

CCS 620/ED 693 – Critiquing Indigenous Literature for Alaska's  
Children

Revised 2006

INSTRUCTOR:

*Arnaq*

Esther Ilutsik, Visiting Assistant Professor  
Alaska Natives and Minority Education  
School of Education

[fneai@uaf.edu](mailto:fneai@uaf.edu)

Phone: (907) 474-1588

Fax: (907) 474-5451

P.O. Box 756480

University of Alaska Fairbanks  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99775-6480

University of Alaska Fairbanks  
Center for Cross-Cultural Studies/School of Education

CCS F620/ED F693 Critiquing Indigenous Literature for Alaska's  
Children

(On/Off Campus Course)

### **Course Description:**

This course will provide educators with a comprehensive framework for reviewing literature that is written about and for Alaska indigenous children. The content of the course provides an in-depth look at how children's literature influences the image of the indigenous children of Alaska and provides a foundation for selecting curriculum materials that accurately represent and address the cultural context of the students and communities that they serve.

### **Course Purposes**

1. To examine the relationship between literacy and cultural identity.
2. To develop an understanding of how children's literature influences the images of Native American people.
3. To examine current Native American books and reviews.
4. To develop a review guide that will examine and review Alaska Indigenous Children's books

### **Course Credit:**

Completion of course will lead to three semester hours of graduate credit at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

### **Course Administration:**

This course will be administered through the distant delivery audio-conference network/on-campus, readings, verbal interactions and discussions, written assignments and projects. Course assignments should be sent directly to the instructor by email [fneai@uaf.edu](mailto:fneai@uaf.edu) or if not possible sent by fax or regular mail to the following address:

Esther Ilutsik, Instructor  
School of Education  
P.O. Box 756480  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99775-6480  
(907) 474-1588  
Fax: (907) 474-5451

**Class Time:** Monday and Wednesday 4:30 PM – 6:00 PM  
January 23, 2006 – May 10, 2006

### **Course Evaluation:**

Students will be evaluated on the basic written materials turned into the instructor. The material will be read, evaluated and returned to the student as soon as possible after receipt. The written assignments will be worth 130 points with oral presentation worth 20 points and class attendance and participation is extremely important worth 40 points.

Paper # 1	Literacy & Cultural	15 points
Book Review # 1		15 points
Paper # 2	Through Ind. Eyes	20 points
Paper # 3	Website Reviews	10 points
Attendance/participation		40 points
Project # 1	Review Guide	50 points
Project # 2	Book Reviews	50 points

Grades for the course will be assigned on the basis of the following point/grade scale:

A	190-200
B	180-189
C	170-179
D or F	169-

### **Course Materials:**

The following publications will be required for the course:

Through Indian Eyes: The Native Experience in Books for Children by Beverly Slapin and Doris Seale, 1987 New Society Publishers Philadelphia, PA Gabriola Island, BC

**ISBN CAN 1-55092-165-7**

A Broken Flute: The Native Experience in Books for Children (Contemporary Native American Communities) by Doris Seale

Dance on a Sealskin by Barbara Winslow, 1995 Alaska Northwest Books  
Anchorage Seattle Portland  
**ISBN 0-88240-443-1**

Guidelines for Respecting Cultural Knowledge, adopted by the Assembly of Alaska Native Educators, Anchorage, Alaska February 1, 2000 Published by the Alaska Native Knowledge Network <http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/publications>

*Literacy and Cultural Identity* by Bernardo M. Ferdman State University of New York, Albany pgs. 181–204

*With a Vision Beyond Our Immediate Needs: Oral Traditions in an Age of Literacy* by Elsie Mather

When Our Words Return: Writing, Hearing, and Remembering Oral Traditions of Alaska and The Yukon  
Edited by Phyllis Morrow and William Schneider

Selection of other readings as assigned representing current Indigenous children's literature

## **Course Requirements**

The course is organized around the following topics:

### **Introduction**

### **Book Review**

Reading: Dance of a Seal Skin

Provide a written and verbal review of this book based on own experiences. This will be followed with in depth class discussion.

### **Paper # 1**

### **Literacy and Cultural Identity**

Required Reading:

Bernardo M. Ferdman, *Literacy and Cultural Identity*

Elsie Mather, *With a Vision Beyond Our Immediate Needs: Oral Traditions in an Age of Literacy*

Other readings should be cited.

In recent years, indigenous people from around the world are evaluating and re-evaluating materials being developed that represent the local indigenous cultures especially by those authors who are not of the cultural group. There is concern in how these materials may contribute to the portraying cultural inaccuracies.

Based on the reading above and drawing on your own experiences please respond to the following two questions:

- What is the relationship between literacy and cultural identity?
- What role do the schools play in defining or redefining literacy and cultural identity?

The paper should be between eight and ten pages in length.

## **Paper # 2**

## **Through Indian Eyes**

Required Reading:

Slapin, Beverly and Seale, Doris. Through Indian Eyes: The Native Experience in Books for Children

A Broken Flute: The Native Experience in Books Children

Guidelines for Respecting Cultural Knowledge, adopted by the Assembly of Alaska Native Educators, Anchorage, Alaska February 1, 2000 Published by the ANKN  
<http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/publications>

In this paper you will extend the ideas presented in the previous paper. Based on these readings and your own personal experiences answer the following question:

To what extent does literature impact and continue to contribute to the stereotypical attitudes of the majority culture? What are some ways in which we can begin to correct these misconceptions?

This paper should be eight to ten pages in length.

### **Paper # 3**

### **Book Reviews by Native Americans /WEB**

Required Reading: Slapin, Beverly and Seale, Doris. *How to Tell the Difference: A Guide to Evaluating Children's Books for Anti-Indian Bias* Through Indian Eyes: The Native Experience in Books for Children

WEB Search begin with – <http://www.oyate.org>  
<http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/IKS/HAIL/>

In this paper you will begin to formulate your own ideas on what you would like to address in your review guide. Please provide examples that will help to support your decisions. For example, if you are going to include genre's that may differ from the Western perspective – how did you arrive at those decisions? How was this information learned? In other words, list examples or share personal experiences that would support your decisions.

This paper should be eight to ten pages in length.

**The course is organized around the following projects:**

#### **Project # 1 Review Guide**

**50 pts**

Required Reading: Slapin, Beverly and Seale, Doris. Through Indian Eyes: The Native Experience in Books for Children, pgs 85–203, website: [www.oyate.org](http://www.oyate.org)  
<http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/IKS/HAIL/> and other.

I would recommend that you investigate to see whether your local school library or city library has a “review” policy in considering books for the school and/or library.

A bibliography will be required for the review guide.

#### **Project # 2**

#### **Five Book Reviews**

**50 pts.**

The book reviews should include the name of the book, the author, the illustrator, the year it was published; publisher; ISBN number, recommended grade level and genre (we will be discussing this more on the audio-conference) and the review should follow the review guide that you have developed.

All the reviews will be presented in class where your fellow classmates will be encouraged to make recommendations that will improve the quality of the review.

With your permission all reviews (at the end of the class) will be posted at the HAIL/ANKN web site: <http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/IKS/HAIL>