
American Environments and Their Afterlives
English 4900
Credits Hours: 4
CRN 40710
Professor Andrea Knutson
Fall 2018
Mondays and Wednesdays 3:30-5:17 • SFH 172

Required Texts

***Early American Writings* is available through Amazon.com, all the rest are available in the campus Barnes and Noble bookstore or through handouts/Moodle)**

Early American Writings (EAW) (New York: Oxford, 2002) Carla Mulford, General Editor. Associate Editors: Angela Vietto and Amy E. Winans (ISBN 9780195118414)

William Apess, *A Son of the Forest and Other Writings* (U of Massachusetts Press)

Black Hawk, *Life of Black Hawk, or Ma-ka-tai-me-she-kia-kiak* (Penguin Classics)

Sarah Winnemucca, *Life among the Piutes* (Univ. of Nevada Press)

Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony* (Penguin Classics)

Simon Ortiz, *from Sand Creek* (Univ. of Arizona Press)

I have ordered the books you need and in service to discussion you must use them rather than an electronic version.

Another source for readings is the Standing Rock Syllabus (SRS) which is available online.

Recommended Texts

Ross Murfin and Supryia M Ray, eds. *The Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms*

Course Description

This seminar will begin in early America and move forward to the present day in order to map the colonial legacies that continue to shape our cultural, material, and natural environments. We will track these legacies by examining flashpoints of struggle and resistance within our emerging national culture through texts that present a settler history alongside a history of Indigenous peoples. The range of readings will allow us to pay close attention to the way that language and long-standing discursive formations shape our relationships to the cultural, material, and natural environments that we inhabit. Some questions that will guide our discussions: How does the literature reflect various historical and cultural phenomena and positions, and what are they? What cultural work does the literature perform? Where do the texts affirm the status quo and where do they depict sub-cultures at odds with the dominant culture? What does the literature say about the particular historical and cultural moment in which it was produced? In what ways are the texts a reaction to previous American historical and cultural moments? In what ways do they relate to later moments? The reading and writing load is intensive. **Students will write weekly responses to the reading, a research paper abstract, an annotated**

Directed Reading Responses (25%)

To help you prepare for class discussions, each of you will write a short (2 page) reading response to questions I pose each week for the reading, starting the week of September 10. While each paper need not be a fully developed essay with a fully explicated thesis, it should be an essay rather than a stream-of-consciousness document. Its prose should be paragraphed, polished, and free of errors. Moreover, each essay should reveal that you've put some serious thought into the assigned reading.

The guidelines are as follows:

- 1) Responses are due on the day that we're discussing the material you're writing about.
- 2) I will not assign due dates or remind you to turn them in; it is your responsibility to complete them.
- 3) In order to get credit for these responses, you will need to offer your insights to the class in our discussion. Responses will be graded on the basis of $\sqrt{+}$ (excellent/credit), $\sqrt{}$ (acceptable/credit), $\sqrt{-}$ (below average, inappropriate, or unacceptable/no-credit), and your response paper grades will be averaged for a final grade based on the number of credits you earn.
- 4) You are expected to write ten (10) responses – this means you can skip two (2) weeks of your choice. But, in order to get full credit you must write a total of ten (10) responses.

You should think of them as a starting point for formulating ideas—making connections among texts, offering close reading observations, asking questions and meditating on how to answer them. The important thing is that you are thinking about and reflecting on the course material. Please quote properly from the text when you need to (refer to MLA style).

Seminar Paper Process Portfolio (15%)

I value not only a well-researched/-documented, well-written, and well-argued seminar paper; I also value the process that leads to the final result. To that end, you will put together a research portfolio for your seminar paper. It will include an annotated bibliography and a project abstract. In addition, a draft of the seminar paper will be due. This means that you should be thinking about the seminar paper early on. When you are writing your weekly reading exercises you should be considering topics, exploring ideas, and coming to my office hours to discuss your interests.

Seminar Paper (50%)

The culmination of the semester's work will be a substantial seminar paper (12-15 pages).

About MLA Style: All written assignments should follow MLA style guidelines (including reading responses). This style encompasses every aspect of an essay. It dictates, for example, that essays must be typed, double-spaced, on white paper, in a standard 12-point font with 1" margins. It dictates where your title should go. It dictates

The grade of Incomplete is available only to students who have demonstrated steady progress in the course but for whom unforeseeable and uncontrollable circumstances make impossible the timely completion of the course. Students must petition in writing for a grade of Incomplete.

Attendance Policy

Excused absences should be used only in emergency situations. Credit hours are earned through attendance. You are allowed two (2) excused absences. Each subsequent absence will result in a half grade drop from your final grade (for example a final grade of B will become a B- with three absences, and so forth). Think of the excused absences as your safety net for **emergencies**. They are not vacation days. Tardiness and leaving early are also forms of attendance. Any two in combination will result in an absence that will be counted against your final grade.

Services for students with special needs are available through the Office of Disability Support Services in 121 North Foundation Hall.

If you need extra help with your essays or responses consider visiting OU's Writing Center. There are tutors and staff available to help you brainstorm, organize, or edit. There are locations at the Joan Rosen Writing Studio (212 Kresge Library) and the Vandenburg Satellite (117 E. Vandenburg Hall).

If there is a snowstorm bad enough to cancel class, I will email you. **A note on the door of our classroom is not an official cancellation.** Either the university will officially close campus or I will email you. Otherwise – classes are being held.

Covered drinks are welcome in the classroom but food is not.

Grade Scale

A/4.0
A-/3.7
B+/3.3
B/3.0
B-/2.7
C+/2.3
C/2.0
C-/1.7
D+/1.3
D/1.0
F/0.0

Teaching Statement

I believe in building classroom communities that are both welcoming and challenging. You, the student, play a vital role in this community: your contributions and questions help the rest of us evaluate and develop our ideas. In turn, I ask that you be collegial, and open to the examination of your own ideas. I also believe that learning should be a

24 (M) Pierre-Esprit Radisson, Introduction and “from the Relation of my Voyage” (EAW 123-139); Adriaen Van Der Donck, Introduction, “from A Description of the New Netherlands,” and “from Of the Manners and Peculiar Customs of the Natives of the New Netherlands” (EAW 708-716)

26 (W) “The Stories of the People: Strangers in the Land” (EAW 140-158); Kyle Whyte, “The Dakota Access Pipeline, Environmental Injustice, and U.S. Colonialism” (Handout)

October

8 (M) Edward Waterhouse, *A Declaration of the State of the Colony in Virginia* (Handout); John Smith, Introduction, “Proceedings” (EAW 169-171); John Smith, “Description of New England” (Handout); Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, “Decolonization is Not a Metaphor” (SRS)

10 (W) Roger Williams, Introduction and “from A Key into the Language of America” (EAW 257-263); John Eliot, Introduction and “from Indian Dialogues, for their Instruction in that Great Service of Christ” (EAW 265-275)

15 (M) **Meet in Kresge Library Room 222 for Research Orientation;** Rowlandson, Introduction and “Narrative of the Captivity and Restauration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson” (EAW 305-328)

17 (W) Pueblo Conflict in New Spain, Introduction and “Letters” by Antonio de Otermin and Diego de Vargas (EAW 384-394); Cadwallader Colden, Introduction and “from The History of the Five Indian Nations” (EAW 628-632)

22 (M) Thomas Jefferson, Introduction and from *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Queries 6 and 11 (EAW 945-956); Philip Freneau, “On Emigration to America...” (Handout); Vine Deloria, “Laws and Treaties” from *Custer Died for Your Sins* (SRS)

24 (W) “The Native Peoples of Eastern North America and the Settlers Who Remained” (EAW 1109-1124); Apess, from *A Son of the Forest and Other Writings*, Introduction and “A Son of the Forest” (3-56); Ned Blackhawk, “The Indigenous Body in Pain” (SRS)

29 (M) Black Hawk, *Life of Black Hawk*

31 (W) Black Hawk cont'd
***Annotated Bibliography and Abstract Due

November

5 (M) Sarah Winnemucca, *Life among the Piutes*

7 (W) Winnemucca cont'd; Kyle Whyte, “Is it Colonial Déjà Vu? Indigenous Peoples and Climate Injustice” (Handout)