English 5750: First Nations Speculative Fiction

Course Location: RB3027
Class Times: Wednesdays 2:30-5:30pm

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Instructor Information
- Instructor: Dr. Judith Leggatt
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- Email: jleggatt@lakeheadu.ca
- Office Hours: Wednesdays and Fridays 10-11am

Course Description
This course will study how speculative novels, short stories, web texts, and film produced by Native North American writers and artists use and transform conventions of genres such as science fiction, fantasy, and gothic, with the main emphasis on science fiction. Topics to be discussed include generic conventions; the politics and cultural specificity of those conventions; the possible transformations of those conventions; the ways in which indigenous texts respond to mainstream texts within the genres; and the transformation of old conventions and creation of new ones in order to reflect Indigenous understandings, concepts, and histories.

Learner Outcomes
By the end of the course students will be able to:
- read Indigenous speculative fiction texts critically, and assess their rhetorical, ideological and aesthetic strategies.
- write well (grammatically correct, clear, effective prose).
- communicate ideas about Indigenous speculative fiction effectively and coherently.
- identify the conventions of a variety of speculative fiction, and ways in which indigenous texts work within, or expand the definitions of, that genre.
- analyse specific literary devices and explain how those devices contribute to the meaning of a literary text.
- explain how Indigenous speculative fiction is produced by, and produces, its historical and cultural context.
- identify and assess the social, environmental and other ethical themes presented in texts
- analyse texts from a variety of theoretical perspectives.
- research a topic and present their findings orally to an academic community
- use library resources to research a topic and write a scholarly literary paper.
- lead and participate in class discussion effectively

Course Resources
Books (available at the LU bookstore)

**Media Texts:**
Roddenberry, Gene. “The Paradise Syndrome.” *Star Trek: TOS*. (to be viewed in class)
Fragnito, Skawennati Tricia. *TimeTravellerTM*. Available:
*Metis in Space. Episode #6. Available:

**Short Stories (available in a binder in the Grad. Office)**

**Essays (available in the same binder in the Grad. Office).**
Texts marked with an * are recommended; all others are required.

Course Website
There is a Desire2Learn site for the course, where you can access the course outline, texts available online, and other materials.

Course Schedule
Texts marked with an * are recommended; all others are required.

January 6: Introduction and representations of Indigenous People in mainstream speculative fiction:
“The Paradise Syndrome” episode of Star Trek: The Original Series. (to be viewed in class)
*Christine Morris, "Indians and Other Aliens; A Native American View of Science Fiction.” (photocopy)
*Sierra Adare, “Introduction” and “Future ‘Indians,’ Past Stereotypes.” (photocopy)
*Metis in Space, Season 1, Episode 6.

January 13: Close Encounters:
Thomas King, “How Corporal Colin Sterling Saved Blossom, Alberta, and Most of the Rest of the World as Well” (photocopy)
Lisa Jackson, “The Visit” (view online)
Jonas George, “The Star-Man” (photocopy)
Nalo Hopkinson, “Introduction.” (photocopy)
Dillon “Imagining Indigenous Futurisms” (1-3)
*Jessica Langer, “Introduction: Elephant-Shaped Holes” and “Conclusion: Filling Holes, Breaking Boundaries.” (photocopy)

January 20: Earth, Outer Space and Colonization:
Celu Amberstone, “Refugees” (photocopy)
Simon Ortiz, “Men on the Moon” (Dillon 85-95)
*Grace L. Dillon, “Miindiwag and Indigenous Diaspora: Eden Robinson’s and Celu Amberstone’s Forays into ‘Postcolonial’ Science Fiction and Fantasy.” (photocopy; concentrate on the Amberstone section for now)
Dillon “Contact” (5-7)

January 27: Time Travel
Sherman Alexie, Flight.
Dillon, “Native Slipstream” (3-5)
Peter Morin, “Before there was light: experiments in time travel”

February 3: Dystopian Futures
Sherman Alexie, “Distances” (Dillon 143-148)
William Sanders, “When This World is All on Fire” (Dillon 149-170)
Eden Robinson, “Terminal Avenue” (Dillon 205-214)
Dillon, “Native Apocalypse” (8-10)
*Grace Dillon, “Miindiwag and Indigenous Diaspora: Eden Robinson’s and Celu Amberstone’s Forays into ‘Postcolonial’ Science Fiction and Fantasy.” (photocopy; concentrate on the Robinson section)

February 10: Balancing Dystopian and Utopian Visions
Thomas King, On the Back of the Turtle.
Dillon, “Indigenous Science and Sustainability” (7-8) and “Biskaabiiyang, ‘Returning to Ourselves’” (10-12)

Reading Week

February 24: Robot Uprising and Cyborg Identities:

March 2: Cyberspace and Reclaiming History:
Skawenatti, “Time TravellerTM” (view online)
Todd, Loretta. “Narratives in Cyberspace.”
Stephen Loft. “Mediacosmology”

Paper Proposal Due

March 9: High Fantasy:
Daniel Heath Justice, The Way of Thorn and Thunder: The Kynship Chronicles
(while it is preferable to read the entire trilogy, class discussion will focus on Cycles 1 and 5-7, and the contextual material at the beginning of Cycles 2-4)
March 16: **Gothic Horror:**
Jeff Barnaby, *Rhymes for Young Ghouls.* (note that this film’s horror is not all supernatural/fantastic, and it can be difficult viewing).
*Elizabeth Kella, “Indian Boarding School Gothic in *Older than America* and *The Only Good Indian*”

March 23: **Gothic Vampire Fiction:**
*Cynthia Sugars and Gerry Turcotte, “Canadian Literature and the Postcolonial Gothic.”

March 30: **Conference**

**Assignments and Evaluation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due date</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seminar</td>
<td>As scheduled</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Up to 1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responses to Seminar Questions</td>
<td>Throughout term</td>
<td>4X5%=20%</td>
<td>400-600 words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposal for Major Paper</td>
<td>March 2nd</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1-2 pages + bibliography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Presentation of Major Paper</td>
<td>March 30</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Paper</td>
<td>April 11</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>3000-4000 words</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Throughout Term</td>
<td>15%</td>
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**Assignment Policies**
- All assignments are individual assignments and cannot be completed collaboratively.
- Assignments are due at the beginning of class, except otherwise indicated.
- If you require an extension, you must ask for one BEFORE the due date.
- Unless you ask for (and receive) an extension, late essays will be penalized by 2% per day (to a maximum of 20%), and will not be accepted after 4:30pm on
- All assignments must be in MLA format, double spaced, with 1” margins, and in 12 point font.
- Exceptions to these policies are allowed only with a doctor’s note or other appropriate documentation.
Seminar

Weight: 20%

Length: One hour (including class discussion)

Due: As scheduled during the first class; discussion questions due 1 week in advance.

Each student will present a seminar on one of the texts we will study in the course. There is one seminar for every class. You will be responsible for presenting ideas and leading class discussion for one hour. The presentation can be as formal or as informal as you wish, but make sure that any formal reading of material takes no more than 20 minutes. While presenting your seminar, try to balance providing information to the class with eliciting class discussion. If you don't know where to start, come to see me, and I will give you some ideas. The most important thing to remember is that your primary audience is the class, rather than the professor. Make sure you are teaching your classmates, and helping them to better understand the material.

At least one week before your seminar, you will post five discussion questions to the course website, to help your classmates focus their thinking about the readings and prepare for class discussion. The questions should be designed to promote discussion and debate; in other words, they should not be yes/no questions or have only one correct answer. The questions can focus in on the details of the texts and/or place them in the larger context of the course by making comparisons with other class material.

At the end of the class in which you present your seminar, you must hand in your notes for the seminar, which will assist in the marking process. They will not be marked for grammar, and can be in point form so long as they are clear. If you use powerpoint (definitely not required), you will be required to provide a copy for inclusion on the class website.

Secondary sources are not required, though you should address the recommended reading for your seminar topic, but note that any secondary material you use should be clearly cited, both in your written material and in your oral presentation of that material.

Unless you have a documented medical or other emergency, you must present your seminar on the assigned day. Posting your seminar questions late will lead to a 5% penalty per day they are late.

Responses to Seminar Questions

Weight: 4 X 5% = 20%

Length: 400-600 words each

Due: at the start of class on the day the question will be discussed.

Over the course of the semester, students will hand in four brief formal responses to ONE of the seminar questions proposed for that text. These responses should be well-written, detailed and analytic, and should engage critically with the material. **You may not hand in more than one response paper in any given class, and may not hand in one on the day you do your seminar.** Responses are due at the beginning of class are no extensions on these assignments.
Proposal for Major Paper
Weight: 5%
Length: 1-2 pages + bibliography
Due: March 2, 2016
You will be required to generate your own essay topic within the general themes of the course. Your proposal should clearly state the working thesis of your essay, and briefly outline the argument you will use, which text(s) will be your focus, and how you will situate your argument within relevant critical and cultural frameworks. Use paragraph form, rather than point form and include a working bibliography indicating all the creative and theoretical texts you plan to use. Your bibliography should include at least five secondary sources that go beyond required reading for the course. If you are having difficulty deciding what to write about, I will be happy to help you.

Unless you ask for (and receive) an extension, late essay proposals will be penalized by 2% per day, and will not be accepted after March 16, 2016.

Oral Presentation of Major Paper
Weight: 10%
Length: 20 minutes (about 3000 words)
Due: March 30, 2016
On the last class, we will have a mini-conference, in which each member of the class will present an oral version of his or her paper. Papers will be organized into two panels, and there will be a discussion period after each panel. Although you will hand in the material you presented, you will be marked on the paper as you presented it orally, and on how you responded to questions. There are no extensions on the oral presentation.

Major Paper
Weight: 30%
Length: 3000-5000 words
Due: On or before April 11th, 2016.
Write a research paper on your choice of topic within the limits of course content and ideas. You may deal with texts we did not study in class, so long as they are about First Nations speculative fiction. Ideally, you should think of this paper as a paper that you will eventually publish, which makes an original contribution to the field, and which situates itself within current academic discourse. Late papers will be penalized 5% per day to a maximum of 20%, and will not be accepted after Friday April 22nd, 2016.

Participation
Weight: 15%
Class participation is a necessary and important part of graduate courses, in which we all learn by exchanging ideas and information. As well, since seminars are an important part of the course, it is necessary to your classmate’s success that you are ready and willing to contribute in a relevant manner to the discussions they will be
leading. Participation will be based on the quality and relevance of your contributions to the discussion, which can include asking questions, making suggestions, providing information, and friendly debates. While disagreement over ideas is encouraged, personal attacks are unacceptable. Make sure you leave room for your classmates to participate too. Attendance is, of course, mandatory for all classes, and absences will adversely affect your participation mark.

**Marking Standards**
All assignments will be marked in accordance with the [English Department Marking Standards](#).

**Plagiarism:**
Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of someone else’s words and/or ideas. Not acknowledging your debt to the ideas of a secondary source, failing to use quotation marks when you are quoting directly, buying essays from essay banks, copying another student's work, or working together on an individual assignment, all constitute plagiarism. Resubmitting material you've submitted to another course is also academic dishonesty. All plagiarized work (in whole or in part) and other forms of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean, who is responsible for judging academic misconduct and imposing penalties. The minimum penalty for academic misconduct is a 0 on the assignment in question. It might also be subject to more severe academic penalties. See the [Code of Student Behaviour](#).

**Course and University Policies**
- Attendance is mandatory for all classes.
- Students in this course are expected to conform to the [Code of Student Behaviour](#).
- Lakehead University provides academic [accommodations for students with disabilities](#) in accordance with the terms of the Ontario Human Rights Code. This occurs through a collaborative process that acknowledges a collective obligation to develop an accessible learning environment that both meets the needs of students and preserves the essential academic requirements of the course.

This course outline is available online through the [English Department homepage](#) and the [Desire2Learn](#) site for the course.