Course Description:
This course broadly focuses on how American Indian experiences have been expressed through literature and text. American Indian depictions in the United States—from sports team mascots to Disney “princesses”—continually rely on caricatured and colonist viewpoints that ignore the precarious position American imperialism has had upon indigenous populations. Meanwhile, 562 American Indian tribes exist within the United States, each with a unique and rich culture, history, and literary history and an urgency to face the adversity that befalls them. This course introduces students to the cultural and political realities of American Indian experiences through the examination of texts, their respective craft and form, and an understanding of the unique tribal cycles, ceremonies, and histories of respective authors, tribes, and landscapes. We will ask: What issues permeate across genre and time? How do American Indian authors use form and genre to transgress colonial/imperial narratives and representations? How does ceremony, tradition, and myth influence creative work? This course explores a variety of genres and perspectives, as well as texts and contexts spanning the history and worldview of American Indians. First grounding ourselves in an understanding of racist rhetoric in initial encounter narratives between American Indians and the settlers who displaced them; then tracing how early oral traditions and ethnographic encounters have pulsed through contemporary poetic, fictional, and digital forms by and about American Indians.

Course Objectives:
• Examine the racist rhetoric and stereotypes underlying American Indian depictions in “first encounter” narratives and beyond.
• Become familiar with American Indian literature in its cultural context. Recognize and interpret texts and representations in relationship to their historical and cultural context.
• Develop an understanding of genre and literary form and its relationship to its content, context, and meaning.
• Think critically and analyze the texts of the course through close reading. Write informed arguments and reflections on those texts using primary and secondary source materials.

Texts (all required):
• When My Brother Was an Aztec, Natalie Diaz
• Course reader

Course Evaluation (Overview):
Attendance, Participation, and Discussion (35 points)
• Attendance and participation in discussion are mandatory. They are highly important for an understanding of our class texts and topics. More than one absence is grounds for failing the course. As a Summer Session course, you can expect to spend, on average, a total of thirty hours per week invested in (attending class, writing for, reading for, etc.) this course.
• You can expect pop quizzes to check your engagement and retention of texts. These scores will be factored into your Attendance, Participation, and Discussion grades.

Reading Responses (35 points)
• To help you prepare for each class discussion and help us have more fruitful conversations, you will prepare seven reading responses that will be guided by a prompt and, in general, will be focused on a significant reading for that day. Responses should be posted to Canvas by class time on the day of reading. You may also be asked to bring a paper copy per my instructions on Canvas.
• All Reading Responses will be graded in a check, check plus, check minus format.
• A check plus = 100%; a check = 90%; a check minus = 75%

Final Analysis Essay & Reflection (formal assignment sheet provided on Canvas) (30 points)
• You will be completing a short analysis essay (1000 words) in which you will present an argument about one to two texts we’ve read in the course (or another text if you choose—with my approval). The goal of this paper is to analyze a literary text using close-reading and present this information in a clear and concise academic format. You will also submit an informal reflection letter with this assignment (approximately 500 words). You must turn in this final paper to pass the course.
• Your Final Analysis & Reflection will be graded in a letter grade format.

Total Points Breakdown
Attendance, Participation, and Discussion—35 points
Reading Responses—35 points
Final Analysis & Reflection—30 points
Total—100 points

90-100 points = “A”
89-80 points = “B”
79-70 points = “C”
69-60 points = “D”
59 & below = “F”

Course Etiquette & Expectations:
Classroom citizenship
The classroom is a learning community. Any behavior that disrupts this community will not be tolerated. This includes speaking to other students while the instructor is talking, obvious sleeping, passing notes, being rude or belligerent to the instructor or other students, etc. Please be respectful of your fellow students and your instructor. If you have problem with anything in the course, you may speak to me about it privately after class or in my office hours.

Technology
Since more often than not technological devices in college classrooms serve as distractions to you and the people around you rather than as supplements to learning, we have a no-tolerance policy. All cell phones should be turned off and put away. Texting and taking calls is not permitted in class. Unless you have been given explicit permission to use your laptop in class, all laptops should be shut and stowed. Given this, you must bring hard copies of our readings to class (bring your course reader
and materials necessary for the day). You will not be allowed to look at course materials on your laptop or phone. Please let me know if you have questions about this.

Email etiquette
I certainly welcome your emails – if you have questions about the course, your work, meeting times, etc., please don’t hesitate to contact me. However, you should treat this as professional correspondence: that is, it should have a greeting, complete sentences, and your name at the bottom. If not, I may choose not to respond. Finally, please e-mail me via ckersten@ucsc.edu. Please do not use the message function on myucsc.com or on Canvas—I do not receive these messages in a timely manner or sometimes at all.

Attendance
Attendance in LIT 163A is mandatory. More than one absence from class is grounds for failing the course. Thus, plan for unforeseen emergencies or illnesses early in the quarter. Being in attendance means being physically present, awake, coherent, and fully prepared for class, with the day’s prep-work completed. If you do not meet all of these conditions, you will be marked absent for the day. You are responsible for making up all of the work that you missed.

Office Hours
My office hours are Thursdays from 5-6pm in Humanities 1 Room 329. I enjoy talking to students outside of class, and welcome you make an appointment to stop by to discuss your work, questions about the course, etc., during that time. If for some reason you can’t come during my regularly posted hours, please email me or stop by after class, and we can make other arrangements.

Class Deadlines
No late work will be accepted. Extension must be approved 48 hours in advance. Plan ahead.

Academic Integrity
All work submitted for this course must be your own. If you do not understand the standards of academic integrity enforced at UC Santa Cruz, inform yourself by consulting The Navigator at <http://registrar.ucsc.edu/navigator/section1/academic-integrity.html>, Section I, Academic Integrity. Breaches in academic integrity may result in failure of the plagiarized assignment, the course, and may result in suspension or dismissal from the university. In short, familiarize yourself with what plagiarism is, how to avoid it, and how to cite sources.

Disability Resources
UC Santa Cruz is committed to creating an academic environment that supports its diverse student body. If you are a student with a disability who requires accommodations to achieve equal access in this course, please submit your Accommodation Authorization Letter from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to me privately during my office hours or by appointment, as soon as possible in the academic quarter, preferably within one week. I also encourage you to discuss with me ways we can ensure your full participation in this course.

I encourage all students who may benefit to learn about the DRC and the UCSC accommodation process. You can visit the DRC website at drc.ucsc.edu. You can make an appointment and meet in-person with a DRC staff member. Call 831-459-2089 or e-mail drc@ucsc.edu.

Course Schedule:
Week One: Context and Early Oral Traditions

Tuesday: Course Introduction & First Encounters and the Language of Race
- Syllabus overview
- Guest Lecture from Dr. Rebecca Hernandez Rosser of the American Indian Resource Center.
- **NO Reading Response Due**

Thursday: First Encounters and the Language of Race
- Survey of the Encounter Narratives (selections from Louise Erdrich and Michael Dorris’ *The Crown of Columbus*, *The Custer Reader*, *Columbus*; Hans Koning’s *His Enterprise: Exploding the Myth* and Adam’s *Columbus and his Discovery of America*)
- Paula Gunn Allen, “The Sacred Hoop: A Contemporary Perspective”
- Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz and Dina Gilio-Whitaker, Introduction to & selections from “All the Real Indians Died Off” and 20 Other Myths About Native Americans
- **Reading Response #1 Due by Class Time**

Week Two: Oral Traditions, Literary Perspectives, & Identity

Tuesday: Oral Traditions
- *Chippewa Music: Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 45*. Frances Densmore (6) (not required to read before class; we will read in class together)
- *Teton Sioux Music: Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 61* (6) (not required to read before class; we will read in class together)
- Vine Deloria, “Civilization and Isolation”
- Paula Gunn Allen, “A Stranger in My Own Life: Alienation in American Indian Poetry and Prose”
- **Reading Response #2 Due by Class Time**

Thursday: Identity
- Elissa Washuta, “I Will Write a Bestselling Native American Biography”
- Vine Deloria, Jr. “Indians Today, the Real and Unreal”
- Michael Dorris, “For Indians, No Thanksgiving”
- Linda Hogan, “The Truth Is”
- Wendy Rose, “Neon Scars”
- **Reading Response #3 Due by Class Time**

Week Three: The Remembered Earth & Language and Learning in Two Worlds

Tuesday: The Remembered Earth
- Lorenzo Baca, “Five Rounds”
- Louise Erdrich, “Skunk Dreams”
- Louise Erdrich, “The Strange People”
- Joy Harjo, “Remember”
- Tommy Pico, selections from *Nature Poem*
- **Reading Response #4 Due by Class Time**

Thursday: Language and Learning in Two Worlds
Chapter Eight, “Language and Learning in Two Worlds”
White Hat, Albert, “Lakota Language”
• Chapter Eight and “Lakota Language” are in the same PDF on Canvas
• Selections from Layli Long Soldiers’ Whereas
• Nora Dauenhauer, “Tlingit Concrete Poem”
• Reading Response #5 Due by Class Time

Week Four: Focus on Contemporary American Indian Writers
Tuesday: Leslie Marmon Silko
• Selections from Leslie Marmon Silko’s Storyteller (Introduction, “Storyteller”, & “Tony’s Story”)
• Paula Gunn Allen, “Where I Come From . . .”
• Reading Response #6 Due by Class Time

Thursday: Sherman Alexie
• Selections from Sherman Alexie’s One Stick Song and The Business of Fancydancing (paper copies will be provided; these readings are not in the reader)
• Reading Response #7 Due by Class Time

Week Five: Natalie Diaz’s When My Brother Was an Aztec
Tuesday
• Natalie Diaz’s When My Brother Was an Aztec Pages 1-53
• Paula Gunn Allen, “Angry Women are Building: Issues and Struggles Facing American Indian Women Today”
• Joy Harjo, “The Woman Hanging From the 13th Floor Window”

Thursday
• Natalie Diaz’s When My Brother Was an Aztec Pages 54-103
• Reading Response Due by Class Time