

Native Americans in Film

AMST 336.001

Spring 2024

Wednesdays, 3:35-6:35 p.m.

008 Gardner Hall

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Office Hours:

MWF, 10:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.,

or by appointment

Teaching Assistant

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Office Hours:

Wednesdays, 2:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m.,

Thursdays, 9:30 a.m.-10:30 a.m.,

or by appointment

Indigenous Land and Sovereignty: The land on which the University of North Carolina stands is the ancestral homeland of Eastern Siouan-speaking Indigenous peoples (Yesàh, “The People”). The university has profited from [the taking of this and other Indigenous lands](#), along with the displacement of Indigenous people and nations, within the present-day boundaries of the state. The inherent sovereignty of the Catawba, Coharie Indian Tribe, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina, Meherrin Nation, Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation, Sappony, Tuscarora, and Waccamaw-Siouan Tribe has endured, nonetheless. It is a great privilege to teach and support faculty, students, staff, and community members from and to work toward justice and reconciliation on behalf of these and other Indigenous nations.

Global Indigeneity & American Indian Studies: The University of North Carolina offers a major concentration and minor in American Indian and Indigenous Studies within the Department of American Studies. We are also in the process of building a free-standing curriculum in Global Indigeneity & American Indian Studies. You can learn more about the current major concentration and minor [here](#) and the Working Group on Global Indigeneity & American Indian Studies [here](#). If you would like to talk about majoring or minoring in AIIS, please feel free to contact me.

Course Description: This course is about more than the title “Native Americans in Film” can possibly contain—at least, that is, more than the common sense meaning once assigned to it. Our class is, as was once assumed to be its totality, about Hollywood’s portrayal of American Indians in film. But, reflecting not only the long tradition of Native presence in film but also recent revolutions in this area of popular culture, we will explore Indigenous self-representation in film, what has and has not changed with regard to filmic representation over time, and contemporary mediums, including streaming services.

Student Learning Outcomes: Over the course of the semester, you will:

- gain knowledge of the ways in which non-Indigenous people have represented American Indians, Alaska Natives, Kanaka Maoli, and (though to a lesser extent) First Nations in film and the purposes these representations have served
- learn about the ways in which Indigenous people have always had a presence in film as actors, writers, producers, and directors
- explore Indigenous self-representation in Hollywood films, documentaries, and television and read that against non-Indigenous forms of representation

Course Format and In-Class Decorum: We will meet together as a single class every Wednesday. The general approach for each class will be for us to watch a film together and follow that viewing with a discussion. These discussions will be informed by readings that you will need to complete in anticipation of each week’s meeting.

With regard to decorum, I expect you to treat one another with courtesy and respect—even if you should disagree with one another. If I have to address behavioral issues, your final grade will be penalized.

Expectations: I expect you to **engage** all of the assigned readings, documentaries, television shows, and movies, to **think critically** about them, and to **share** your thoughts and questions. In turn, you can expect me to be prepared and to facilitate your learning to the best of my ability.

Inclusion and Diversity: This course seeks to be inclusive by presenting a diversity of perspectives on the past and present of Native America. We also seek to cultivate an environment which invites students to develop and share diverse perspectives on the topics covered in the course. Inclusion has everything to do with a sense of belonging, and we want you to feel like you belong here!

Attendance: Attendance will be taken. You are allowed one absence. Each absence above that number will result in a one-half letter grade (five-point) deduction from your final participation grade. The only excused absences above that number are those for university-organized and sponsored activities (student athletes), religious observances, and documented medical reasons. In all instances you must notify me *prior* to missing class.

Late Papers & Make-Up Exams: Late papers will not be accepted, and make-up exams will not be administered unless you have secured an excused absence *before* the due date.

Reading Requirements: The readings include selections **scholarly articles, book chapters, and online sources.** These will be made available to you via Canvas. You must complete the readings before the class meeting for which they are assigned. All students need to purchase the following books:

Articles, Book Chapters, and Online Sources on Canvas

Grading Scales and Rubrics: This course utilizes a weighted grading scale. The grades you receive on your various assignments will be out of 100 points (95%, 86%, 77%, etc.). *They will not, however, be weighted equally in ascertaining your final grade.* The breakdown for the course is as follows:

Midterm Essay:	15%
Final Exam Essay/Presentation:	35%
<u>Option One</u>	
Final Exam Essay:	100%
<u>Option Two</u>	
Individual or Group Alternative Assignment:	50%
Final Exam Essay:	50%
Discussion:	50%

Final grades are assigned using the following plus and minus system:

A	94-100	B	84-86	C	74-76	D	64-66
A-	90-93	B-	80-83	C-	70-73	D-	60-63
B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69	F	0-59

Midterm Essay (15%): The midterm essay, due at the beginning of our Week 8 meeting, requires you to synthesize the films, documentaries, and readings. It will be approximately 2,000 words and account for 15% of your final grade. Guidelines forthcoming.

Final Exam Essay (35%): You will write a final exam essay that requires you to synthesize the films, documentaries, television shows, and readings. If you choose Option One, the essay is worth 100% of this portion

of your final grade and must be approximately 3,500 words. If you choose Option Two, the essay is worth 50% of this portion of your final grade and must be approximately 2,000 words. An individual or group presentation (detailed below) will be worth the other 50% of this portion of your final grade. The essays will be due at the beginning of our final exam time. Guidelines forthcoming.

Individual or Group Alternative Assignment: If you choose Option Two for the Final Exam/Presentation, you may elect to do either an individual or group project. For this project, you will choose one of the films we watched for the class and create a PowerPoint presentation that completes this sentence: “Why *Title Of Film* Matters.” In addition to the title and Works Cited slides, you need to create one slide for each person involved in the project. So, an individual project would have a title slide, and Works Cited slide, and one additional slide. A two-person group would have a title slide, a Works Cited slide, and two additional slides; and so forth. You or your group will then provide a five-to-ten-minute presentation during our final exam time.

Discussion (50%): Weekly discussions serve as a vital component of the course. This portion of your grade will be determined according to the *consistency and quality* of your participation. It is worth 50% of your final grade. Your ability to make substantive contributions in class will depend on how much time and effort you put into the readings and how thoughtfully you relate them to the films, documentaries, and television shows we watch in class.

Grading Rubrics: In Canvas you will find the grading rubrics that will be used to assess your performance on the final exam essay, individual or group alternative assignment, and discussion. I encourage you to familiarize yourself with these expectations so that you can maximize the chances of reaching your goals in the class.

Syllabus Adjustments: I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus, including assignments and due dates. These changes will be announced as early as possible.

Extra Credit Opportunities: You will have opportunities to earn extra credit for attending events relating to American Indian and Indigenous peoples. To receive credit, submit a one-paragraph reflection to me **no more than two days after the event**. For each event you attend and write a reflection on, I will add 1 point to your overall participation grade. You can receive up to 5 total extra credit points.

A Quick Tour of Our Canvas Site:

- **Home.** This is where our journey begins!
- **Announcements.** This is where I’ll post important updates and reminders regarding the class. These are also delivered directly to your email inbox.
- **Syllabus.** Here you’ll find all of the essential information about the class—the course description, learning goals and objectives, expectations, reading requirements, information on grading, descriptions of the assignments, and a detailed course schedule featuring all due dates. Needless to say, you’ll want to familiarize yourself with the document right away.
- **Modules.** This area organizes links readings, videos, films, film guides, and reflection prompts into weekly modules. The links are presented in the order in which they appear in the syllabus.
- **Panopto Video.** You’ll find any narrated PowerPoints lectures here!
- **Course Reserves.** Here you’ll find a link to any electronic copies of monographs that may be used.
- **Assignments.** Here you will find links to the midterm, final exam, and final presentation guidelines.
- **Discussions.** This is where you will find the following forums:
 - **The Well.** This section of our Canvas site is a great place for you to “talk” to your colleagues about anything and everything related to the class and beyond. Read a story online about Native people that you’d like to share? Find an interesting website? Post ‘em here! I hope this will become a lively space where you can get to know each other better.
 - **The Troubled Sea of Thought.** This section of the Canvas site is the place to ask course related questions that arise as you (in the immortal words of economist John Kenneth Galbraith) “cast out

on the troubled sea of thought.” Don’t understand something in the lectures? Have something you’d like to pursue further from the readings? Post your questions here. As your captain, I will check the troubled sea during my office hours (MWF, 10:00-11:00 a.m. EST) and post responses within 24 hours of your questions being asked. Hopefully all ships will be righted! I encourage you all to cast out on the troubled sea daily, too. I am a firm believer in the idea that “to teach is to learn.” So, try it! Help *each other* out!

- **Grades.** This is where you can see all of your grades for the class.

American Indian Center: Located at 205 Wilson Street, the American Indian Center offers a convenient place to gather, study, and find out more about American Indian programming on campus and in the area.

Course Schedule

Important Due Dates Are *****Bolded, Italicized, and Marked with Asterisks*****
(Canvas) Means You Need to Consult Our Canvas Site for Additional Information

Week One

January 10

Course Introduction

Week Two

January 17

Context and Analytical Frameworks

Watch and discuss *Imagining Indians* (1993) and *Reel Injun* (2009)
Read Black, preface and introduction (Canvas)

Week Three

January 24

The More Things Change, The More They Stay The Same? Text and Subtext

Revisiting *Imagining Indians* and *Reel Injun*
Watch and discuss *Last of the Mohicans* (1992)
Read Black, chapter 1 and epilogue (Canvas); Stockbridge Munsee Story (Canvas); Delucia, “Indigenous Stories” (Canvas); and Orange, “Untold Stories” (Canvas)

Week Four

January 31

Always Present: Native People and the Birth of Film

Revisiting *Last of the Mohicans*
Watch and discuss St. Cyr/Young Deer films
Read Aleiss, “From Lillian” and “A Century Before” (Canvas)

Week Five

February 7

Different Storytellers/Different Stories

Revisiting St. Cyr/Young Deer films
Watch and discuss *Dance Me Outside* (1994)
Read Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Canvas) and Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (Canvas); Watch *The Squaw Man* (Canvas)

Week Six

February 14

A Tidal Shift?

Revisiting *Dance Me Outside*
Watch and discuss *Smoke Signals* (1998)

Week Seven

February 21

Rethinking Audience

Revisiting *Smoke Signals*
Watch and discuss *Atanarjuat* (2001)
Read Teichler, *Carnivalizing* (Canvas) and Raheja, “Nanook’s Smile” (Canvas)

Week Eight

February 28

Transitions

Revisiting *Atanarjuat*
Watch and discuss *Songs My Brother Taught Me* (2015)

Week Nine

March 6

Truth and Reconciliation Through Film

Discuss Essay One
Revisiting *Songs My Brother Taught Me*

Watch and discuss *Indian Horse* (2017)
Read Mayer, “Neo Frontier Cinema” (Canvas) and Watch interviews (Canvas)
****Essay One Due****

Week Ten

March 13

Spring Break

No Class

Week Eleven

March 20

The Story Thus Far

Revisiting *Indian Horse*
Watch and discuss *Beans* (2021)
Read Giancarlo, et al, “Methodology” (Canvas)

Week Twelve

March 27

Pushing Boundaries

Revisiting *Beans*
Watch and Discuss *Drunktown’s Finest* (2014)
Read TBD

Week Thirteen

April 3

Indigenous/Indigenized Sci-Fi

Revisiting *Drunktown’s Finest*
Watch and discuss *Prey* (2021)
Read Tahmahkera, “Behind the Scenes” and TBD (Canvas)

Week Fourteen

April 10

New/Next, Part One

Revisiting *Prey*
Watch and discuss *Reservation Dogs* (2021)
Read Tahmahkera, preface, introduction, and conclusion and TBD (Canvas)

Week Fifteen

April 17

New/Next, Part Two

Revisiting *Reservation Dogs*
Watch and discuss *Reservation Dogs* (2021)
Read TBD

Week Sixteen

April 24

People’s Choice

Revisiting *Reservation Dogs*
Watch and discuss TBD
Read TBD

Finals Week

May 3

****Final Exam Presentations/Essays Due (4:00 p.m.)****

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Statements for Undergraduate Classes
Spring 2024

Attendance Policy

University Policy: As stated in the University's [Class Attendance Policy](#), no right or privilege exists that permits a student to be absent from any class meetings, except for these University Approved Absences:

1. Authorized University activities: [University Approved Absence Office \(UAAO\) website](#) provides information and [FAQs for students](#) and [FAQs for faculty](#) related to University Approved Absences
2. Disability/religious observance/pregnancy, as required by law and approved by [Accessibility Resources and Service](#) and/or the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](#) (EOC)
3. Significant health condition and/or personal/family emergency as approved by the [Office of the Dean of Students](#), [Gender Violence Service Coordinators](#), and/or the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](#) (EOC).

Honor Code

All students are expected to follow the guidelines of the UNC honor code. In particular, students are expected to refrain from "lying, cheating, or stealing" in the academic context. If you are unsure about which actions violate that honor code, please consult honor.unc.edu.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Policy – CAS units only

Instructors should specify the details of AI Use Policies for the particular course, either by indicating that:

Use of generative AI tools of any kind is not permitted in this course. Any use of these tools will be considered an instance of academic dishonesty and will be referred to the Honor System.

- or -

The following uses of generative AI tools are permitted in this course: *Categories of possible permitted use include, but are not limited to: topic selection, brainstorming and idea generation, research, source validation, outlining and planning, drafting, media creation, peer review, revising, and polishing.*

Syllabus Changes

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus including project due dates and test dates. These changes will be announced as early as possible.

Accessibility Resources and Service

[Accessibility Resources and Service](#) (ARS – ars@unc.edu) receives requests for accommodations, and through the Student and Applicant Accommodations Policy determines eligibility and identifies reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities and/or chronic medical conditions to mitigate or remove the barriers experienced in accessing University courses, programs and activities.

ARS also offers its Testing Center resources to students and instructors to facilitate the implementation of testing accommodations.

Counseling and Psychological Services

UNC-Chapel Hill is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body. The [Heels Care Network](#) website is a place to access the many mental health resources at Carolina. CAPS is the primary mental health provider for students, offering timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services. Go to their website <https://caps.unc.edu/> or visit their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health building for an initial evaluation to learn more. Students can also call CAPS 24/7 at 919-966-3658 for immediate assistance.

Title IX and Related Resources

Any student who is impacted by discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, or stalking is encouraged to seek resources on campus or in the community. Reports can be made online to the EOC at <https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/> or by contacting the University's Title IX Coordinator (Elizabeth Hall, titleixcoordinator@unc.edu) or the Report and Response Coordinators in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (reportandresponse@unc.edu). Confidential resources include Counseling and Psychological Services and the Gender Violence Services Coordinators (gvsc@unc.edu). Additional resources are available at safe.unc.edu.