English 5750WA: Indigenous Speculative Fiction

This course will study how speculative novels, short stories, drama, web texts, and short film produced by Native North American writers and artists use and transform conventions of genres such as science fiction, fantasy, alternative history 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 genre; and the transformation of old conventions and creation of new ones in order to reflect Indigenous understandings, concepts, and histories.

Instructor:

Dr. Judith Leggatt
Office: RB 3041
Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays from 1-2pm, or by appointment
Office Phone #: 343-8286
Email: jleggatt@lakeheadu.ca

Required Reading

Books (available at the LU bookstore)

Alexie, Sherman. *Flight*. New York: Black Cat, 2007.

Dillon, Grace L., ed. *Walking the Clouds: An Anthology of Indigenous Science Fiction*. Tucson: U of Arizona P, 2012.

Justice, Daniel Heath. *Kynship: The Way of Thorn and Thunder Book 1*. Cape Crocker Reserve: Kegedonce, 2005

Silko, Leslie Marmon. *Almanac of the Dead*. New York: Penguin, 1992.

Taylor, Drew Hayden. *Toronto at Dreamer's Rock & Education is Our Right: Two One-Act Plays*. Calgary: Fifth House, 1990.

-----. *The Night Wanderer: A Native Gothic Novel*. Toronto: Annick, 2007.

Visual Media Texts:

Fragnito, Skawennati Tricia. *Imagining Indians in the 25th Century.* Available: http://www.imaginingindians.net/ 2000.

-----. *TimeTravellerTM*. Available: http://www.timetravellertm.com/ 2121.

Jackson, Lisa. *The Visit*. 2007 Available: http://www.nfb.ca/film/vistas_the_visit/ 2009

Short Stories (available in a folder in the Grad. Office)

Alexie, Sherman. "A Drug Called Tradition" and "Imagining the Reservation." *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven*. New York: Grove, 2005. 12-23 and 149-153.

Amberstone, Cely. "Refugees." *So Long Been Dreaming: Postcolonial Science Fiction and Fantasy*. Ed. Nalo Hopkinson and Uppinder Mehan. Vancouver: Arsenal, 2004. 161-182. (half the story is in *Walking the Clouds*)

George, Jonas. "The Star-Man." *The Star-Man and Other Tales*. Ed. Basil H. Johnston. Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 1997. 59-63.

King, Thomas. "How Corporal Colin Sterling Saved Blossom, Alberta, and Most of the Rest of the World as Well." *One Good Story, That One*." Toronto: HarperCollins, 1993. 47-63.

Sanders, William. "Going After Old Man Alabama." In *Tales from the Great Turtle: Fantasy in the Native American Tradition*. Ed. Piers Anthony & Richard Gilliam. New York: Tor. 189-208.

-----. "The Undiscovered." *The Year's Best Science Fiction: Fifteenth Annual Collection*. Ed. Gardner Dozois. New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1998. 224-244. [1997]

Essays (available in the same folder in the Grad. Office).

Adare, Sierra. "Introduction" and "Future 'Indians,' Past Stereotypes." *"Indian" Stereotypes in TV Science Fiction: First Nations' Voices Speak Out*. Austin: U of Texas P, 2005. 1-9 and 29-57.

Allen, Paula Gunn. "The Ceremonial Motion of Indian Time: Long Ago, So Far." *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions*. 2nd Edition. Boston: Beacon Press: 1992. 147-154.

Dillon, Grace L., "*Miindiwag* and Indigenous Diaspora: Eden Robinson's and Celu Amberstone's Forays into 'Postcolonial' Science Fiction and Fantasy." *Extrapolation* 48.2 (2007): 219-243.

Hoagland, Erica and Reema Sarwal. "Introduction: Imperialism, the Third World and Postcolonial Science Fiction." *Science Fiction, Imperialism and the Third World: Essays on Postocolonial Literature and Film*. Ed. Erica Hoagland and Reema Sarwal. Jefferson: McFarland, 2010. 5-19

Hopkinson, Nalo. "Introduction." *So Long Been Dreaming: Postcolonial Science Fiction and Fantasy*. Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2004. 7-9.

Langer, Jessica. "Introduction: Elephant-Shaped Holes" and "Conclusion: Filling Holes, Breaking Boundaries." *Postcolonialism and Science Fiction*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. 1-10 and 153-159

Morris, Christine. "Indians and Other Aliens; A Native American View of Science Fiction." *Extrapolation* 20.4 (1979): 301-307.

Todd, Loretta. "Narratives in Cyberspace." *Transference, Tradition, Technology: Native New Media Exploring Visual and Digital Culture.* Ed. Dana Claxton, Steven Loft, and Melanie Townsend. Banff: Walter Phillips Gallery, 2005. 152-163

Method of Evaluation:

All assignments will be graded based on English department marking standards available on the department website: http://english.lakeheadu.ca/?display=page&pageid=26. Pay particular attention to the section on Academic Dishonesty, which applies to all assignments for the course:

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" available at http://policies.lakeheadu.ca/ policy.php?pid=60 for more details.

Seminar
Weight: 20%
Length: 1 hour (including class discussion)
Due: according to sign up sheet (you will sign up the first class)
Each student will present a seminar in one class, based on the readings for that 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. 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 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. **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.

Seminar discussion questions
Weight: 5%
Length: 5 questions
Due: 1 week before seminar
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 classes. **Late questions will be penalized 20% per day.**

Responses to seminar discussion questions
Length: 400-600 words
Weight: 4 X 5% = 20%
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 seminar questions. 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**. There are **no extensions** on seminar question responses, but if you are unable to make it to class on a day for which you had prepared a response, you can submit your response via email before the start of class.

Essay Proposal
Weight: 5%
Length: 1-2 pages + bibliography
Due: March 5, 2013
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, and which text(s) will be your focus. Use paragraph form, rather than point form, and include a working bibliography indicating all the creative and theoretical texts you plan to use. Your proposal should also indicate whether you will be writing a conference paper or an article paper (see below).
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 19, 2012.

Research Paper: 35%
Length: 4500-6000 word (article-length) paper
OR 20 minute conference paper (about 2500-3000 words)
Due: April 2nd, 2013.
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 fall within the general topic of Indigenous Speculative Fiction. You should think of this as a paper you will eventually publish, and which makes an original contribution to the field. To that end, there are two options for this assignment: a 20-minute conference paper to be presented during the last class of the semester, or an article-length paper suitable for publication in a journal. For the conference paper you will be graded not only on your written submission, but also on your presentation of the paper, and the way you handle questions. The written option is longer, but has no oral component.

Class Participation: 15%
Class participation is central to graduate courses, in which we all learn by exchanging ideas and information. As well, it is necessary to your classmate's success that you contribute in a relevant manner to the seminar discussions they lead. 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 (without good reason) will adversely affect your participation mark.

Schedule:

January 8: **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)

Sierra Adare, “Introduction” and “Future ‘Indians,’ Past Stereotypes.” (photocopy)
Christine Morris, "Indians and Other Aliens; A Native American View of Science Fiction." (photocopy)

January 15: **First Contact**:
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)
Jessica Langer, “Introduction: Elephant-Shaped Holes” and “Conclusion: Filling Holes, Breaking Boundaries.” (photocopy)
Dillon “Imagining Indigenous Futurisms” (1-3)

January 22: **Alien Encounters and Colonization**:
Celu Amberstone, “Refugees” (photocopy)
Gerry William, “from *The Black Ship”* (Dillon 77-84)
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; you can concentrate on the Amberstone section for now)
Dillon “Contact” (5-7)
Nalo Hopkinson, “Introduction.” (photocopy)

January 29: **Time Travel**:
Drew Hayden Taylor, *Toronto at Dreamer’s Rock*
Paula Gunn Allen, “The Ceremonial Motion of Indian Time: Long Ago, So Far.” (photocopy)
Dillon, “Native Slipstream” (3-5)

February 5: **Timeslip and Body Jumping**:
Sherman Alexie, *Flight*.

February 12: **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)
Erica Hoagland and Reema Sarwal. “Introduction: Imperialism, the Third World and Postcolonial Science Fiction.” (photocopy)

Reading Week

February 26: **Balancing Dystopian and Utopian Visions:**
Leslie Marmon Silko, *Almanac of the Dead*.[1]
Dillon, "Indigenous Science and Sustainability" (7-8) and "Biskaabiiyang, 'Returning to Ourselves'" (10-12)

March 5: **Cyberspace and Reclaiming Past and Future History**:
Skawenatti "Imagining Indians in the 25th Century" and "TimerTravellerTM" (view online)
Loretta Todd, "Narratives in Cyberspace." (photocopy)
Paper Proposal Due

March 12: **Fantasy**:
Daniel Heath Justice, *Kynship: The Way of Thorn and Thunder Book 1*.

March 19: **Gothic**:
Drew Hayden Taylor, *The Night Wanderer: A Native Gothic Novel*.

March 26: **Alternative History:**
William Sanders, "The Undiscovered" and "Going After Old Man Alabama." (photocopy)
Sherman Alexie, "Imagining The Reservation" and "A Drug Called Tradition" (photocopy)

April 2: **Conference**

[1] While it is preferable to read the entirety of the novel, make sure to read *at least* the following sections: 19-48, 62-65, 101-109, 134-137, 148-160, 224-235, 309-317, 374-378, 400-410, 470-471, 481-483, 509-49, 569-578, 602-609, 615-20, 625-632, 658-664, 678-690, 709-763