

# **Native/Indigenous/Aboriginal Film and Media CES 379, Section 1—Spring 2009**

**Monday & Wednesday 2:50-4:05 (TODD 204)**

**Instructor: David Warner**

**Office: Wilson 122**

**Phone: 335-4178**

**E-mail: dpwarner@wsu.edu**

**Office hours: Wednesday 1p.m. to 2p.m., & by appointment**

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Through film and other media this course explores major issues of contemporary Indigenous peoples of the world. Each week we will view award-winning films made for theater, television, and the Internet. Modern media written, produced or acted in by Native peoples convey to the public the issues that Natives consider important, both in Native voices and from Native perspectives. Throughout this course, we will inquire about “Indians” from their perspectives and the viewpoints of the colonizers (anthropologists, historians, filmmakers, etc.). The principal objective being to better understand the Indigenous stories—the stories of independent sovereign peoples who have persevered through 500+ years of attempted colonization, attempted assimilation, and, in many instances, the outright destruction of their cultures (language, social bonds, spirituality, etc.), peoples, and the poisoning of their bodies and the spaces which those bodies occupy (air, land, water, and the flora and fauna—i.e. all our relations).

These issues will be examined through the theoretical lenses of cultural studies, history, anthropology, education, queer studies, gender studies, and film and media studies. This class will not be about feathers and beads, or frybread (no cultural tourism here...). Rather, the attempt will be made to represent Indigenous peoples as they truly are: flesh and blood peoples with their own stories of creation, adaptation, and continuation. Many of the readings, written by Indigenous peoples, complement the films and will focus our dialogues on the issues of ethnic identity, tribal sovereignty, environmental racism, economic development, health disparities, human rights, spirituality, religious freedom, sacred lands, language retention, music, art, and dance.

This course is also about Indigenous peoples’ stories of resistance, revitalization, and decolonization (thus the use of the word “attempted” previously) and is designed to enhance your knowledge of Native peoples, “Indians”, and global Indigeneity through the historical, social, cultural, political, and aesthetic expressiveness surrounding Native peoples and global Indigenous struggles. Furthermore, we will be problematizing your understanding and experience of Nativeness and Indigeneity—your thinking, your speaking, and your actions—how you frame your worldview and how it affects your interactions with the world. In order for us to begin to understand where these filmmakers, writers, and actors are coming from we need to dive head first into the subject matter and critically work to understand, to the best of our ability, the perspectives, arguments, and visual interpretations they are presenting to us. This may be very unfamiliar to many in the class, but it is a good opportunity to learn new perspectives that we may have never heard, seen, or experienced ourselves.

## **COURSE GOALS:**

1. To understand Native/Indigenous film and media as encompassing a multitude of supports (photographic image/digital image), an abundance of industrial branches (cinema, entertainment, TV, news, etc.), a plurality of products (fiction, documentary, archival materials, etc.) and various modes of consumption (in a film theatre, in a multiplex, at home, through cable TV, exchanged on the Internet, or seen on a mobile phone).
2. To broaden and deepen your exposure to and understanding of Native/Indigenous images and to connect these filmic images to the larger context of U.S. history and world history
3. To become familiar with the histories, values, and cultures of Indigenous peoples.
4. To hone your ability to analyze, synthesize, and interpret film through in- and out-of class writings, exams, and your final paper/project.
5. Gain an awareness of the scope and complexity of human diversity.
6. Understand the production of knowledge and the role of multimedia in presenting Indigenous views.
7. Appreciate the economic, health, environmental, political and legal issues that have affected and continue to influence the everyday lives of contemporary Indigenous peoples.
8. Recognize the effects of culture change, modernization and globalization on Indigenous peoples.
9. Unpack stereotypes and stories, make connection between cinema and context, and reflect upon the relationships between image and identity, race and representation, gender and culture, as well as power and perception.

## **COURSE STRUCTURE:**

This course is broken into smaller units and although they are laid out as separate entries there is a great deal of overlap and interaction between these areas of study. These areas of discovery and disruption are laid out so that you will have a contextual approach to deal with the subject matter. The aim is to provide historical, theoretical, and practical lenses through which you can examine the daily discourses that surround you and affect your world regarding your interactions with both the real/lived and imagined/stereotyped discourses of and about Native/Indigenous people around you.

This class revolves around our classroom dialogue. This is not a debate; we are involved in a dialectic struggle. The struggle is not only about finding solutions but also about the questions we ask of the world and ourselves. If we seek change we must approach it “...by means of the praxis: reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it” as stated by Paulo Freire in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. This class asks you to question the structures you have been handed—you will need to take risks and speak out; I will respect your opinions and learning. I am with you, not against you; I learn from you, as you learn from me.

This is an interactive class. Dialogue is imperative to this course. Student participation will be a determining factor in a student’s final grade. I will be introducing material to be discussed by the class as a whole. Because dialogue is the basis of education, be assured that your viewpoint will not be detrimental to your grade. We must listen to each other. We have to give respect, and create an atmosphere in the classroom where we can all feel comfortable enough to make mistakes. We must also be able to express our opinions even if what we have to say is not popular, or easily received. True learning can only take place in an atmosphere that is safe enough to examine *any* ideas that arise. It is the responsibility of each of us to keep this classroom safe.

## REQUIRED MATERIALS:

\* ***Inventing Western Civilization*** (IWC)  
Thomas C. Patterson

\* ***Film as Social Practice IV*** (FASP)  
Graeme Turner

\* ***Shooting Back from the Reservation:  
A Photographic View of Life by  
Native American Youth*** (SBR)  
Jim Hubbard

\* ***Global Indigenous Media: Cultures,  
Poetics, and Politics*** (GIM)  
Pamela Wilson and Michelle Stewart, Eds.

\* ***Native Features: Indigenous Films  
from Around the World*** (NF)  
Houston Wood

\* **An e-mail account**

## REQUIRED WORK:

Your grade in this course is determined in a simple fashion: do the work and you get the corresponding grade. The work in this class is designed to help you challenge yourself and ultimately everyone in this class will be a teacher as well as a student (myself included). In order for you to succeed you must do the readings and participate. We will fail in our goal of class interaction and growth if the readings are not done. To help you in the goal of absorbing knowledge through the written text two content areas exist to aid you in your discovery process.

**[QUESTIONS ON READINGS]:** To help us in our engagement with the readings and our interactions with one another you will need to come to each class having done the readings for that day. With the understanding that this is completely new material for the majority of you this section will aid in your comprehension of the material. Any questions that you have regarding the material you will “write” and bring to class, as these will assist us in both the lecture and discussion. As that material which is most challenging will elicit the most questions, I will be able to gauge the level of understanding of the class and adjust the lectures/discussions accordingly. You do not need to write questions for every article/chapter that we read for a given day - pick *one* for that day and engage it critically.

**As you read the assigned material, consider the following questions (not *all* may apply):**

- What are the MAIN POINTS of this article?
- What CONCEPTS and which THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES are raised by this material?
- What ISSUES and POSITIONS does this material raise about diversity, inclusiveness, and relationships of power and hierarchy?
- What might be missing from the analysis? Is any perspective ignored or marginalized?
- From what PERSPECTIVE are these issues raised?
- What are your thoughts about these issues; do you agree or disagree with the views of the author?
- In what ways did this material make you more conscious of your beliefs or attitudes?
- What QUESTIONS does this material raise in your mind?

**TAKE NOTES on the readings, as you ARE expected to participate in class!**

**[READING RESPONSES]:** See requirements after “COURSE SCHEDULE” section.

**EVALUATION:**

	<u>% of final grade</u>	<u>point value</u>
Attendance/Participation	≈15%	75
Reading Reactions (5)	≈15%	75
Questions on Readings (20)	≈20%	100
Midterm Paper	≈25%	125
Final Paper/Project	≈25%	125
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>500</b>

**Your final grade is the percentage earned of the total points possible and is equivalent to the following letter grade scale:**

94-100%	A	74-76%	C
90-93%	A-	70-73%	C-
87-89%	B+	67-69%	D+
84-86%	B	64-66%	D
80-83%	B-	60-63%	D-
77-79%	C+	59% and below	F

**LATE WORK POLICY:**

- Course work submitted electronically — i.e. as an e-mail attachment — will not be accepted under any circumstances. Similarly, you cannot e-mail your course work on the day it is due as proof that it is completed and in lieu of submitting it in hard copy on time.
- If you are unable to complete any assignment by the due date, you should notify me at least ONE DAY BEFORE the due date and negotiate an extension. ONLY ONE EXTENSION WILL BE GRANTED FOR ANY ONE ASSIGNMENT (except where otherwise noted).
- If you do not submit the assignment by the agreed upon extension date your grade for the assignment will be reduced by ONE LETTER GRADE for each additional day it is late. NO EXTENSIONS WILL BE GIVEN FOR THE FINAL PROJECT.
- If you do not notify me about late work at least one day before the due date to negotiate an extension, your grade for the assignment will immediately be reduced by one half grade for each day it is late and WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED after one week past the original due date.
- NO LATE Reading Questions will be accepted. All questions will be collected at the beginning of each class.

**ATTENDANCE POLICY:**

You are expected to attend class every day, arrive on time, and participate in an informed and consistent manner. (PLEASE NOTE: IF YOU ARRIVE LATE OR LEAVE CLASS EARLY, OR SIMPLY DECIDE TO TAKE A BREAK DURING CLASS, YOU MAY BE GIVEN A PARTIAL ABSENCE.) Anything less will not be tolerated and will result in problems in this class. After two absences, whether excused or unexcused (in terms of absences resulting from university-sanctioned activities, please see me), each missed class will lead to a 5% deduction (per day) from your overall grade, up to 15%. IN TOTAL, YOU WILL BE ALLOWED TO ACCUMULATE 5 ABSENCES (**FIRST TWO ARE “FREE,”—WITHOUT CONSEQUENCE; HOWEVER, EACH ADDITIONAL ABSENCE AFTER THAT (3 beyond the initial 2), WILL RESULT IN A 5% DEDUCTION PER ABSENCE). YOUR 6<sup>th</sup> ABSENCE WILL RESULT IN AN AUTOMATIC “F” FOR THE COURSE.** This requirement may seem difficult but as a community of learning we cannot learn from you if you are not

here. If you repeatedly sleep, read the newspaper, or chat with friends during class I will mark you absent. Respect your community and your community will respect you.

Attendance will be taken at the beginning of class, so lateness will potentially lead to an absence for that day. If you are absent from class it is your responsibility to check on announcements made while you were away.

Additionally, your attendance/participation will be reflected through your reading reaction assignments and questions inspired by the readings. This portion will help those who may feel reticent about jumping into the discussion *every* day.

### **ACADEMIC HONESTY:**

Plagiarism is the presentation of another person's thoughts, words, judgments, ideas, etc., as your own. Direct quotations from the published or unpublished work of others, including work available electronically, must always be identified as such by being placed inside quotation marks (if less than four lines long) or receiving a block quotation (if more than four lines long). Full reference to the source of such quotations must be provided in the proper form. A series of short quotations from several different sources, if not clearly identified as such, constitutes plagiarism just as much as does a single unacknowledged long quotation from a single source. Equally, if you paraphrase another person's ideas or judgments, you must refer to that person in your text, and include the work referred to in your bibliography.

Examples of plagiarism include:

- Direct copying of paragraphs, sentences, a single sentence or significant parts of a sentence without any acknowledgement;
- Direct copying of paragraphs, sentences, a single sentence or significant parts of a sentence with an end reference but without quotation marks around the copied text;
- Paraphrasing, summarizing or simply rearranging another person's words, ideas, etc without changing the basic structure and/or meaning of the text;
- Offering an idea or interpretation that is not one's own without identifying whose idea or interpretation it is;
- A 'cut and paste' of statements from multiple sources;
- Copying or adapting another student's original work into a submitted written assignment.

Following the departmental and University policy, any incidence of plagiarism that is discovered by the instructor will result in a grade of F for the assignment in question and/or a grade of F for the entire course. Please refer to the WSU Student Handbook rules and regulations regarding the University's policy.

To avoid any potential problems with the appearance of plagiarism be sure in every instance where you are using others' ideas (i.e. paraphrasing the author, direct quotes) to always properly and accurately cite your source materials—this means both in-text citations and your works cited page. If you do not know how to do academic citations, please consult the latest edition of either the Modern Language Association (MLA) Handbook or the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA). Copies of each may be found at Holland Library and online helps are available (e.g. Google search—keyword: MLA).

**DISABILITY ACCOMODATIONS:**

Students with disabilities: Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and may need accommodations to fully participate in this class, please visit the Disability Resource Center (DRC). All accommodations MUST be approved through the DRC (Washington Building, Room 217). Please stop by or call (509) 335-3417 to make an appointment with a disability specialist.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

I reserve the right to give unannounced tests/quizzes if I feel there is a lack of commitment to the materials and reading.

Absolutely no cell phones when class starts. No text messaging during class. No private conversations during class, or when someone else is talking. If you are talking about the subject matter, please keep your voices low—I may call on you to share your thoughts with us if I see any private conversations taking place.

**COURSE SCHEDULE (*I reserve the right to change this schedule for any reason*):**

- Come to class prepared. You will be expected to have read each day's assignment *before* class and be prepared to intelligently discuss the material.
- If you are having any difficulty, or need help of any kind, please feel free to see or contact me as soon as possible. This is my job, you pay for it, use it.
- Please bring to every class critical thinking skills, a willingness to entertain new ideas, a willingness to listen, a willingness to discuss and, of course, a sense of humor.
- Instructor's Philosophy: I strongly believe that each of us is responsible for what happens in this classroom. Students are just as responsible for, as the instructor of making this classroom experience great. We are studying communities and cultures, and in the process we are also creating a new community in our own classroom. We are all still striving, still learning. The key to a successful class is mutual responsibility. We all have a myriad of valuable insights to offer. I will expect each of you to be committed to the course, just as you will expect commitment from me. I am excited to learn with you. It is my hope that we can have a fun, enriching semester. Therefore, expect to do a good bit of work, plenty of reading, and plan on participating fully in class.

### Week 1

**Monday—January 12**

Syllabus, introduction, face-to-face/in-your-face

**Wednesday—January 14**

*Images of Native People as Seen by the Eye of the Blackbird*

*Making Things Our Own: The Indigenous Aesthetic in Digital Storytelling*

### Week 2

**Monday—January 19**

**Martin Luther King Jr. Day—ALL UNIVERSITY HOLIDAY**

**Wednesday—January 21**

*Inventing Civilization* (IWC) **Reading Question #1**

*Inventing Barbarians and Other Uncivilized Peoples* (IWC)

*Tourism, Mass Media, and the Making of Visual Culture in the Greater Yucatan Peninsula*

<http://www.jackson2bears.net/10LittleIndians/homepage.html>

<http://www.jackson2bears.net/>

### Week 3

**Monday—January 26**

*Civilization and its Boosters* (IWC) **Reading Question #2**

*The Parallax Effect: The Impact of Aboriginal Media on Ethnographic Film*

[http://www.media-](http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/issues/stereotyping/aboriginal_people/index.cfm)

[awareness.ca/english/issues/stereotyping/aboriginal\\_people/index.cfm](http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/issues/stereotyping/aboriginal_people/index.cfm)

**Wednesday—January 28**

*Re-Constructing the Colonizer Self-Representation by First Nations Artists* **Reading Question #3**

*Getting the “Indian” Out of the Cupboard: Using Information Literacy to Promote Critical Thinking*

*Aboriginal media lab to be used to challenge stereotypes*

<http://www.non-compliance.ca/>

### Week 4

**Monday—February 2**

*Custer’s Last Sitcom: Decolonized Viewing of the Sitcom’s “Indian”* **Reading Reaction #1**

*Smoke or Signals? American Popular Culture and the Challenge to Hegemonic Images of American Indians in Native American Film*

**Wednesday—February 4**

*The feature film industry* (FASP) **Reading Question #4**

*From seventh art to social practice – a history of film studies* (FASP)

### Week 5

**Monday—February 9**

*Film languages* (FASP) **Reading Question #5**

*Film narrative* (FASP)

**Wednesday—February 11**

*Film audiences* (FASP)

*Film, culture, and ideology* (FASP)



## Week 10

### **Monday—March 23**

*Weaving a Communication Quilt in Colombia: Civil Conflict, Indigenous Resistance, and Community Radio in Northern Cauca* (GIM) **Reading Reaction #3 Reading Question #12**

*Outside the Indigenous Lens: Zapatistas and Autonomous Videomaking* (GIM)

### **Wednesday—March 25**

*The Search for Well-Being: Placing Development with Indigenous Identity* (GIM)

<http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=105510955441&oid=20491132843>

<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=2481013630298098907&ei=DCRnSdOqE4H0-wGdkcS4Dg&q=Zapatista+media&hl=en>

## Week 11

### **Monday—March 30**

*Shaking Our Shells: Cherokee Two-Spirits Rebalancing the World* **Reading Question #13**

### **Wednesday—April 1**

*Stolen From Our Bodies: First Nations Two-Spirits/Queers and the Journey to a Sovereign Erotic*

<http://www.myspace.com/dgaproductions>

## Week 12

### **Monday—April 6**

*Cache: Provisions and Productions in Contemporary Igloolik Video* (GIM) **Reading Question #14**

*Reading Nanook's Smile: Visual Sovereignty, Indigenous Revisions of Ethnography, and Atanarjuat (The Fast Runner)*

*Chapter 9: Indigenous Films of the Arctic* (NF)

### **Wednesday—April 8**

*Atanarjuat, the Fast Runner and Its Audiences* **Reading Question #15**

*Atanarjuat and the Ideological Work of Contemporary Indigenous Filmmaking*

## Week 13

### **Monday—April 13**

*Digital Tools and the Management of Australian Aboriginal Desert Knowledge* (GIM)

*Rethinking the Digital Age* (GIM) **Reading Reaction #4**

*Gone Digital: Aboriginal Remix and the Cultural Commons*

### **Wednesday—April 15**

*Resistance through Re-presenting Culture: Aboriginal Student Filmmakers and a Participatory Action Research Project on Health and Wellness* **Reading Question #16**

<http://www.spiderkidthemovie.com/main.html>

[http://novanewsnet.ukings.ca/nova\\_news\\_3588\\_10280.html](http://novanewsnet.ukings.ca/nova_news_3588_10280.html)

*Standing Together*

<http://www.firstnationsdrum.com/Fall%202005/YthComix.htm>

[http://www.metacafe.com/watch/1118395/darkness\\_calls\\_in\\_gitxsan\\_trailer/](http://www.metacafe.com/watch/1118395/darkness_calls_in_gitxsan_trailer/)

[http://www.nativepeoples.com/article/articles/267/1/Indigenous-Animation-](http://www.nativepeoples.com/article/articles/267/1/Indigenous-Animation-Movement-Rising)

[Movement-Rising](http://www.nativepeoples.com/article/articles/267/1/Indigenous-Animation-Movement-Rising)

Week 14

**Monday—April 20**

*Shooting Back from the Reservation* **Reading Question #17**

*A Case against Giving Informants Cameras and Coming Back Weeks Later*

<http://webb.nmu.edu/Centers/NativeAmericanStudies/SiteSections/AboutUs/CommunityOutreach/WritingWithLight.shtml>

<http://photoclub.canadiangeographic.ca/blogs/featuredcameraclubs/archive/2008/11/03/first-nations-youth-photography-club.aspx>

**Wednesday—April 22**

*Challenging Stereotypes about First Nations Children and Youth: Collaborative*

*Photography with the Innu from Uashat mak Mani-Utenam* **Reading Question #18**

<http://www.thefigtree.org/may06images/twa-leabrahamson.html>

Week 15

**Monday—April 27**

*Challenging the silences and omissions of dominant media: Youth-led media collectives in Colombia* **Reading Question #19**

<http://www.indigenousaction.org/>

<http://www.youtube.com/user/outtayoutbackpack>

<http://www.navajohopiobserver.com/main.asp?SectionID=30&subsectionID=42&articleID=5257>

**Wednesday—April 29**

*Circling the Cross: Bridging Native America, Education, and Digital Media* **Reading**

**Question #20**

<http://www.anashinteractive.com/>

\*\*\*\*\*May 4 to May 8 **FINALS WEEK**\*\*\*\*\*

Final Paper/Project *and* Reading Reaction #5 are due by 5 p.m. on Tuesday, May 5, either to my office (Wilson 122) or my mailbox in the main CES Office (Wilson 111).

## Your Guide to Writing a Reading Reaction Paper<sup>1</sup>

A reading reaction paper is your opportunity to demonstrate that you've read the assignment and thought deeply about it; ideally, it should represent a mini-analysis of some part of the work that struck you as important or meaningful. I encourage you to *record and express any thoughts, questions, and/or concerns that come up as you read*, and thus develop independent ideas about a text. Furthermore, your response should *succinctly state what part of the work you see as significant and then explain its relationship to the work as a whole*. Don't tell me what happened or summarize the text. I've read the material and don't need this information. Instead, *your focus should be explaining to me as clearly as possible how and why a certain detail or incident shapes your analysis and is important to your overall understanding of the work*. Make certain that you support any generalizations with specifics and that you offer me some less-than-obvious insight as a reward for reading your reaction paper!

All I ask of you is a certain degree of care and focus as you pay attention to the text and choose something about which to write. The reading reaction paper is not a formal paper, so you do not have to produce a developed thesis and argument; however, make sure your writing is free of mistakes and that your style is interesting. Don't worry about the length; instead, worry about saying something worthwhile. Be clear about what you are saying, and communicate what fascinates or troubles you. Remember that a reading reaction is not just about what you like or don't like – you may *begin* with feelings, but you do not end there. **Try to make sense of the text.**

Reading reaction papers provide several valuable services for me: They help me insure that you do the reading and help me assess your level of understanding and the depth of your thinking; they help me monitor your writing skills; and finally, they improve the level of our classroom discussion.

I've provided you with a guide to get you started below. These steps to analysis are loosely adapted from *Writing and Thinking Analytically* by David Rosenwasser and Jill Stephen.

### Examples of possible types of responses:

1. *Focus on a small part*: Discuss one sentence or passage in detail and explain its significance for the whole or find two key sentences or passages and discuss their relationship.
2. *Assemble pieces of evidence*: Locate three "hotspots" from the text (passages that seem *important, striking, puzzling*) and suggest what they might show individually or together.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Amy Habberstad's "Reading Reaction Paper" from asdk12.org (Anchorage School District Online)

3. Formulate overarching *ideas, themes, or problems*: Devise a good question, explain why the answer is not so obvious, and then try to answer it by finding three apt passages or locate and define a theme or main subject of the text.
4. *Revise or complicate*: Give a raw response, then either analyze it for your own assumptions, values, expectations, or after rereading, give a second response complicating or refuting what you first thought.
5. *Define* significant parts and how they're *related*: Try to figure out what rhetorical tools the writer uses and how those tools help us understand the meaning of the subject as a whole.
6. Make the implicit *explicit*: Convert meanings that are suggested but not overtly stated into direct statements.
7. Look for *patterns*: Seek out repetitions or resemblance, contrasts, or anomalies. The latter are especially important for they help us refine our claims and keep us from ignoring evidence; they often lead us to new and better questions and ideas.
8. Keep *reformulating* questions and explanations; REMEMBER, uncertainty is a normal and necessary part of understanding.
  - A. Which details seem significant? Why?
  - B. What is the significance of a particular idea? What does it mean?
  - C. What else might it mean?
  - D. How do the details fit together? What do they have in common?
  - E. What does this pattern of details mean?
  - F. What else might this same pattern of details mean? How else could it be explained?
  - G. What details don't seem to fit? How might they be connected with other details to form a different pattern?
  - H. What does this new pattern mean? How might it cause me to read the meaning of the individual details differently?

**Your reading reaction papers will be scored based on their focus and depth. You should attempt a variety of responses (i.e., if you write the same sort of response every time, you will see your scores drop as you are not displaying critical thinking or offering anything new or unique for consideration.)**

**As these papers are written outside of class, I expect them to be typed in 12 pt Times New Roman font, double-spaced, and the *minimum* length is 3 pages. You may pick one article or you may use one of the eight types of responses to critique two or more articles from the previous three-week period.**