

Studies in Fiction—Cherokee Literature & Cultural Memory

Last Updated: Tue, 01/06/2026

Course prefix: LMC

Course number: 3202

Section: RH

CRN (you may add up to five):
35299

Instructor First Name: Randall

Instructor Last Name: Harrell

Semester: Spring

Academic year: 2026

Course description:

This course introduces students to the study of Cherokee literature through close reading, thoughtful discussion, and engagement with fiction and related texts grounded in the historical and cultural contexts of what became the U.S. Southeast. We will explore how literature shapes and reflects the world, considering questions of identity, society, place, and human experience as they emerge from Indigenous-authored narratives.

Focusing on historical and contemporary fiction, the course examines how Cherokee writers represent removal, survival, and the ongoing afterlives of nineteenth-century U.S. settler colonialism. Students will read novels alongside selected historical documents, excerpts from Cherokee print culture, and short critical readings to understand how fiction functions as a form of historical meaning-making rather than a departure from it. Through writing, discussion, and reflection, students will develop skills in close reading and interpretation while considering how literature articulates sovereignty, memory, and Indigenous presence in the present and future.

Course learning outcomes:

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Analyze Literature in Context

Interpret Cherokee-authored literary texts and examine how they reflect and shape historical, cultural, and social contexts.

2. Explore Multiple Perspectives

Examine Indigenous fiction through different interpretive lenses to consider questions of identity, power, place, and culture.

3. **Understand Removal as Process**

Explain how literature represents Cherokee removal as a prolonged, collective, and ongoing historical experience.

4. **Engage Fiction and Historical Materials**

Analyze literary texts alongside selected historical documents and print culture materials to deepen interpretation.

5. **Connect Past and Present**

Relate Cherokee literature and historical memory to contemporary social, ethical, and civic questions.

6. **Communicate Thoughtfully and Critically**

Produce clear, evidence-based written and oral analyses that demonstrate critical reading, reflection, and engagement with course materials.

Required course materials:

Required Primary Texts

This course centers Indigenous-authored fiction. Each student is expected to have consistent access to their own copy of the following novels—either in print or digital form—to support close reading, annotation, and sustained engagement with the texts:

- **Pushing the Bear** — Diane Glancy
- **Riding the Trail of Tears** — Blake Hausman
- **The Removed** — Brandon Hobson

Additional Readings (Provided via Canvas)

- Selected historical materials related to Cherokee history and removal
- Excerpts from nineteenth-century Cherokee print culture, including the ***Cherokee Phoenix***
- Short critical and theoretical excerpts from Indigenous literary studies, including selections from ***Our Fire Survives the Storm*** and ***Why Indigenous Literatures Matter*** by Daniel Heath Justice

Required Film Viewings

Films will be viewed in class or assigned for outside viewing. All required films will be made available through institutional streaming services or library reserves:

- ***In the Light of Reverence*** (directors Christopher McLeod and Malinda Maynor)
- ***The Cherokee Word for Water*** (directors Tim Kelly and Charlie Soap)
- ***First Language: The Race to Save Cherokee*** (directors Danica Cullinan and Neal Hutcheson)

Optional Pre-Course Viewing

- **Reel Injun** (directors Neil Diamond, Catherine Bainbridge, and Jeremiah Hayes)
(Optional — recommended prior to the start of the semester as general background on Native representation in popular media.)

Grading policy:

Grades in this course will be based on a combination of assessment methods, which may include short written responses, analytical essays, synthesis assignments, quizzes or exams, presentations, collaborative work, and participation. Not all components listed may be used in every section or semester. Detailed grading criteria, point values, and expectations for each assignment will be provided during the semester.

Georgia Tech Letter Grade Scale:

A: 90–100%
B: 80–89%
C: 70–79%
D: 60–69%
F: <60%

Attendance policy:

Active presence and engagement are essential. Attendance and participation together count for 20 points. More than three absences may lower your final grade. Participate actively during sessions and in small group discussions. All major assignments must be completed to receive a passing grade. Late work is generally not accepted. If you experience illness or emergency, communicate promptly to make arrangements. Although some exceptions may be made for certain situations, I reserve the right to determine what constitutes any extenuating circumstance. If you are physically present but wholly unprepared or blatantly disengage, your grade will be affected and you may be counted absent. Attendance exceptions are allowed for institute-approved absences (for example, those documented by the Registrar) and situations such as hospitalization or family emergencies (documented by the Office of the Dean of Students). Some assignments and activities cannot be made up. I reserve the right to determine what can and cannot be made up after an absence. **NOTE:** Excessive tardiness will begin to accrue absences.

Academic honesty/integrity statement:

If you engage in plagiarism or any other form of academic misconduct, you will fail the assignment and possibly be referred to the Office of Student Integrity. You should be familiar with these Georgia Tech sites:

- Honor Challenge — <https://osi.gatech.edu/students/honor-code>
- Office of Student Integrity — <https://osi.gatech.edu/index.php/>

A Note Addressing Artificial Intelligence:

This course is about growing in your ability to write, communicate, and think critically. Generative AI agents should only be used as tools. Tools cannot learn or communicate for you, and they cannot meet the course requirements for you. AI cannot stand in for your voice and your ideas. Work generated with AI and submitted will be treated as if it is plagiarized work—which leads the student to fail the assignment and possibly be referred to the Office of Student Integrity.

Core IMPACTS statement(s) (if applicable):

This is a **Core IMPACTS** course that is part of the **Arts, Humanities & Ethics** area. Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with **essential knowledge in foundational academic areas**. This course will help master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:

- How do I interpret the human experience through creative, linguistic, and philosophical works?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcome:

- Students will effectively analyze and interpret the meaning, cultural significance and ethical implications of literary/philosophical texts in English or other languages, or of works in the visual/performing arts.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Ethical Reasoning
- Information Literacy
- Intercultural Competence