental or ecological perspective on Indigenous community, we begin to see new dynamics in the text.

Following on such questions about Silko, about ecocriticism, Indigenous literature, national identity, about ontology and epistemology, the nature of being and knowing, the course also looks through more specific theoretical issues of the divide or non-divide of nature and culture. We will consider how Silko addresses some theoretical dimensions of that fundamental body/mind, nature/culture split of Western thinking versus philosophical systems of interrelation and balance in Indigenous and other non-Western cultures. These perspectives will bear on the current discourse of “American Indian Literary Nationalism.”

Graduate students will have a chance to focus these and their own questions on this broad field. Each student should have solid background in Native American studies as well as literary theory and will be responsible for a substantial research project, for a presentation, and for participation in class and online discussions (which includes active listening). Each student will develop their own definitions of Indigenous literary theory, of animism, pluralism, and of modern nationhood and personhood, in relation to these theoretical roots. Depending on the needs of this particular set of students, there may be one or more short papers analyzing literary texts, in addition to the longer theoretical venture.

### **A NOTE ON REQUIREMENTS, OUTCOMES, ASSESSMENTS**

The following list of activities tries to quantify your expected work. Ultimately, no one can “quantify the quality” of your writing or discussion. Grading in arts and humanities courses inevitably entails subjective criteria. Because of that subjectivity, more dialogue between student and faculty can be part of the process of creating and grading “performance” in humanities subjects. Literature is a conversation. Literary criticism grows out of conversation. I hope you come to feel that I am open for you to get to know me in the classroom and in my office. Please come see me to talk through assignments or anything else. On written work, both form and content will be graded, and explicit writing standards will be part of each assignment. Grades are based on a combination of 1) 80% written work (content & form); 2) 10% discussion questions, participation, and 3) 10% attendance.

If you are working with Disability Services and have any certifiable disability that requires accessibility steps for you to meet the course requirements, be sure to let me know in the first week of class. I will be glad to work with you on a strategy for success.

### OUTCOME CRITERIA:

1. Close familiarity with key texts and roots of Leslie Marmon Silko's oeuvre, in the interdisciplinary contexts of Native American literary studies and ecocriticism.
2. Recognition and articulation of key historical, literary, and philosophical issues in Silko's work, through an ecocritical lens focusing on pluralistic and animistic formations of national identity in Indigenous literatures.
3. Facility with ecocritical methods as well as Indigenous research dynamics and the ethics of literary critical methods for considering texts.
4. Engagement with themes of the course as they apply to 21<sup>st</sup>-century lives.

### OUTCOME ASSESSMENTS:

**1) Discussion:** The class runs on a combination of readings, lectures, online and in-person discussions, and presentations, some entirely in the hands of the students. All of these activities are founded on your attendance; so in a class that meets only once per week, more than one unexcused absence can drop the final grade. (Notice of an absence should be given in advance when we can arrange for your make-up work.) The goal is participation as both a listener and speaker in class. (Verbal assessment of Criteria 1-4:)

**a. Discussion questions:** On Moodle, there will be a Forum for each required reading. Discussion questions are due online by *midnight before the day the reading is listed on the class schedule [negotiable]*. Each student will be responsible for *generating at least two questions* on each required reading (usually two or three authors). **Best Practice:** if possible, each question should be anchored to a passage with a page number in the text. Each student is also responsible for *responding to at least two questions on the Moodle Forum, by noon before class [also negotiable]*. I will incorporate some of your perspectives into the afternoon's lecture, so take the time to write thoughtful, critically driven discussion questions focused around a close reading of one or more of the texts. (See Moodle resource on How to Write Discussion Questions.) Plus we will project some of the Forum questions for use during the in-class discussions. This means you need to schedule your study time carefully to meet those noon deadlines. We will discuss and do close readings in class on some of the required primary readings (poetry, fiction, prose, etc.) and on some of the required secondary material (introductory and editorial commentary), and you are welcome to offer questions for discussion on any of these materials. More coaching on discussion questions: Be the teacher. Craft open-ended questions with specific suggestions for directions to explore. Bounce off of specific quotations again *with page references*. Asking for students together to define terms and issues for themselves, to compare and contrast readings, to generate new real-life examples of issues, such questions can draw on both theoretical possibilities and practical applications.

**b. Discussion groups and full-class discussions:** Depending on the dynamics in the classroom, participation in discussion of daily readings will be in both small groups and the full class. The course is designed for your input. Some of the best lectures happen when there are good questions or comments from the floor. "Participation" can be both vocal and silent, both speaking and listening, but not all of one or the other. Discussion is one of the best ways to learn, and the class can hardly flow without you there. This pedagogy is so crucial to the course that I'll take a few more lines here to explain: Everyone's idea is important. When you speak, try to give your idea away to the group. You don't need to defend it once it's out there. And equally, when you listen, give each speaker respect. Humor helps

too. We don't need to have everyone agree, but perhaps we can build a community in the classroom where each of us can feel engaged with the questions. (Written assessment of Criteria 1-4:)

**2) Writing skills and critical thinking** in analyzing diverse literary texts, and facility with ecocritical and Native literary critical methods for considering those texts. (Written assessment of Criteria 1-4) Depending on the needs of this particular set of students, there may be added one or more short papers applying an ecocritical analysis to literary texts.

**a. Reading Journal** (recommended): Use a separate, dedicated spiral journal, or do this on computer. For each reading, on one side of a page, record the author's ideas, facts, quotes, or note other important info; on the other side, record your questions, impressions, responses, and feelings as you read. These responses might develop into discussion questions, but they may go in any other directions toward essays as well. I will ask for the total of journal pages at least twice in the semester.

**b. In-class Presentation & Critique** (required): nb: There is a time limit on this presentation: no more than one-half hour, including discussion facilitated by the student. Dates tba.

Each class member will present a critique to the class in the form of a two-to-three-page microtheme (double-spaced), on a focused aspect of one of the recommended additional readings for the course that you will choose in consultation with the professor. The presentation may develop toward your seminar paper.

nb: A critique is more than a summary; it should develop a thesis statement. Always include a bibliography as a service to your colleagues. The presentation should end with a short list of questions for discussion related to the context of the course, and the student will facilitate discussion for ten or fifteen minutes (totaling a half-hour with the presentation). Be sure to make hard copies for the entire class, and/or email me a copy attachment the day before for me to post on Moodle.

Thus for the presentation, make copies for the class of three items:

- 1) microtheme with thesis
- 2) bibliography
- 3) questions for discussion

**c. Prospectus, Bibliography, & Presentation of Research** (required; and in addition to presentation above): In conversation with the professor, each student will select one or more texts from the course or from their related research to analyze for their seminar paper due at the end of term, and/or there is an artistic option. In the latter part of the semester, each member of the course will

- 1) talk through a
- 2) two-page abstract, with
- 3) a working thesis statement, and
- 4) an extensive working bibliography, as a
- 5) launch for short discussion.

Be sure to make copies for the entire class, and give me a copy by noon that day. Dates tba.

**d. Research Essay +/-or Artistic Project** (required) : Following on the Prospectus above, one research essay approximately 20- to 25-pages (plus bibliography of at least five to ten secondary sources) is due during finals week, developed in conversation with the prof. Depending on your educational degree trajectory, there is an option for artistic projects in consultation with the professor. Such a project must include a critical artist's/author's statement. Further, in accord with the needs of this particular set of students, there may be two short papers analyzing literary texts, in addition to the research paper.

On the research paper, you should plan at least a month of work on the prospectus, rough drafts, bibliography, etc., which should be turned in with the final draft—all as email attachments in Word.doc. (&/or we will explore submission of electronic copies via Moodle.)

In addition, writing skills require an understanding of how to avoid plagiarism (see note below in “Legalities”).

Proofreading is crucial as well. Grading will reflect content, research, development of ideas, and form, including MLA form for bibliography and in-text citations.

**e. Peer Editing** (recommended): Toward the end of the semester, study groups of 3 students should meet outside of class face-to-face or online to support each other’s final project. Every writer needs an editor!

**nb: The Writing Center** is available to students, grads and undergrads, of all abilities: LA 144, phone 243-2266, with on-site tutoring; paper coaching; plus writing and test-taking workshops, etc. They do not provide proof-reading services; rather, their focus is on composition skills. Note that they require lead-time for revising your paper well before it’s due. They might turn you away if you come in so close to your deadline that you don’t have time to revise. Also online tutoring via

<http://www.umt.edu/writingcenter/>

SOME LEGALITIES: Pay attention to these 8 items.

- 1) See the Cyberbear website <http://cyberbear.umt.edu/> for Important Dates such as these: last day to add/drop with refund on Cyberbear; last day to drop without refund by drop/add form; last day to withdraw. I’m open to late drops if you find it unavoidable, but Incompletes are rarely available; see next item.
- 2) Per general University policy, a grade of Incomplete is granted only for a medical emergency that interferes with the end of the semester, so plan your time carefully.
- 3) The Credit/No Credit option must be arranged at the beginning of the semester, not in retrospect toward the end. If the class is taken for Credit/No Credit option, an average grade of D- or above constitutes Credit, and a grade of F equals NCR. (This system replaces Pass/No Pass.)
- 4) Plagiarism is defined as using another’s words *or ideas* (outside of common knowledge) directly or indirectly without citing them. It is shocking, but students waste their own education and my time by plagiarizing off the Internet. If they can find it online, so can I, and I have no mercy on academic deception. Consequences of plagiarism can range from ostracism to rehabilitation training to zero credit to failing and being dropped from the class to being expelled from the University. Please take this warning seriously. Do not plagiarize. Plagiarism is an affront to fundamental social and academic values, indicating a lack of respect for intellectual labor and a lack of responsibility for each student’s part in sustaining academic community. To avoid this breach of trust, acknowledge all work that has influenced your thinking, using accurate bibliographic citations. 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/VP/SA/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).
- 5) & is it necessary to mention that cell phones, text messaging, emailing, and Internet surfing are not acceptable in class? Laptops for notetaking are welcome, but surfing the Internet is not allowed, unless

requested by the instructor in discussion. Participation does not equal distraction. There are limits to multitasking. This is one.

6) Departmental Assessment: The English Department's ongoing process of assessing its curriculum requires professors to read student papers to learn how students in general are progressing through the program. Thus your professor may choose a copy of one of your papers or ask for an electronic version of it to use in this assessment process. All identifying information will be removed and no evaluation of student work outside the boundaries of the course will play any role in determining a student's grade. If you do not want your work used in such a way, please inform your professor and s/he will not forward it to the Assessment Committee. Otherwise, we appreciate your tacit consent.

7) In addition to the departmental assessment process, 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.

8) This syllabus and schedule may be subject to changes, which will be announced in class.

**TEXTS (UC Bookstore, Mansfield Library, The Book Exchange, amazon.com, or . . .)**

**Ten texts are required for the course (plus essays and additional readings as assigned); then each student picks an individual text on library reserve (or elsewhere) for presentations in Indigenous literature, theory, & related fields below, considering pluralism &/or animism from Indigenous and/or Western perspectives, and/or via additional research.**

**Required texts all to be discussed by class participants:**

- Silko, *Ceremony* (1977)
- Silko, *Storyteller* (1981)
- Silko & James Wright, *The Delicacy and Strength of Lace: Letters Between LMS & James Wright* (1986)
- Silko, *Almanac of the Dead* (1991)
- Silko, *Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit: Essays on Native American Life Today* (1996)
- Silko, *Gardens in the Dunes: A Novel* (1999)
- Silko, *The Turquoise Ledge: A Memoir* (2010)
- Silko, *Oceanstory* (online only) (2011)
- Moore, *That Dream Shall Have a Name: Native Americans Rewriting America* (2013) (on reserve)
- Moore, ed., *Leslie Marmon Silko: Ceremony; Almanac of the Dead; Gardens in the Dunes* (2016)

Required—Presentation on another text on reserve in Mansfield Library (or elsewhere). In consultation with the professor, each student picks one of the following texts for an in-class presentation. (Or if students find another relevant text, they may consult with the prof to choose that instead.) In addition to the list below on this syllabus, see separate list on Moodle of these and further relevant reserve materials. Schedule tba.

**On Reserve:**

nb: This early collection of short fiction includes five pieces by Silko, plus other key writers.

Kenneth Rosen, ed. *The Man to Send Rain Clouds: Contemporary Stories by American Indians* (1974)

nb: also on reserve: Audio CD. LMS reading (1981); and of course there are plenty of her readings and lectures on YouTube.

**Silko-focused Critical Works on Reserve:**

Ellen L. Arnold, *Conversations with Leslie Marmon Silko* (2000)

Louise K Barnett; James L Thorson, eds., *Leslie Marmon Silko: A Collection of Critical Essays* (1999)

Allan Richard Chavkin, *Leslie Marmon Silko: A Casebook* (2002)

Laura Coltelli, ed., *Reading Leslie Marmon Silko: Critical Perspectives through Gardens in the Dunes* (2007)

Helen Jaskoski, *Leslie Marmon Silko: A Study of the Short Fiction* (1998)

Robert M. Nelson, *Leslie Marmon Silko's Ceremony: The Recovery of Tradition* (2008)

Catherine Rainwater, ed., *Leslie Marmon Silko's Storyteller: New Perspectives* (2016)

Mary Ellen Snodgrass, *Leslie Marmon Silko: A Literary Companion* (2011)

Amy H. Sturgis, *The Intersections of Fantasy and Native America: From H.P. Lovecraft to Leslie Marmon Silko* (2009)

Rebecca Tillett, ed. *Howling for Justice: New Perspectives on Leslie Marmon Silko's Almanac of the Dead* (2014)

**[pending on reserve:]**

Sean Kicummah Teuton, *Red Land, Red Power: Grounding Knowledge in the American Indian Novel* (2008)

David Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in the More-than-Human World* 128 A161s

Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* 304.2 B4717v

Vine Deloria, Jr., *The World We Used to Live In: Remembering the Powers of the Medicine Men* 299.7 D362w & electronic book

Larry Evans & Felipe Molina, *Maso Bwikam/ Yaqui Deer Songs: A Native American Poetry* 897.4 Y25.E

Simon Ortiz, *from Sand Creek* 811.54 O77f

Adrian Jawort, *Off the Path: An Anthology of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Montana American Indian Writers* [not yet in Mansfield Library]

William S. Yellow Robe, Jr. *The Native American Paranormal Society (NAPS)*, electronic playscript

Ray Young Bear, *Black Eagle Child: The Facepaint Narratives* 811.54 Y78Z & electronic book

**Reserve Materials by Topic: Pluralism & Animism****Pluralism****Indigenous Perspectives**

Taiaiake Alfred, *Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto*

Joni Adamson, et al, eds., *The Environmental Justice Reader: Politics, Poetics, & Pedagogy*  
 Kevin Bruyneel, *The Third Space of Sovereignty: The Postcolonial Politics of US-Indigenous Relations*  
 Vine Deloria, Jr. & Clifford M. Lytle, *The Nations Within: The Past and Future of American Indian Sovereignty*  
 Ronald Niezen, *The Origins of Indigenism: Human Rights and the Politics of Identity*

### **Western Perspectives**

Terry Tempest Williams, *The Open Space of Democracy*  
 Cheryl Glotfelty et al, eds., *The Bioregional Imagination: Literature, Ecology, and Place*  
 Barry Lopez, *The Rediscovery of North America*

### **Animism**

#### **Indigenous Perspectives**

Vine Deloria, Jr., *God is Red: A Native View of Religion; &/or The Metaphysics of Modern Existence*  
 Marijo Moore & Trace Demeyer, eds., *Unraveling the Spreading Cloth of Time: Indigenous Thoughts Concerning the Universe* selections  
 Alison Deming & Lauret Savoy, eds., *The Colors of Nature: Culture, Identity, and the Natural*  
 Linda Hogan, *Dwellings: A Spiritual History of the Living World*  
 N. Scott Momaday, *The Way to Rainy Mountain*  
 Leslie Marmon Silko, (fiction) *Almanac of the Dead*; or *Gardens in the Dunes*; (nonfiction) *The Turquoise Ledge*

#### **Western Perspectives**

David Abram, *Becoming Animal: An Earthly Cosmology*  
 Stacy Alaimo & Susan Hekman, eds., *Material Feminisms* selections  
 Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*  
 Cheryl Glotfelty & Peter Fromm, eds. *The Ecocriticism Reader* selections  
 Graham Harvey, *Animism: Respecting the Living World*  
 Leon Lederman & Christopher Hill, *Quantum Physics for Poets*  
 Theodore Roszak, *The Voice of the Earth: An Exploration of Ecopsychology*  
 Rupert Sheldrake, *Morphic Resonance: The Nature of Formative Causation*  
 Terry Tempest Williams, *Finding Beauty in a Broken World*

& see additional titles on separate list of reserve book on our Moodle page under Resources.

**LIT 491.01 Special Topics: Leslie Marmon Silko**  
**Draft/ Schedule –Tues/Thurs – Autumn 2017**

- Week 1**  
**8/31 -- Introduction**  
 (Thursday) Introductions. Syllabus. Silko background, including Native American Literary Renaissance. Native American Studies Key Points. *That Dream Shall Have a Name* intro material: dialectics/ dialogics; five terms. Animism/ Consciousness Studies. Pluralism. Ecocriticism. Logistics.
- Unit 1 -- Ceremony**
- Week 2**  
 [9/4 was Labor Day Holiday]  
**9/5 --** Introductory material continues. [See Moodle Forums on each of the readings through the semester.] *Ceremony* (to last page). Moore: “‘Linked to the land’: An Introduction to Reading LMS”; Moore: “‘Accept this offering’: Introduction to Part One.”  
**9/7 --** *Ceremony* cont. Wieser: “Healing the ‘Man of Monstrous Dreams’: Indian Masculinities in Silko’s *Ceremony*”
- Week 3**  
**9/12 --** *Ceremony* cont. Gemein: “‘Branched into All Directions of Time’: Pluralism, Physics, and Compassion in Silko’s *Ceremony*.”  
**9/14 --** *Ceremony* cont. Dekker: “The Lost Women of Silko’s *Ceremony*.”
- Week 4**  
**9/19 --** *Ceremony* cont. Additional readings tba. Student presentations.  
**9/21 --** *Ceremony* cont. Additional readings tba. Student presentations.
- Unit 2 -- Almanac of the Dead; & Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit**
- Week 5**  
**9/26 --** *Almanac* (to last page). Moore: “‘Indian Country’: Introduction to Part Two.”  
**9/28 --** *Almanac* cont. Kelsey: “Indigenous Economic Critique in Silko’s *Almanac of the Dead* and Gaspar de Alba’s *Desert Blood*: Against a Philosophy of Separation.”
- Week 6**  
**10/3 --** *Almanac* cont. Madsen: “Silko, Freud, and the Voicing of Disavowed Histories in *Almanac of the Dead*.”  
**10/5 --** *Almanac* cont. Piatote: “Seeing Double: Twins and Time in Silko’s *Almanac of the Dead*.”
- Week 7**  
**10/10 --** *Almanac* cont. *Yellow Woman* (to page 123). Student Presentations.  
**10/12 --** *Almanac* cont. *Yellow Woman* (to last page). Student Presentations.

**Unit 3 -- *Gardens in the Dunes: A Novel***

**Week 8**

- 10/17** -- *Gardens in the Dunes* (to last page). Moore: “‘Old Snake’s Beautiful Daughter’: Introduction to Part Three.”
- 10/19** -- *Gardens in the Dunes* cont. Gercken: “World of Water, World of Sand: Teaching Silko’s *Gardens in the Dunes* and Sullivan’s *Star Waka*.”

**Week 9**

- 10/24** -- *Gardens in the Dunes* cont. Fallor: “EuroAmerica, Europe, and the Indigenous: The Complex (and Complicating) Dialectics of Silko’s Jamesian Turn.”
- 10/26** -- *Gardens in the Dunes* cont. Tillett: “‘Sand Lizard Warned Her Children to Share’: Philosophies of Gardening and Exchange in Silko’s *Gardens of the Dunes*.”

**Week 10**

- 10/31** -- *Gardens in the Dunes* cont. Additional readings tba. Student Presentations.
- 11/2** -- *Gardens in the Dunes* cont. Additional readings tba. Student Presentations.

**Unit 4 -- *Storyteller; Oceanstory; & The Turquoise Ledge; Delicacy; etc.***

**Week 11**

- 11/7** -- *Storyteller*.
- 11/9** -- *Oceanstory*.  
(Friday, 11/10, Veterans Day. No classes.)

**Week 12**

- 11/14** -- *The Turquoise Ledge: A Memoir*.
- 11/16** -- *The Turquoise Ledge* cont. **Optional Research Paper Prospectus due. Roundtable.**

**Week 13**

- 11/21** -- *The Turquoise Ledge* cont. Roundtable cont.
- 11/23** -- (Student Travel Day on Wednesday, 11/22. No classes.) **Thanksgiving Vacation.**

**Week 14**

- 11/28** -- *The Delicacy and Strength of Lace*. Additional readings tba. Student Presentations.
- 11/30** -- Additional readings tba. Student Presentations.

**Week 15**

- 12/5** -- Additional readings tba. Student Presentations.
- 12/7** -- Additional readings tba. Student Presentations. **Optional Research Paper due.**

**Week 16**

- 12/12** -- Last Day of Regular Classes
- 12/13** -- Wednesday—Study/Reading Day. No classes.

**Finals 12/14-20****12/14** -- Thursday**12/19** -- Tuesday