

New Course Development Grant Application
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I will be developing a special topics course for Fall 2020 titled “Native American Literature and Film,” rostered in the English Department, but also counting for Film Studies. This course is meant to replace a prior catalog course ENG 356 “Native American Literature,” taught by Mary Lawlor before she retired. Seeing the current lack of any Native American studies courses in our curriculum, I feel it is time to bring this course back, modified to connect to my own areas of expertise. Having a course like this return to our curriculum is another step towards diversifying our students’ knowledge. Nationwide, the invisibility of Native American history, arts, and contemporary culture is shocking. I intend this course to be a minor intervention in this marginalization, and as an expansion of other ways I have been integrating Native issues into my teaching.

Background:

Native American filmmaking has been one of my secondary fields of research since I was an undergraduate, when I interned at the Film & Video Department at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian and wrote a senior honors thesis on Native American independent filmmaking. One of my PhD qualifying exam fields, “Race in American Cinema,” focused on African American and Native American representations in film. I also took two seminars that combined Native American literature, film, and cultural theory. In 2013, I published an essay in an anthology of Native American filmmaking.

While I have a general knowledge of Native American literature and cultural studies, these fields have always been secondary to my film work. And after publishing the essay in 2013, I have not kept up to date with new films or scholarship within Native American Studies, though I have taught some prominent Native American authors in an early FYS and in my iteration of AMS 101 “Introduction to American Studies” (Louise Erdrich, Sherman Alexie, Joy Harjo).

Work Goals and Plans:

My work during the summer of 2020 to prepare this course will include:

- Reading new novels/short story collections including *Shell Shaker*, *The Fast Red Road: A Plainsong* and *There, There* (and others I will no doubt discover as part of my research)
- Revisiting novels, poetry and short story collections I have read/taught previously to choose what to include in this course (including *House Made of Dawn*, *Ceremony*, *Winter in the Blood*, *The Sharpest Sight*, *Love Medicine*, *Tracks*, *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven*, and the poetry of Joy Harjo and Sherman Alexie)
- Reading anthologies of Native American literature to get a broad knowledge of older literature (oral histories, myths, poetry, etc.), where I have had less training (examples include *Native American Literature: An Anthology*, *The Remembered Earth: An Anthology of Contemporary Native American Literature*, *My Home as I Remember*, and *Native North American Literary Companion*)

- Reading reference works to select portions for students to read (examples include *The Cambridge Companion to Native American Literature* and *Native American Literature: A Very Short Introduction*)
- Reading recent works of literary criticism and Native American studies to have a solid grounding of the current theories in the field
- Perusing the websites of film organizations like Film & Video Department at the National Museum of the American Indian, American Indian Film Festival, and Sundance Film Festival to get a good list of post-2007 Native-directed films
- Purchasing a select number of those films for our library and viewing them in order to select a few to teach along with the ones I will definitely include (*Smoke Signals* and *The Business of Fancydancing*)
- Consulting with members of the English department to make sure the way I teach literature aligns with some of their best practices

I plan to be working on this all summer, so I am requesting an 8-week stipend as compensation for this time. If necessary, I will accept a reduced amount. During the spring semester and at the very beginning of the summer, I'll be ordering books and DVDs for the library and while I am waiting for those to arrive, I'll read books we do have as well as literary criticism/ cultural studies in journals such as *American Indian Quarterly*, *The Wičazo Ša Review*, and *Studies in American Indian Literatures*. I have no other professional commitments this summer aside from possible revisions (if requested) for an essay that is under review as part of the anthology *Race and the Suburbs in Postwar American Film*.

Muhlenberg Grants Received in the Last Five Years

A Summer Research grant in 2018 compensated me for time researching and writing "Inhabiting the Suburban Film: Arab American Narratives of Spatial Insecurity," an essay forthcoming in the anthology *Race and the Suburbs in Postwar American Film* (SUNY Press).