Course Description: Throughout history, Native peoples have been portrayed through a stock set of stereotypes such as savage warriors, Indian princesses, or mystical shamans. These images surround us in advertising, news media, Hollywood, sports mascots, and Halloween costumes. This course will examine the foundations of these representations and their connections to colonization, with a focus on contemporary and ongoing examples, from Johnny Depp’s Tonto, Urban Outfitters’ “Navajo” products, to JK Rowling’s “History of Magic in North America,” with an additional focus on the ways Native peoples are taking back and reshaping Native representations through activism, social media, art, design, film, and other realms.

Learning Outcomes:
By the end of the course, students will have a clearer understanding of:

- Historic and ongoing colonialism in the United States
- Tribal sovereignty (including visual and cultural sovereignty)
- Representations, stereotypes, and cultural appropriation
- The ways Native peoples have been (mis)represented throughout history across mediums
- The ways Indigenous communities and Native cultural producers are reclaiming and reshaping representations in numerous contexts and approaches
- The vast diversity of Native communities and cultures throughout the US
- How understandings of Indigenous representations reflect larger issues of colonialism, decolonization, Native oppression and cultural revitalization.

The specific skills that students will use and develop in order to achieve these intellectual goals are:

§ Reading critically a variety of media—from books, book chapters, journal articles, advertising, popular culture, blogs, and websites.

§ Producing scholarship and creative work in different forms ranging from essays that require the students to both reflect on assigned reading and their lived experience, to critical analyses of media, to a final project exploring an issue in Indigenous representations.
§ Integrating knowledge from different disciplines in order to develop a new understanding of representational issues in Native communities.

§ Participating in in-class and online discussions to further explore issues raised in the assigned reading.

Course Requirements:

Credit-Hours notice: Over 14 weeks, students will spend 3 hours per week in class (42 hours total). Required reading for the seminar meetings is expected to take up approximately 7 hours per week (98 hours). In addition, writing and researching response essays, course facilitation preparation, and the final project is estimated at total of approximately 40 hours over the course of the term.

Your final grade will be calculated and based on:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points/%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and participation</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Positionality Paper</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical Analysis</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>Class facilitation</td>
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<td>Final Project Proposal</td>
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Attendance and Participation (25%):
This course is a seminar style course, and as such attendance and participation are very important. This portion of your grade will be calculated with a combination of physical attendance in class, as well as weekly posts to Canvas discussion boards.

Attendance:
Since our course only meets 13 times, attendance to class is of utmost importance. You must notify Professor Keene via email if you are missing class, and while illness and other unforeseen circumstances occur, all absences should be excused with a dean’s or doctor’s note. If you miss more than one class, your grade will begin to be affected, more than two classes may put your passing the course in jeopardy.

Canvas discussion posts:
Each week, by Sunday at 11:59pm, you need to post 2-3 questions/reflections about the week’s reading. Think of these as discussion starters for class the next day— In these responses, you may choose to engage a single text on its own, or draw connections between several readings. Suggested questions to guide your
responses: What do you see as the most valuable contribution, thesis, or idea from this material? What aspects of the author’s findings or argument do you find especially useful, well-argued, problematic, confusing, or unconvincing? How does this connect to some of our key ideas or themes in the course?

The goal of these responses is not simply to demonstrate that you have carefully read and considered the readings with a critical eye (that is assumed) or to provide summaries. You should use them as an opportunity to share candid impressions, questions, and things that you find puzzling or contradictory. Be sure to read your classmates posts—you are welcome to respond to their questions and posts, and this will count towards your quota of 2-3 comments/questions for the day. These homework posts are not a useless exercise, but rather a way for me and your weekly facilitators to direct the class material and discussion in a way that will best serve your interests.

**Positionality Paper (5%):** This short paper (1-2pgs) asks you to understand your own relationship to the topic of the course, and help the instructor to better shape the content and direction of the course. What are the events and experiences in your own life that shape your understanding of Native peoples? How does your own identity/identities influence or intersect with your understandings?

**Due 9/22, by 5pm, uploaded to Canvas**

**Critical Analysis (20%):**
For this assignment you will put into practice the close reading and critical lens we’ve developed together. Choose a Native representation (ideas: food product labels, advertising campaigns, products named after Native tribes or people, “Native inspired” fashion designs, a news article about a Native person or community, a film, TV character, a book, website, anything) and provide an analysis of this representation, utilizing the readings and theories from class: Who created it? What is the context surrounding it? What is your assessment of the representation (good/bad/stereotypical/ harmful/somewhere in between)? Why? What specific elements (descriptors, visual cues) lead you to that assessment? What course readings support your assertions? How could the creator make it better? This paper should be approximately 4-5 pages.

**Due 10/11, by 5pm, uploaded to Canvas**

**Class Facilitation (10%):**

One week of the semester you and a partner (or groups of three) will be responsible for guiding the class discussion for the first 20-30 minutes of class.
This will involve preparation through a close reading of the assigned texts, reading your classmates’ canvas postings for the week, and talking with your partner(s) outside of class. The two of you will develop a plan for stimulating discussion, whether it is a class activity, small group discussions, bringing in outside materials like video clips or a short in-class reading, discussion questions posed to the class, or anything else you can dream up. This is not meant to be stressful or a lot of outside work, but rather a chance to practice skills that will be useful in many courses, meetings, and other participatory spaces, and Professor Keene will assist and guide as needed during class as well. The facilitations will not start until week 4, to give students a chance to see how our classroom space operates and see examples of discussion activities and styles from Professor Keene. Each facilitation group must email the rough plan for class by Sunday night before Monday class.

Final Project w/Proposal (40%):

The final project for the course is a chance for you to be creative and engage in many of the forms of new media we’ve explored throughout the semester, or delve more deeply into a topic that peaked your interest through a research paper. The sky’s the limit, but some possible project ideas:

**Podcast:** Perform audio interviews and sound recordings to create a podcast that explores themes from the course. Could be designer or artist profiles, telling the story of a court case or ongoing controversy, interviewing activists, reviewing media, profiling an event, or any other audio storytelling. Successful pieces will be well-edited using garage band or other software, utilizing several perspectives, sources, or voices, incorporating music or other transitions.

**Short film:** Creating a short documentary, scripted film about a topic related to the course material, a series of PSAs about cultural appropriation/playing Indian/buying Native art and design, or any other cinematic representation.

**Museum exhibit:** This is a chance to design a “dream” museum exhibition without the boundaries of funding or space or constrictions of a typical museum. What would the exhibit be titled? Which artists, works, objects, etc would be included and why? What would the space and arrangement of the objects look like and why? It may be helpful to include visual representations (floor plans, object photos, 3-D models, etc).

**Research Paper:** If there is a topic or question that caught your attention throughout the semester and you would like to explore more deeply through a research paper, you are more than welcome to do so.
Successful papers will be well supported with a number of primary and secondary (scholarly) sources and 8-10 pages in length.

**Curriculum:** We know these stereotypes and misrepresentations of Native peoples are deeply embedded into the lessons taught in classrooms. This is an opportunity for you to design a course syllabus, class lesson plans, or similar product that would teach students from a specific age group about a topic related to the course. How would you structure the lesson? What is the specific age group? What readings/viewings would you assign? What materials would you need? What challenges would you anticipate? How would you involve the local community?

**Blog:** Since I am a fan of the medium of blogging, I welcome the creation of a new blog related to course topics. You would need to create and design the physical space (using wordpress or a similar platform), decide on the title, topic, and tone, and provide several posts. Accompanying your blog would be an approximately 2 page paper describing the philosophy behind the blog, the theories or literature you plan to “translate” for a public audience, and any other background information on the content and decisions around the blog.

**Website:** Is there a Native organization, author, designer, artist, musician, filmmaker, etc. that you encountered through the course who needs a website to bring more publicity to their work or cause? If you are skilled in web design (or efficient with drag-and-drop tools like SquareSpace) and would like to create a webpage, this is your chance. Many Native cultural producers may not have access to these skills or resources, and publicity for their work is key. This will involve working with the individual or organization directly, I can make introductions and facilitate. There may be opportunities for some funding through the course to pay for domain names or 1 month of hosting fees.

**Play/Short Story:** For the fiction writers in the course, this is a chance to experiment with writing non-stereotyped non-exploitative stories or a short play. Especially for non-Native students, it is a chance to demonstrate how an “outsider” can do it right given the knowledge and skillset.

**Creative non-fiction:** Another chance to flex creative writing muscles, this can be a long form New Yorker (or similar publication) style piece, such an in-depth profile of a Native cultural producer, an investigative reporting style piece on an issue in Indian Country, whatever you dream up.

**Resource guide:** School districts, teachers, designers, companies, and individuals trying to enact change on issues of representation often ask for
guides on how best to start the process. This is your chance to create a document that brings together research, resources, links, news articles, and step-by-step instructions to help someone new to these issues. The final product would need a comprehensive table of contents, strong organization, and writing that summarizes and links together the resources.

Anything else: If you have any other idea, I'm happy to talk through with you and see if it would work for the final. I'm truly open to all traditional and non-traditional formats.

**Group Finals:** Students may work in groups up to 4, but the expectations increase with each additional team member, and each group member will also submit a (private) 1pg memo detailing their contributions to the final product and any group dynamics I may need to be aware of.

**Final Proposal (5%)**: Each group or individual (if working independently) will submit a 1-2pg proposal detailing their final project idea and plans, for review and feedback from Professor Keene. The proposal should include the topic or problem area the project will address, the final outcome (a paper, a film, a podcast, an art project, etc), several sources that will be drawn upon, the names of the group members, and any questions or concerns at this point in the process.

**Proposals are due 11/13 by 5pm to Canvas**

**Sharing day (12/4)**: On our last day of class we will have opportunities to share the final projects with one another. Since the final due date is not until the next week, these can be snippets or works-in-progress. We will either have short 5 min presentations from each group, or arrange a science-fair type sharing experience, depending on the nature of the projects.

**Final Projects Due 12/16 by 11:59pm**

**Weekly “Hot Topics”:**
Since these issues have many resonances in current events and popular culture, at the beginning of each class we’ll have time to discuss any news items, websites, or photos you may have encountered that reflect the course topics. You may email Professor Keene ahead of time, or simply share during class. This is meant to be informal and a chance to apply what you’re learning to the real world.
**Classroom Policies:**

**Attendance:** You must notify me via email if you are missing class, and while illness and other unforeseen circumstances occur, all absences should be excused with a dean’s or doctor’s note. If you miss more than one class, your grade will begin to be affected, more than two classes may put your passing the course in jeopardy.

**Late Paper Policy:** All assignments have *an automatic two-day grace period*. On time and early papers are always encouraged and will have the professor’s fresh eyes on them, but students also have two days to turn in the paper, no questions asked. After that, an automatic one grade (A to B, B to C, etc) is dropped on the paper, and the student will need to meet with Professor Keene to work out a plan. I encourage you to plan ahead with your schedule, comparing the syllabi for your courses now, to see when you have conflicting assignments or difficult weeks. If things look impossible, please talk to me with plenty of advance notice.

**Plagiarism/Academic Honesty:** Any breach of academic integrity will not be tolerated and will be reported immediately. Infringement of the academic code entails penalties ranging from a zero on the assignment, to reprimand, suspension, dismissal, or expulsion from the University. Students should refer to the Brown Academic Code for more information: [https://www.brown.edu/academics/college/degree/policies/academic-code](https://www.brown.edu/academics/college/degree/policies/academic-code)

**Grade policy:** All grades are final, and students can track their progress throughout the semester on Canvas. There will not be any make-up or extra credit assignments offered. Incompletes may be negotiated with a dean’s assistance in extreme circumstances.

**Accessibility and Accommodations:** Students gain access to academic learning in a variety of ways. Brown University is committed to full inclusion of all students. Please inform me early in the term if you have a disability or other conditions that might require accommodations or modification of any of these course procedures. You may speak with me after class or during office hours. For more information, please contact Student and Employee Accessibility Services at 401-863-9588 or SEAS@brown.edu. Students in need of short-term academic advice or support can contact one of the deans in the Dean of the College office.

**Names and Pronouns:** If you go by a different name or gender pronoun than the one under which you are officially enrolled, please inform me. Students are expected to respectfully refer to each other by preferred names and pronouns during class discussions.
Weekly Topic Breakdown:

Week 0 (9/4): No Class (Beyoncé’s 36th Birthday)
Week 1 (9/11): Introductions/syllabus
Week 2 (9/18): Playing Indian
Week 3 (9/25): Cultural Appropriation
  Positionality Paper Due 9/27 by 5pm
Week 4 (10/2): Music [and Indigenous People’s Day]
Week 5 (10/9): NO CLASS INDIGENOUS PEOPLES’ DAY
  Critical Analysis Due 10/11 by 5pm
Week 6 (10/16): Film/TV
Week 7 (10/23): Fashion
Week 8 (10/30): Literature [and Halloween]
Week 9 (11/6): Visual Art
Week 10 (11/13): Sports and Mascots
  Final Project Proposal Due 11/16 by 5pm
Week 11(11/20): Museums (Haffenreffer visit) [and Thanksgiving]
Week 12 (11/27): Theater
Week 13 (12/4): Indians on the Internet: Activism and new media

Final Project Due 12/16 by 11:59pm

A Note on readings: The readings for the course are very interdisciplinary, coming from fields of law, psychology, anthropology, sociology, education, literature, and more, as well as many “non-traditional” mediums such as blogs, news articles, podcasts, museum guides, and youtube clips. Additionally, I have made a very strong effort to center Native voices and authors, with Native authors denoted on the syllabus by their tribal/community affiliation in parentheses after their name.

Accessing Texts:
Unless otherwise noted, all readings and articles will be available on the course Canvas site. All videos, podcasts, and films will be available via streaming or the course site.

There are no required books for the course
**Week 1 (9/7):** Introductions/syllabus

Introductions, course expectations, brief overview of Indian Country

What are some of the messages we receive every day about Native peoples? Talking through some current events and representations.

**Week 2 (9/14):** Playing Indian

Who is Native American? Where do the original myths and stereotypes of Native peoples come from? This week we'll start with early America and discuss the ways that settlers, through a process of colonization, have taken on the identities of “Natives” in various ways—from the Boston Tea Party through the present. We will also go through an overview of tribal sovereignty and contemporary Native identity.


**Week 3 (9/21):** Cultural Appropriation

What is “Cultural Appropriation” and how does it play into representations of Native peoples? How have debates around cultural appropriation shaped Native peoples abilities to push back on these instances? What does the law say about protecting Native communities and cultural markers?


**Urban Outfitters case (skim):**


*Navajo Nation’s case against Urban Outfitters just took a hit* (Yahoo News): [https://www.yahoo.com/style/navajo-nations-case-against-urban-150700793.html](https://www.yahoo.com/style/navajo-nations-case-against-urban-150700793.html)

**OPTIONAL:**

**Positionality Paper Due 9/27 by 5pm**

**Week 4 (10/2): Music/Podcasting revolution**

Historically, what are the ways that Native peoples have been portrayed through music? What stereotypes still linger in music today? This week we will spend a lot of time listening to music, reading lyrics, and watching music videos, as well as thinking about podcasting as another means for creating Native spaces. We’ll also spend time talking about the Indigenous Peoples Day name change at Brown.

Salon: “We had to replace the lyrics to ugg a wugg”: Meet the Native American Consultant who worked on nbc’s peter pan:
http://www.salon.com/2014/11/21/we_had_to_replace_the_lyrics_ugg_a_wugg_meet_the_native_american_consultant_who_worked_on_nbcs_peter_pan/

RPM.fm (Revolutions per minute: Indigenous Music Culture): Selections TBD

Indian and Cowboy Podcasting Network (First and Only Indigenous Podcast Network): listening selections TBD

Listen to songs by (linked on Canvas):
Frank Waln
A Tribe Called Red
Leanne Simpson
Northern Cree

**WEEK 5 (10/9): NO CLASS INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY**

**Week 6: Film/TV (and Indigenous Peoples Day)**

From early westerns to Twilight, The Lone Ranger, and Peter Pan, Native peoples have been objects of fascination on the big and small screen. What are the ways Native people have been (mis)represented in these realms? How are Native peoples taking back their images and making their own?


In class, clips from Sterlin Harjo’s films

OPTIONAL:

Guest Skype: Sterlin Harjo (Seminole/Creek)

End class with discussion about IPD/Columbus Day & Screening of short documentary by Sierra Edd ’18

Critical Analysis Due 10/11 by 5pm

Week 7: Fashion

While we focused in on how outsiders are misusing Native cultures in Week 3, this week is about celebrating the vibrant, cool, innovative world of contemporary Native fashion. We’ll talk about some amazing designers, and read about the ways Native people have always been fashionable.

Jessica Metcalfe (Turtle Mountain Chippewa), Beyond Buckskin: www.beyondbuckskin.com (skim through posts and read a few designer profiles)


Podcast: Jared Yazzie (Navajo Nation) Next Gen Native: http://nextgennative.com/jared-yazzie-oxdx-clothing/

Refinery 29: Who you’re insulting when you buy “Native American” Inspired Things: http://www.refinery29.com/native-american-fashion (watch the video at the top of the page, plays after an ad)


Guest Skype: Jared Yazzie (Navajo) and Jessica Metcalfe (Turtle Mountain Chippewa)
**Week 8: Literature (and Halloween)**
From early fairy tales to JK Rowling, literature has been obsessed with portrayals of Native peoples. We’ll read a few cringe-worthy awful selections, as well as some incredible Native work.

Longfellow, H. W., (1899). *The song of Hiawatha* (No. 218-219). TY Crowell. (available online: https://www.gutenberg.org/files/19/19-h/19-h.htm)


JK rowling history of magic in North America:  
JK Rowling Ilvermorny: https://www.pottermore.com/writing-by-jk-rowling/ilvermorny

Sherman Alexie Short Story TBD


Debbie Reese (Nambe Pubelo): American Indians in Children’s literature blog (selections TBD) https://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/

Should Halloween revelers be able to dress up as Native Americans for Halloween? Where do the rights of “free speech” intersect with Native representations?

OpEds TBD (We’ll talk about the Yale controversy/letter, numerous examples)  
**Week 9: Visual Art, Advertising**

Art:


OPTIONAL:


Advertising:
Molholt, S. “American Indians in Print Advertising since 1890” In Halloween. In American Indians and Popular Culture Volume I (pgs 152-163)

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**Week 10: Sports and Mascots**


OPTIONAL:

Guest Skype: Amanda Blackhorse (Navajo)

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**Week 11: Museums**


Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act: [https://www.nps.gov/history/local-law/fhpl_nagpra.pdf](https://www.nps.gov/history/local-law/fhpl_nagpra.pdf)


OPTIONAL:

Field trip to Haufenreffer museum!
**Week 12: Theater**

Theater:
Sliver of a Full Moon by Mary Catherine Nagle (Cherokee Nation)

Princess Pocahontas and the Blue Dots by Monique Mohica (Guna/Rappahannock)


Thanksgiving:

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**Week 13: Indians on the Internet: Activism and new media**

What is representation justice?


Videos from the 1491s (linked on Canvas)

Daily show clips on Native mascots (on Canvas)

Plus:
Migizi Pensoneau (Anishnaabe): "I'll fucking cut you." Behind the scenes of the 1491s' segment on "The Daily Show"

Final Project Due 12/14 11:59pm