Oral & Written Traditions
NASX 235X-B01 Fall 2020
BLENDED CLASS
Meets Gen Ed Perspectives V (Literary and Artistic) & Intermediate Writing Requirements

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The best way to get in touch with me is through email. If you have questions about anything at all, don’t hesitate to email me. I recommend checking your UM email at least once a day. There will be a Moodle page for this course. If you need assistance with your essay, email me your current draft and I will help in any way I can.

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. A strong presence of Indigenous Film and other videos will also be supplementing our learning. We will read from a variety of selected literary works that is by no means all-inclusive of all traditions. In terms of genre, we will also read both historical and more contemporary pieces and pieces that are cyclical in nature and apply to past, present, and future. 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.

Required Books & Reading

All reading assignments will be given in class.

The Stars We Know by Timothy P. McCleary

Two Old Women by Velma Wallis

The Way to Rainy Mountain by N. Scott Momaday

Additional pdf documents will be supplied as required reading also.

Remember: If for some reason you do not have your reading done, come to class anyway.
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 completing a presentation project with visual, auditory, and/or other types of aids, as appropriate
- To function within a group while preparing for class discussions
- 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 will be announced in class.

Attendance is mandatory!

**Essay #1:** Personal Oral History (3-4 pages) **100 points**

**Essay #2:** *The Stars We Know* (4-5 pages) **100 points**

**Essay #3:** *Two Old Women* (4-5 pages) **100 points**

**Essay #4:** *The Way to Rainy Mountain, Poetry, & Oratory* (4-5 pages) **100 points**

**Presentation:** Each student will prepare a presentation (details later) which will be delivered in class toward the end of the semester. Attendance for all presentations is mandatory and points will be docked for missing these days. Detail about this will be worked out in the coming weeks. **60 points**

**In-Class Worksheets:** These will be weekly. They will encourage engagement with the reading assignments and promote class participation. Don’t worry; these will be fun and won’t be too difficult, especially if everyone is keeping up on reading. Most worksheets will be utilized during class discussion as well. (10 pts & 14 worksheets) = **140 points**

~ ~ 600 TOTAL POINTS ~ ~
(Grading breakdown on last page)

All essays 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, 1-inch margins, 12 font Times New Roman, double-spaced and identified by the class, by your name, student ID, and essay #. Throughout the term, we will discuss the principles of good writing and have in-class writing exercises. I will provide writing feedback on each essay when I grade them. Also, don’t forget about the services offered at the UM Writing Center (http://www.umt.edu/writingcenter/).
Extra credit assignments: From time to time, students may be offered extra-credit (not meant to replace larger assignments) options for listening to visiting speakers to UM campus or participating in Native American events on campus. For full credit, students must write a response paper of 2 pages in length, with an opening paragraph that presents the central idea of the lecture or event. The opening 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. (up to 10 points extra credit)

****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 worksheets help with this). The due dates of the reading assignments will be given in class. 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. Excused absences are a possibility but will not be tolerated if there are too many.

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. However, please keep in touch with me if you are having difficulties during the semester. 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 phones, iPods, ear buds, etc. in class, and please turn your cell phone to vibrate. 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.

Using a laptop to “take notes” in class is discouraged. Nothing beats paper and pen/pencil for taking notes in class. It is also interesting to note that it is proven that doodling while taking notes in class will help you remember more. 😊

If you have DSS accommodations of which I should be aware, please do not hesitate to speak with me; let me know early on what 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.
Grading

Grading will be based on how many points you earn during the semester, which is broken down as follows:

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\text{A} = 600-540 \text{ pts} // \text{B} = 539-480 \text{ pts} // \text{C} = 479-420 \text{ pts} // \text{D} = 419-360 \text{ pts} // \text{F} = 359-0 \text{ pts}
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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/) 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 (I) 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 about plagiarism:

Please know that plagiarism (don’t do it) 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.

For more information on plagiarism, go to Plagiarism Online Handout: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_plagiar.html.

UPWA Writing Sample Submission (on Moodle):

“Intermediate Writing courses are required to have students participate in the University-wide Program-level Writing Assessment (UPWA). The goal of the UPWA is to study the effectiveness of the University’s writing program. We are not re-grading or evaluating individual students’ or faculty performance. Rather, this assessment gathers data to show aggregate areas of strength in students’ writing, areas for improvement, and areas to support faculty in writing instruction. Student writing samples from the Intermediate Writing courses provide authentic data about student writing proficiency.” Details for this will be announced in class later in the semester.

This syllabus may be subject to changes, which will be announced in class. Don’t forget to check your email regularly and eat your vegetables.