

Indigenous Columbia Plateau in Composition Classes Native Perspectives Across the Curriculum

Michael Rozendal, Associate Professor of Rhetoric and Language &
Academic Director, Undergraduate Teacher Education Center
University of San Francisco

Module Enhancement: Framing Research, Ethics of Citation, Curating Sources

Objective: Deepen first-year research into a range of self-selected topics,

Motivation: Native knowledges should inform inquiry across the curriculum, should be organizing perspectives (not simply “objects of study”) in many disciplines, foundations for college-level courses regardless of major. In this, the composition curriculum in particular and first year seminars in general are critical points to incorporate indigenous material.

Overview:

In brief, this is a series of three class sessions as students are developing topics for independent research, developing these topics through a library orientation session, and then deepening their thinking by developing a book abstract of a particular source.

Framing this sequence with native material highlights the some of the stakes in research—what are perspectives that might be beyond or behind? That may have been silenced or obscured? It also seeks to open thinking about it means to work with sources, to reflect on what “counts” as meaningful in terms of community and conversation.

Learning Outcomes Addressed

Learning outcomes as defined by the University of San Francisco Core for the class include

1. Critical analysis of academic discourse: Students critically analyze linguistic and rhetorical strategies used in long and complex texts from a variety of genres, subjects, and fields.
2. Integrating multiple academic sources: Students incorporate multiple texts of length and complexity within a unified argumentative essay, addressing connections and differences among them.

Daily Plans and Some Possible Prompts for Students

Day 1: Pitching Topics, Motivating Research, Looking beyond the Familiar Story with Tommy Orange’s Prologue to *There There* (2018).

Before class, students will write a topic pitch for independent research that they will share with the class for feedback in large group, small group, or through a blog. They will also read the Prologue, available electronically from the publisher

here: <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/563403/there-there-by-tommy-orange/9780525520375/>

In class, workshop topics as a group, discuss Orange, then in-class writing applying the focus from the discussion to their own topics.

Topic Pitch prompt: "Pitch your initial idea to your peers here and informally explore some of the different perspectives on, positions in, or discourses about your topic (about 2 pages) bring the material to class so that we can work on them in person.

What are you interested in? What is a compelling example you'd like to know more about? What are some of the conflicting visions here?"

In-Class Writing prompt: "From what perspective is the dominant version of the topic that you are interested in written from? What might this reveal? What conceal? What types of research or sources might help to give a different understanding?"

Day 2: Library Orientation, Shelfies

The class meets in the library to gain an introduction to the resources of the institution and to expand their sense of discovery, inquiry, curiosity, and research beyond Wikipedia.

Prompt for the day: "**During class:** Take a photo of a book related to your research on its shelf including its ecosystem--the set of books around it. Books are organized by topic, so this whole ecosystem is rich hunting ground for your research. Second, take a selfie with the book. While you have it in your hand, you might as well check it out! Then post these two photos here to create a visual record of our collective research.

After class, write: How did your curiosity develop or shift based on the book/sources that you found? What was interesting, unexpected or strange? (1 paragraph posted to discussion board along with your images)

Some thoughts on books: When it comes time to research, students rarely reach for books, even though these can often be the starting point for *excellent* and *efficient* research.

Books, whether by a single author or a collection of chapters from different authors, give an overview of a field and introduce us to the live conversations in a particular field. They introduce us to the interesting things that people are actually debating.

Once you find a book, often the introduction and/or a single chapter can frame your research, giving you the terms that you can apply to a particular, concrete example.

So, for this visual assignment after our library orientation, either individually or as teams you will venture into the stacks of Gleeson to find a book on your topic.

Day 3 Book Abstract, Situating knowledge in Community and Conversation

Before class, students will write a brief abstract (1-2 pages) of a book that sparked their curiosity for their individual research and either post this to a course blog or bring to class for group discussion. They will also read about Traditional Knowledge (TK) Labels at Local Contexts <http://localcontexts.org/tk-labels/> in

combination with a brief selection from Deborah Miranda's *Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir* on the linguistic work of JP Harrington and Alfred Kroeber.

In class, a discussion building from Miranda will work to raise questions of what is at stake in research—who is it for? What is it for? What are the disconnections in the conversations? Communities?

This will build toward small groups unpacking the Traditional Knowledge Labels and looking at the Plateau People's Web Portal <https://plateauportal.libraries.wsu.edu/> in class to find examples of the labels in action.

After sharing out and reflecting, students will strategize their ongoing research and writing either individually or in groups.

Sources and Resources

Miranda, Deborah. *Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir*. Heydey Press, 2013.

Monroe, Barbara. *Plateau Indian Ways with Words : The Rhetorical Tradition of the Tribes of the Inland Pacific Northwest*. University of Pittsburgh Press, 2014. Pittsburgh Series in Composition, Literacy and Culture.

Orange, Tommy. *There There*. Knopf, 2018.

Rader, Dean. *Engaged Resistance: American Indian Art, Literature, and Film from Alcatraz to the NMAI*. University of Texas Press, 2011.
<https://utpress.utexas.edu/books/radeng>

Scott Richard Lyons, author. "Rhetorical Sovereignty: What Do American Indians Want from Writing?." *College Composition and Communication*, no. 3, 2000, p. 447. EBSCOhost, doi:10.2307/358744.

Weiser, Kimberly G. *Back to the Blanket: Recovered Rhetorics and Literacies in American Indian Studies*. University of Oklahoma Press, 2017.

Further Inquiry and Exchange

Native Cases www.nativecases.evergreen.edu

"The Enduring Legacies Native Cases Initiative develops culturally relevant curriculum and teaching resources in the form of case studies on key issues in Indian Country.

Culturally relevant curriculum is a key factor in student success and essential to prepare students for leadership roles. Key topics of our cases have been identified by Native leaders."

Native Lands www.native-land.ca

A digital mapping project including layers for territory, language, and treaties.

