

Course Number and Section: ENGL 355S.101

Credits: 3

Course Name or Topic: Studies in Backgrounds to Literature: Special Topics:
Postcolonial Readings of Canadian Settler Narratives

Term: Winter T2, 2020 (Jan.-April 2021)

Instructor: Dr. Shirley McDonald

NB: This course satisfies the Canadian Literature requirement for ENGL majors and honours students.

Course Description:

Postcolonial Readings of Canadian Settler Narratives examines the memoirs, diaries, and travel narratives of British settlers who established horse and cattle ranches in Western Canada. It also examines myths about these ranchers as cowboy heroes who conquered the Canadian frontier, and myths about the racial stereotypes that Daniel Francis calls *imaginary Indians*. We will employ Francis's text to engage in close readings of a revisionist Western novel about "cowboys and Indians" and a satirical film that exposes the racism inherent in Western film and fiction. We will also examine and discuss excerpts of texts by several prominent Indigenous life writers and activists who expose racism in Canada and deconstruct colonial history and its misrepresentations of Indigenous peoples. The course examines colonial and postcolonial discourse in fiction, history, memoir, diary, travel narrative, poetry, and film.

Method of Course Delivery: This course will run online with the exclusive use of self-guided (asynchronous) materials. For a fuller description of asynchronous, see below.

Tentative Reading List:

Monica Hopkins, *Letters from a Lady Rancher*. (settler memoir, excerpts)

Guy Vanderhaeghe, *The Englishman's Boy*. (travel narrative/life writing, revisionist Western, novel)

Bert Sheppard, *Just About Nothing; Spitzee Days; History of the TL Ranch* (excerpts, memoir); "Whiskey Forts and Traders" from the community history: *Leaves from the Medicine Tree*. (excerpts)

Daniel Francis, *The Imaginary Indian*. (postcolonial history)

Arthur Manuel, *Unsettling Canada: A National Wake-Up Call*. (autobiography, excerpts)

Arthur Manuel and Ronald Derrickson, *The Reconciliation Manifesto* (excerpt)

Sarah Carter, *Lost Harvests* (postcolonial history, excerpt)

George Manuel and Michael Posluns, *The Fourth World*. (Indigenous history, excerpt)

Sherman Alexie, *Smoke Signals*. (film, satire, postcolonial discourse)

Louise Halfe, *Bear Bones and Feathers*. (anti-colonial poems, excerpts)

I. S. MacLaren, "Exploration/Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Author." (article, auto/bio theory)

Shirley McDonald, "The Sheppard Journals: Equestrianism as Acts of Governance on the Canadian Prairies." (article, auto/bio theory, postcolonial history)

Other: The course will be delivered asynchronously in Canvas. Students will be expected to purchase and read two monographs, 10 excerpts which are provided in a custom coursepack (CCM), and two articles. There are also film excerpts provided by the UBC Library. Active participation is required. Students will engage in close readings of the primary and secondary sources, in group analysis and written presentation, and in individual writing practice in informal writing exercises and formal essays. These exercises are designed to develop students' knowledge about the course materials and skills in writing about the texts. Revision of formal essays is mandatory.

Asynchronous: Refers to course instruction delivered in the form of materials that can be accessed and worked through at the student's own pace; these materials might include recorded lectures or power point demonstrations, required readings, etc. Consult your instructor for specifics.