



English (ENGL) 308

Indigenous Literature in Canada (Revision 4)

Status:	Replaced with new revision, see the course listing ↗ for the current revision ✖
Delivery mode:	Individualized study online ↗
Credits:	3
Areas of study:	Arts or Humanities
Prerequisites:	ENGL 211 and ENGL 212 or equivalent first year English course(s).
Precluded:	None
Challenge:	ENGL 308 has a challenge for credit option.
Faculty:	Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences ↗

Overview

English 308: Indigenous Literature in Canada begins with the origins of Indigenous literature in the oral tradition and leads to contemporary Indigenous writing in English. The course also examines related areas such as findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), released in 2015. Assigned readings from the TRC will inform many of the topics and themes found in Indigenous literature.

English 308 is designed to provide you with the basis for a deeper understanding of the literature of Indigenous nations in Canada. The course is divided into eight units and progresses from orature and stories from the oral tradition through written poems, stories, and drama, to two novels.

Outline

- **Unit 1:** Introduction to Indigenous Literature
- **Unit 2:** Family Stories and the Oral Tradition—*Earth Elder Stories*
- **Unit 3:** Myths, Legends, and Trickster Stories
- **Unit 4:** *The Rez Sisters* by Tomson Highway
- **Unit 5:** Culture, History, and Politics in Modern and Contemporary Poetry
- **Unit 6:** The Legacy of Residential Schools
- **Unit 7:** The Contemporary Novel in Depth—Eden Robinson's *Monkey Beach*
- **Unit 8:** The Contemporary Novel in Depth—Katherena Vermette's *The Break*

Learning outcomes

After completing English 308, students should be able to do the following:

- Demonstrate familiarity with Indigenous literature in Canada, including its origins, diversity, and contemporary forms
- Examine the cultural aesthetics surrounding the tradition of oral storytelling and its connection to contemporary Indigenous literature
- Demonstrate an understanding of the legacy of the residential school system and its expression in literature
- Analyze the values, politics, and concerns addressed in works of Indigenous literature

- Assess the use of literary elements such as theme, symbolism, and poetic devices in the assigned works

Evaluation

To **receive credit** [↗](#) for ENGL 308, you must achieve an overall grade of at least **D (50 percent)** [📄](#) and at least D (50 percent) on the final exam. All assignments are required in order to pass the course. The weighting of the course assignments is as follows:

Activity	Weight
Essay 1	10%
Essay 2	25%
Essay 3	25%
Final Exam	40%
Total	100%


The **final examination** for this course must be requested in advance and written under the supervision of an AU-approved exam invigilator. Invigilators include either ProctorU or an approved in-person invigilation centre that can accommodate online exams. Students are responsible for payment of any invigilation fees. Information on exam request deadlines, invigilators, and other exam-related questions, can be found at the **Exams and grades** [↗](#) section of the Calendar.


To learn more about assignments and examinations, please refer to Athabasca University's **online Calendar** [↗](#).

Materials

Highway, Tomson. *The Rez Sisters*. Fifth House, 1988. [📄](#) (Print)

Robinson, Eden. *Monkey Beach*. Vintage, 2001.  (Print)

Ruffo, Armand Garnet, and Katherena Vermette, editors. *An Anthology of Indigenous Literatures in English: Voices from Canada*. 5th edition. Oxford University Press, 2020.  (Print)

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*. 2015. (Available through the ENGL 308 Digital Reading Room.)  (eBook)

Vermette, Katherena. *The Break*. House of Anansi Press, 2016.  (Print)

Wolfe, Alexander. *Earth Elder Stories*. Fifth House, 1988.  (Print)

Other Materials

All other course materials can be found online.

Content Warning

Topics in this course include racism; physical and cultural genocide; residential schools; Missing Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2-Spirit People (MMIWG2S); the Indian Act and the TRC; violence (including sexual and domestic), exploitation, and injustice; systems of power and agency; as well as kinship, belonging, and resurgence.

If you have any concerns about this, don't hesitate to contact your tutor before starting the course materials. They can help you navigate the reading schedule (including alerting you to page numbers of where difficult materials are depicted in the texts).

Challenge for credit

Overview

The challenge for credit process allows you to demonstrate that you have acquired a command of the general subject matter, knowledge, intellectual and/or other skills that would normally be found in a university-level course.

Full information about **challenge for credit**  can be found in the Undergraduate Calendar.

Evaluation

To **receive credit** [↗](#) for the ENGL 308 challenge registration, you must achieve a grade of at least 50 percent on the examination, and a grade of at least **D (50 percent)** [📄](#) overall.

Activity	Weight
Research Essay	50%
Exam	50%
Total	100%



[Challenge for credit course registration form](#)

Important links

- > [Academic advising](#) [↗](#)
- > [Program planning](#) [↗](#)
- > [Request assistance](#) [↗](#)
- > [Support services](#) [↗](#)

Athabasca University reserves the right to amend course outlines occasionally and without notice. Courses offered by other delivery methods may vary from their individualized study counterparts.

Opened in Revision 4, September 28, 2018

Updated March 25, 2024

View [previous revision](#) [↗](#)