ENGL5740.001

Lit & Film: From Hollywood Indians to Native American Cinema

Professor Calcaterra

2:00 – 4:50 PM R

Course Description: This course will focus on Indigenous/Native American self-representation in literature, film, and other visual/digital media. We will begin by briefly surveying and unpacking a century of one-dimensional Hollywood Indians, considering the ways these cinematic representations have real consequences for Indigenous people. We will then turn to contemporary films and other media directed by Indigenous people and featuring Indigenous cast members, alongside Native literature and scholarship that informs or complicates these films. Our focus will be films and texts that treat some of the most pressing issues in Native communities today: urban life, violence against Indigenous women, Native political leadership, coming of age on the reservation, the importance of satire and comedy, and the re-branding of Indigenous people according to their own standards. Films will include Reel Injuns; Atanarjuat, The Fast Runner; Four Sheets to the Wind; Mekko; Drunktown’s Finest; Mankiller; Winter in the Blood; and Wind River. Literature will include Tommy Orange’s There, There; Louise Erdrich, The Round House; James Welch, Winter in the Blood, and Wilma Mankiller, Mankiller.

Graduate course requirements:
• Regular participation
• One in-class presentation/discussion-leading assignment and analytical paper
• Weekly discussion-board posts
• A final project with preparatory assignments: either a creative project involving script writing and/or short film creation, or an analytical research/analysis paper.