Syllabus: English 473
Instructor: Harold Crook, Ph.D.
Office: 201 Administration Building
Office hours: Monday/Wednesday 10:30-noon & 1:30-2:45
Email address: hdcrook@lcmail.lcsc.edu
Phone: (208) 792-2852
Class Location: Silverthorne Theater
Class Hours: Monday / Wednesday 9-10:15

Blackboard: I will put materials on there for you. Your grades will all be recorded on Blackboard. I will usually have you submit your papers on Bb and receive them back that way.

Graduation Requirements: English 473 is a senior level, upper division elective, satisfying requirements in all of the English B.A. degrees. It will satisfy elective requirements for other degrees, as well as requirements for the Native American Studies Minor and the Nez Perce Language Minor.

Work Load: Lewis-Clark State College expects you to work approximately two hours outside of class for each hour in class. Some days there will be more than two hours work and some days there will be less. There will be a fair amount of required reading and writing in this class. If you feel I am pushing you beyond the two-hour per class load on a regular basis, please let me know.

Texts: We have the following texts:

- Eugene S. Hunn with James Selam and family *Nch'l-Wana “The Big River”: Mid-Columbia Indians and Their Land*. University of Washington Press. 1990. [This book is an excellent ethnography of the Mid-Columbia Sahaptan peoples. It includes several interesting stories itself, and it will help us understand the history and culture of Indian people of the Plateau, which in turn is essential to understanding their oral literature.]
- Photocopied stories, provided by the Instructor.

Grading: I will assign grades with the following curve: 100-93% = A; 90-92% = A-; 88-89% = B + ; 83-87% = B; 80-82% = B-; 78-79% = C + ; 73-77% = C; 70-72% = C-; 68-69% = D + ; 63-67% = D; 60-62% = D-; < 60% = F. I may revise the curve downwards slightly but not upwards.
**Short Assignments:** (20 points each) You will have several short assignments. These may be short essays or short creative writing projects, such as writing your own Coyote stories.

**Story Performing:** (20 points each) Everyone will perform three stories. I expect to see growth in your performance quality over the semester.

**Short paper:** (50 points) 3-5 pages on a topic to be announced.

**Final Paper:** (130-150 points) 7-10 pages. You may choose from several topics.

- Analyze and interpret one or more stories in-depth within the context of the culture and history of the people.
- An analysis of the culture and oral traditions of an Indian group of your choice.
- Who is woman or who is man or who is a person in a culture as seen in the oral literature. For example, look at all of the representations of what a woman says and does. Consider the roles women have. Discuss what the oral literature has to say about who a woman is.
- Character study of Coyote and/or other characters within one or more oral traditions. You will find more than enough material in the reader and readings.
- An analysis of the performance aspects of storytelling.
- A topic of your own choice, approved by the Instructor.

I will require you to submit a topic by October 31 (10 points), and 2 page essay or 2 page outline of your paper before Thanksgiving break (20 points). I will be very happy to accept a rough draft and give you feedback before the paper is due. The Final Paper will be due at 4:00 p.m. on the day the Final Exam is scheduled, December 12, 2018. There will be no final exam.

**Outside speakers:** The elders are the true experts on Indian culture, so I will bring them in as outside speakers to give you additional perspectives on Indian culture and Indian stories. Some of these outside sources will be on video and audio tape.

**The Class:** In this class we will learn to read, interpret, appreciate, and tell the stories, the verbal art, of Native Americans. For us to come to some understanding and appreciation of the stories of another culture, it is essential that we develop an understanding of their history and culture. Therefore, I have chosen to concentrate on the Columbia Plateau, the Northwest Coast, and Southwest. You are welcome to bring in your own stories from other regions, including Central and South America.
I believe it is best for us to go somewhat in-depth with one region and develop a stronger basis for understanding there. From that point, we can branch out and learn the similarities and contrasts with other cultures. Let us keep in mind that Indian peoples have been lumped together by outsiders for years. People tend to think there is one language and one culture, when there are hundreds of languages and hundreds of cultures. At the same time, neighboring cultures may share many things, including materials and technologies, linguistic similarities, and stories. Our goal is to see the similarities and the differences. Let us also remember that there are some things which people everywhere seem to share: physical and emotional needs, language development, ambition, love, kindness, meanness, morality, and of course stories.

Specific outcomes expected for English 473:

My goal is that while reading the materials in this class you will become proficient in interpreting, appreciating, enjoying, and telling the oral literature – the stories – of Native Americans.

- **Interpretation** is the foundation. Our goal is to learn to see the world through the eyes of the other person in a different culture, to the greatest degree possible. We will need to take into account language, history, culture, and word play. It is our task to try to determine the meaning the other person had in mind when they told the story and the ideas that the culture has. We will find that stories are products both of individual storytellers and of the cultures within which they live.

- **Appreciation** is the next step. These stories often contain intricate structure, chiasms, scenes and acts. They are “verbal art”, and it is my goal that we will appreciate their artistic grace and power.

- **Enjoyment** will follow from our interpretation and appreciation. Life is too short not to enjoy our classes, and if we don’t have a good time with these wonderful stories it will be a real shame! I encourage you to relax, let yourself get into them, and have a ball! Remember how much fun stories were when you were a little kid? The stories are still fun; it is just you and I that have changed.

- **Telling stories** is a practical, useful skill. You will undoubtedly find yourself in the presence of children one day (perhaps your own, perhaps today!). If you can tell good stories and tell them well, you will be a person these children will be happy to see. Our stories make us live, help us grow into adulthood, lead our lives with nobility, and help us die gracefully. I hope you will be a better storyteller after this class!
Lastly, I hope that we are all challenged and changed by these stories, that we will develop our character and become better people as we come to grips with some of the lessons and examples that these stories give us.

Each story has a meaning for the storyteller and for the culture within which they are located. A story will also have personal meaning for you and me. This is also an interesting part of this class. What happens to us when we are impacted by the stories of other cultures? How are we changed?