WS 320-4  Special Topic:  First Nations Women

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We are all very familiar with popular culture images and mainstream stereotypes of Native women such as Walt Disney’s *Pocahontas* and news coverage that focuses on alcoholism and conflict. In this course, we will look beyond these stereotypes and begin to understand the ways in which race, class and gender operate in the lives of Native women. To what degree do First Nations cultural perspectives intersect with mainstream feminism? Stressing the differences among distinct traditions, as well as the unique experiences of individual women, we will question various approaches in representing and interpreting First Nations cultures. We will draw on literature and criticism from both Native and non-Native writers and critics, with an emphasis on material from a First Nations perspective. Debates about authenticity and appropriation will serve as a companion to our inquiries about current practices and will inform our own attempts to formulate effective contemporary approaches.

**Required readings:**


Custom Courseware Package available at SFU bookstore.

**Course requirements and Grading Structure:**

- 15% - class participation
- 5%  - library project
- 15%  - article critique
- 5%  - essay proposal
- 20%  - in-class exam
- 10%  - student presentation/evaluation
- 30%  - final essay

**Selected topics:**

- Overview of Native Cultures in the U.S. and Canada
- Images, Lives and Experiences of Native Women
- History and Representation of First Nations Women
- Contesting Mainstream Feminism
- Knowledge and Subject Positions
- Native Writers, Resistance Movements, Emerging Literature
- Analysis of Issues Arising from Jeannette Armstrong’s *Slash*
- Native Theatre, Visual Arts and Interpretation
- Analysis of Issues Arising from Tomson Highway’s *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing*
- Gender in Native and non-Native Communities

**Prerequisites:** 60 credit hours

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THE DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN’S STUDIES ENCOURAGES CLARITY OF THOUGHT AND EXPRESSION AND GOOD WRITING. STUDENTS WILL BE EVALUATED ON THESE SKILLS IN ALL COURSES GIVEN BY THE DEPARTMENT.