

Indigenous Studies Program and Department of English & Writing Studies

**Indigenous Literatures of Turtle Island  
English 3680F / Indigenous Studies 3880F (001)  
Fall 2023**

**Prerequisites for Indigenous Studies 3880F:**

Antirequisite(s): English 3680F/G and English 3880G.

Prerequisite(s): 1000-level English or Indigenous Studies 1020E.

**Prerequisites for English 3680F:**

Antirequisite(s): Indigenous Studies 3880F/G and English 3880G.

Prerequisite(s): At least 60% in 1.0 of English 1020-1999, or Indigenous Studies 1020E, or 1.0 of Film 1000-1999 plus English 2112F/G, Film 2212F/G or Theatre Studies 2212F/G or permission of the department, or Indigenous Studies 1020E.

**University Policy:** Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

**Course Description:**

*Welcome to Indigenous Literatures of Turtle Island!* This course will engage with concepts and practices of storytelling from several distinct Indigenous nations across Turtle Island (North America) while considering the many shapes that Indigenous storytelling takes, including oral narratives, literature, and film. In so doing, we will reflect upon what it means to learn *with* and *from* Indigenous stories, rather than merely learning “about” them. In many Indigenous communities, stories are an important way of teaching—they transmit knowledges and histories and offer powerful insights about how to live in good relation with each other and the world around us. Stories, therefore, require attentive listening and respect. Through engaging with the work of Indigenous storytellers, we will consider what kinds of scholarly practices demonstrate such thoughtfulness and care.

**Land Acknowledgement**

Western University is located on the lands of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Chonnonton (Neutral) peoples, on lands connected with the London Township and Sombra Treaties of 1796 and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum. This land continues to be home to diverse Indigenous peoples.

### Course Objectives:

- To introduce students to and/or enrich their experiences of learning with and from Indigenous storytelling arts from Turtle Island.
- To consider how engagements with Indigenous literary and cultural production is enhanced by an attention to Indigenous ways of knowing and, in particular, Indigenous practices of storytelling and their vital importance to many Indigenous communities.
- To consider the relationship between socio-historical contexts and Indigenous literatures.
- To assist students in honing their critical thinking skills through in-class discussions and analyses of literary and cultural texts.
- To foster the development and honing of students' writing and communication skills through the provision of feedback on the writing process as well as the finished product.
- To foster the development of students' distinctive intellectual voices and perspectives through the consideration of self-location and self-reflexivity as part of ethical engagements with Indigenous stories.

### Course Materials:

Joshua Whitehead, *Jonny Appleseed* (Available at the University Bookstore)

Thomas King, *The Back of the Turtle* (Available at the University Bookstore)

Melissa Schnarr, *Secondhand Moccasins* (Please note that this book needs to be ordered directly from the press via this link: <https://www.anstrutherpress.com/new-products/secondhand-moccasins-by-melissa-schnarr>)

Custom Course Book (Available at the University Bookstore)

All texts listed on the syllabus with weblinks are not included in the Course Book. These materials can be accessed directly online.

### Statement on ChatGPT and all Artificial Intelligence Software

While ChatGPT may have salient learning purposes in some courses and some real-world applications, in this course, ChatGPT and any and all other AI technologies are not compatible with the learning objectives, which include personal reflection, intellectual independence, and critical thinking and writing skills conducted via each students' own individual skill sets and independent thinking processes. For this reason, any assignment that is found to be created or written with the aid of ChatGPT or any other AI technology for this course will receive a grade of zero.

For all assignments completed outside of class, the professor may require you to attend an in-person interview to discuss your work before the mark is finalized.

### Methods of Evaluation:

Assignment	% of Grade	Length	Due Date
Participation	10%	N/A	Ongoing

In-Class Quizzes	10% each x 3 = 30%	N/A	October 10 <sup>th</sup> , October 24 <sup>th</sup> , November 7 <sup>th</sup> , November 14 <sup>th</sup>
Response to Course Reading and Class Discussion	25%	4 pages, double-spaced, plus Works Cited	Any time up until the class of October 17 <sup>th</sup>
Essay Draft and Commentary on Revision Process	12.5%	Essay Draft plus commentary of 2 pages, double-spaced	November 26 <sup>th</sup>
Final Essay	22.5%	6 pages, double-spaced, plus Works Cited	November 26 <sup>th</sup>

**Final Grades:** The Department of English & Writing Studies and the Indigenous Studies Program do not release final grades. All undergraduate grade reports will be available online from the Office of the Registrar.

Students are fully responsible for being familiar with the information posted on the English Department website at

<http://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/info%20for%20students.html#grade>.

### Assignment Objectives and Descriptions

For each assignment discussed below, I will identify the objectives informing the assignment as well as the key criteria for assessment.

#### a.) Class Participation

##### Objectives:

- The objectives for this assignment are foundational to Indigenous pedagogies: learning in this course is grounded in being part of a classroom community and the collective experiences we create as part of that community. To truly learn and engage with the course materials, students need to demonstrate a commitment to the class community by showing up on a regular basis and participating in our collective learning.

##### Assignment Components:

- Please come to every class and arrive on time.
- A key part of being prepared for and ready to participate in class is bringing copies of the assigned readings for the week, when applicable. We will be working with these texts closely in class discussion, so please bring them with you. Preparation for each class involves reading all assigned materials *at least once and preferably twice* before class, making notes about these materials

(underlining or marking key passages, reflecting on your responses, etc.), and preparing potential questions or comments to raise in class.

- While some students feel more comfortable sharing their thoughts verbally than others, I want to encourage everyone to try to contribute to class discussions when possible. However, this is not the sole criterion for in-class participation, so if there is a significant reason as to why you feel reticent to share verbally, then please be sure to commit to the other components of in-class participation listed above. Attentive listening and respectful engagement with the ideas of other classmates are also key parts of contributing to class discussions.
- Contributing to class learning also means being a respectful and careful listener, not only to me but also to other students. Sometimes, this means recognizing when you have spoken a lot and making space for other people to share. This also involves respectfully engaging with the ideas of others—treating peoples' insights with care and, if you hold a different perspective, sharing that perspective tactfully.

## **b.) In-Class Quizzes**

### **Objectives:**

- To ensure that students are reading a broad range of course materials.
- To provide students with an opportunity to complete short, low-stakes (i.e. a low percentage portion of the final grade) assignments that motivate them to keep up with the course readings on a regular basis.

### **Assignment Components:**

- On 4 different dates throughout the semester, students will be given 20 minutes during class to answer short quizzes designed to make sure that students have read the course materials.
- These quizzes are not overly-complicated: they may involve multiple choice or short answer questions. If you've done the readings and attended class, you should be able to do very well.
- The top 3 grades out of the 4 quizzes will be counted towards each student's final course grade. This means that if a student misses one of the quizzes, they will have to make sure they attend class on the dates of the other quizzes. There will be no make-up quizzes without formal academic accommodations for serious medical or compassionate reasons.

## **c.) Response to Course Reading and Class Discussion**

### **Objectives:**

- This assignment is designed to help me get to know how each student is experiencing this course, what they are learning, what they are enjoying or struggling with, what questions they have, and how they are actively and thoughtfully engaging with the course readings/listenings/viewings.

- This assignment is also designed to provide students with an opportunity to experience writing as a personal and reflexive—a process that helps them to learn more about themselves as well as the course materials.

### **Assignment Components:**

- Students need to submit one of these assignments during the semester with regard to classes of their own choosing—**up to and including the October 17<sup>th</sup> class. The only other exception is that students cannot choose to write these assignments for class dates where we have scheduled an in-class quiz.** Each assignment should be a total of 4 pages double-spaced. Students should write at least 3 pages of each of these assignments in proper paragraph prose form. However, for the additional 1-page equivalent, students can either continue with prose writing or they could submit a poem or piece of experimental writing or supplement their writing with a photograph or piece of art that they have created.
- This assignment must be submitted a maximum of 7 days after the class the student is writing about. The assignment is due on or before the 7<sup>th</sup> day at midnight (i.e. if a student wishes to write about the readings and the class discussion of those readings from Tuesday September 19<sup>th</sup>, then their assignment would be due by 11:59 p.m. on Tuesday September 26<sup>th</sup>).
- Each entry should respond to at least two of the course readings/listenings/viewings scheduled for discussion during the class that they are writing about. How did this material speak to you or impact you? What did you learn from this material? What did you think of this reading prior to our class discussion and what are your impressions now? Did the class discussion change your understanding of this reading in some way? If so, how? What remaining questions do you have about this reading?
- How am I grading these assignments? I will focus on the level of thought and care put into these reflections. Does the response reflect that the student has genuinely read, listened to, and engaged with the course material **in specific and detailed ways**? Does the response demonstrate that the student has put thought, care, and time into writing these entries? Does the response demonstrate the student's reflection on their learning process in this course?
- A Works Cited is required at the end of this assignment.

### **d.) Essay Draft and Commentary on Essay Revision Process**

#### **Objectives:**

- This assignment is designed to encourage students to approach their writing as a process rather than something they do the night before an essay is due.
- The assignment also encourages students to become editors of their own writing—to learn more about their strengths and weaknesses as scholars and how to make the most of their strengths. The assignment also encourages students to plan steps in their revision process that help address the areas of their writing that could benefit from more attention.

### Assignment Components:

- At minimum, students should submit for this portion of the essay assignment a rough draft as well as a two-page reflection on changes you made during the process of planning and writing the final essay for the course.
- Students' processes for writing may vary and may involve documents like brainstorming notes, thesis statements, and essay outlines. Students are welcome to include in their submission for this assignment any and all documents such as brainstorming and essay outlines in addition to a rough draft of their essay. The more thoughtful steps that you have engaged in on your journey to create your final essay for the course, the higher your grade on this assignment will likely be.
- The "Commentary" portion of this assignment should be a two-page, double-spaced reflection on your writing and revision process for the final essay. It should be written in proper paragraph form. The Commentary should address the following questions: how and why did you choose the topic that you did? How did your thinking about the topic change as you worked on the essay? What changes did you make during the revision process and why? What did you learn through revising your work (about the literary work you were writing about and/or your process/strengths/challenges as a writer)?

### 3.) Final Essay (6 Pages Double-Spaced, plus Works Cited)

#### Objectives:

- This assignment is designed to promote the development of students' critical thinking and writing skills.
- By focusing upon a literary work from the course syllabus of their choice, and considering not just what it says but *how* it says it (i.e. how representation shapes meaning), students are encouraged to think deeply about this work of literature and to focus on the skills of close reading.
- Students then have the opportunity to use those close reading skills to formulate an argument/analysis of the work.

#### Assignment Components:

- This assignment involves conceptualizing and writing an analytic scholarly essay that demonstrates strong critical thinking skills, the development of an original argument, and the careful utilization of textual details or "evidence" to support the contentions made in the thesis statement. Essays should include a clear and focused thesis statement followed by the coherent and sustained development of the argument throughout the paper.
- **The essay must also incorporate meaningful references to at least two of the critical readings / essays we have studied throughout the course.**
- Essays should address more than the plot of the literary work when developing an analysis. Please consider the form of the story or text as well. How does the narrative voice (first person? omniscient?) shape the story? Does the narrative proceed in a chronological order or does it move back and forth in time? Does

imagery shape the meaning of the story? If so, how? Please provide detailed textual examples to support your discussion.

- Students are not required to consult secondary sources for this paper but they are welcome to do so should they want to. If secondary sources are consulted, however, they must be acknowledged and cited properly.
- A proper Works Cited should be included at the end of the paper.

### **Important Information Regarding All Assignments**

- Assignments submitted after the due date will be assessed a late penalty (2% per day, including weekends). Assignments must be submitted as **Microsoft Word documents** uploaded through the course OWL portal.
- **All written assignments should be formatted with 1” margins, double-spaced, and in Times New Roman 12-point font. Please do not use extra spaces between each paragraph.**
- For all students enrolled in English 3680, all bibliographic notations should follow the MLA method of parenthetical citation. All assignments that use secondary sources should be accompanied with a Works Cited page. For information regarding correct MLA formatting, please consult the PowerPoint Presentation placed on the course OWL site. For all students enrolled in Indigenous Studies 3880, students may use a bibliographic citation method approved for their particular discipline. Students must inform the instructor of the method they are using (e.g. Chicago Manual of Style, American Psychological Association format, etc.) and adhere to those conventions.
- Please retain at least one electronic copy of every assignment you submit. As well, please retain all marked assignments until you receive your final grade for the course.

### **Accommodation:**

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components, and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student’s Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested.

Further information on Western’s “Policy on Academic Consideration for Student Absences – Undergraduate Students First Entry Program” can be found at

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_illness.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_illness.pdf)

### **Downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC):**

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf)

### **Academic Offences:**

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following website:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf).

### **Plagiarism:**

It is crucial that students create all assignments (both written and oral) using their own ideas and their own words. If you use a concept, idea, or phrasing from another source, it is imperative to signal the direct borrowing of words with quotation marks and to register the borrowing of ideas and concepts via the use of explanatory footnotes and parenthetical citations. When in doubt, please cite your source rather than leaving it out! Plagiarism is a serious academic offence. Any use of CHATGPT or other AI programs for the creation of assignments in this course will be treated as an instance of plagiarism.

### **Plagiarism Checking:**

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Chair of Undergraduate Studies. Proven cases of plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. Subsequent offences will result in failure for the course.

For English Department regulations regarding term work, exams, faculty office hours, academic relief (appeals, petitions, complaints), and other matters, please refer to the “Information for Students” on the departmental website at <http://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/info%20for%20students.html>.

### **Support Services:**

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>  
Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>  
Student Development Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western (<http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

### **Accessibility Options:**

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you

require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 661-2111 x82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation. Information regarding accommodation of exams is available on the Registrar's website:

[http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/examinations/accommodated\\_exams.html](http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/examinations/accommodated_exams.html).

### **STATEMENT ON GENDER-BASED AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

Western [is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence](#) and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced gender-based or sexual violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts, [here](#). To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact [support@uwo.ca](mailto:support@uwo.ca).

## **Schedule of Readings/Listenings/Viewings**

### **Unit 1: Land, Locations, and Relations**

*This first unit of our course is designed to help locate us in relation to the land that Western and the city of London are located upon as well as to locate us (from our different subject positions) in relation to learning from and with Indigenous literatures.*

#### **September 12: Welcome and Introduction to the Course**

#### **September 19: Engaging with Indigenous Literatures: The Ethics of Reading and Writing**

- Warren Cariou, "On Critical Humility"
- Greg Younging, "Chapter 2: A history of the portrayal of Indigenous Peoples in Literature"
- Leanne Simpson, "Please Be Careful When You're Getting Smart"
- Greg Younging, "Chapter 6: Terminology" (For this reading, students are welcome to skim this chapter, making note of which terms Younging considers appropriate and which he considers inappropriate.)

#### **September 26: Stories of and from the Land**

- Warren Cariou, "Terristory: Land and Language in the Indigenous Short Story— Oral and Written"
- Gloria Alvernaz Mulcahy, "through the eye of the *eshkan ziiib*"
- Mbwaach'idiwag ("they visit with each other"), podcast episode "Walking Along Deshkan Ziibing with Summer Bressette" (available here: <https://mbwaachidiwag.libsyn.com/mbwaachidiwag-walking-along-deshkan-ziibing-with-summer-bressette>) (If possible, please take a walk or sit outside while listening to this podcast.)

**October 3:** Class visit with poet Melissa Schnarr, Chippewas of the Thames First Nation

- Melissa Schnarr, *Secondhand Moccasins*

## **Unit 2: Writing Back to and Writing Beyond Settler Colonialism**

This unit considers how settler colonialism has impacted not only Indigenous political and legal formations but also Indigenous peoples' very intimate practices of embodiment, gender, and sexuality. At the same time, we will also learn about the ways that Indigenous authors have employed storytelling to re-claim nation-specific Indigenous understandings of bodies, genders, and sexualities and to express what Cherokee writer Qwo-li Driskill calls an “erotics of sovereignty.”

### **October 10: Confronting Settler Colonialism**

- Emma Battell Lowman and Adam J. Barker, “Canada and Settler Colonialism” (Students are only required to read pages 24-39.)
- Alanis Obomsawin, dir., *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance* (available here: [https://www.nfb.ca/film/kanehsatake\\_270\\_years\\_of\\_resistance/](https://www.nfb.ca/film/kanehsatake_270_years_of_resistance/)). Please watch the entire film prior to class.
- January Rogers, “Forever”

### **October 17: Re-Storying Genders and Sexualities**

- Joshua Whitehead, *Jonny Appleseed*
- Niigaan Sinclair, “Returning to Ourselves: Two-Spirit Futures and the Now”
- Alex Wilson, “Our Coming In Stories: Cree Identity, Body Sovereignty, and Gender Self-Determination” (available here: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1011&context=jqi>)

### **October 24: Re-Storying Genders and Sexualities (continued)**

- Joshua Whitehead, *Jonny Appleseed*

### **October 31: Class Cancelled for Fall Reading Week**

## **Unit 3: Indigenous Literatures Now: Engaging History, Envisioning Futurity**

This unit features Indigenous literary works that address recent events in Canadian society and the question of how to reckon with settler colonialism. Most crucially, these works offer powerful visions of different futures—futures based on Indigenous values, ethics, and ideas of what a decolonial world might look like.

### **November 7: Métis Futurisms and Making Kin**

- Chelsea Vowel, “Preface” to *Buffalo is the New Buffalo*
- Chelsea Vowel, “kitaskînow 2350” (Please read this story by accessing the EZProxy link for *This Place: 150 Years Retold* on the course OWL site).
- Please also listen to the audio version / podcast of “kitaskînow 2350” available here: <https://www.cbc.ca/listen/cbc-podcasts/1020-this-place/episode/15862270-kitaskinaw-2350>

**November 14: Indigenous Futures of Resurgence**

- Leanne Simpson, “Nishnaabeg Resurgence: Stories from Within”
- Chelsea Vowel, “kitaskînow 2350” (Please read this story by accessing the EZProxy link for *This Place: 150 Years Retold* on the course OWL site).

**November 21: Life Beyond Apocalypse**

- Thomas King, *The Back of the Turtle*

**November 28: Life Beyond Apocalypse**

- Thomas King, *The Back of the Turtle*

**December 5:**

- Leanne Simpson, “Shi-Kiin: New Worlds”
- Leanne Simpson, “for asinykwe”
- Leanne Simpson, “gwekaanimad”