

## Philipp Kneis, M.A., Potsdam University, Summer Semester 2011

### Undergraduate Seminar

### “Representations of Old Age in Native American Literature and Culture”

The Seminar will investigate representations of old age in American Indian literature from a cultural studies perspective. In the course of our analysis, we will consider aspects like cultural memory, loneliness, trickster stories, the context of relatives, the visibility of old age, and cultural change in representations of the old. Among the authors to be discussed are James Welch, Louise Erdrich, and Sherman Alexie.

**Assessment:** All participants will have to give an oral presentation (10-15 min.) on a topic of their own choice, be part of a group presentation, and write a research paper (5-7 pages). In addition, surprise quizzes and tests will ensure that participants comply with the reading assignments.

**Seminar Details:** 90 minute sessions, Thursdays, 4:15-5:45 PM

#### Seminar Plan:

- 1    04/14/11    **Introduction**
- 2    04/21/11    **Age Theory I**  
Cole 1983 - The 'Enlightened' View of Aging  
Overall 2006 - Old Age and Ageism, Impairment and Ableism
- 3    04/28/11    **Age Theory II**  
Keith et al 2009 - Culture and the Meaning of a Good Old Age  
Woodward 2002 - Against Wisdom
- 4    05/05/11    **Indian Identity**  
Cote 1996 - Sociological Perspectives on Identity Formation  
Tallbear 2003 - DNA, Blood, and Racializing the Tribe  
form Independent Study groups
- 5    05/12/11    **Independent Study Session on Traditional Stories**  
5 groups:  
(1) Supernatural Beings, Creators and Tricksters  
(2) Old People and the Order of Things  
(3) Old People and the End of the World  
(4) Lonely Old People  
(5) Old People, Partnership and Sexuality
- 6    05/19/2011    **Traditional Stories I, Group Presentations 1-3**
- 7    05/26/11    **Traditional Stories II, Group Presentations 4-5**  
06/02/11    **no class - Holiday**
- 8    06/09/11    **Velma Wallis, Two Old Women**
- 9    06/16/11    **James Welch, Winter in the Blood**
- 10   06/23/11    **Louise Erdrich, Tracks**
- 11   06/30/11    **no class - prepare abstracts for paper, share on Moodle**
- 12   07/07/11    **Guest Lecture: Prof. Ashis Nandy (Delhi), Moderator: Prof. Rüdiger Kunow**  
"Heroic and Un-Heroic Killers: Aspects of Genocide in a Society Based on Communities"
- 13   07/14/11    **Sherman Alexie, from *The Toughest Indian in the World***  
"One Good Man," "Dear John Wayne"
- 14   07/21/11    **Janet Campbell Hale, "Claire"**  
**Poetry**  
Conclusion

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