

ENGL 758 - Summer Seminar on Frontier Fictions Rebecca Weaver-Hightower (University of North Dakota)

Tentative COURSE SCHEDULE

June 13-17 in-class

June 20-25 out-of-class

Daily events

We will meet daily from 9-4, and our day will be divided into the following blocks:

9-10:30

discuss novel as representative reading and national history

10:30-noon

theory to contextualize discussion

12-12:30/1

lunch

12:30/1-2:30

cinematic text we experience together

2:30-4:00

discussion of cinematic text and theme for the day

The Week

Unit 1 Monday June 13:

Introduction to Postcolonial Studies

Unit 2 Tuesday June 14:

The Settler Fantasy and the Contact Zone

Unit 3 Wednesday June 15:

Natives, Race, and Captivity

Unit 4 Thursday June 16:

Space, Land, and Animals

Unit 5 Friday June 17:

Frontier Children and the Terror of Loss

Follow-up work

June 20- 22: Independent work on final essays on own, send to workshop group members and professor by June 22 at 5pm

June 23- June 24: Group workshops, TBA

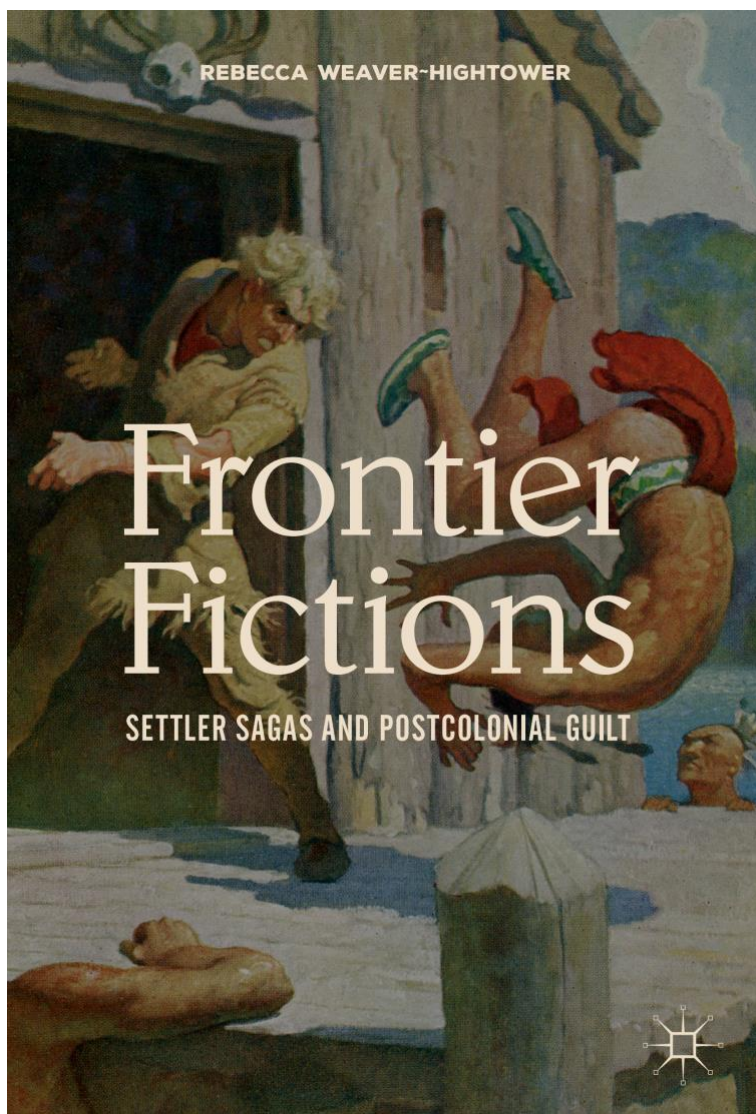
June 25: Mini-conference, TBA

Required texts

All of these are available electronically on blackboard, or you can order used print copies online or buy them from the bookstore. These novels are of considerable length, so you will need to do reading in advance of when we discuss them in class and then remind yourself of your notes the night before class.

- William Gilmore Sims' *The Yemassee: A Romance of Carolinas* (1835)
- Catherine Parr Traill's *The Backwoods of Canada* (1836)
- John Robinson's *George Linton: Or The First Years Of An English Colony* (1876)
- Henry Kingsley's, *The Recollections of Geoffry Hamlyn* Vol 2 (1860)

Other materials you will access through blackboard. Please bring texts to class on the date we discuss them. Bringing your laptop with the text as a PDF and notes is fine.



Course description

Americans are most familiar with “the frontier” through the Western—set in the land of wagon trains and log cabins; where law, religion, and civilization are only barely functioning; where John Wayne and “Indians” war over land, resources, and way of life. Similar stories of the frontier—the place where European settlement comes into contact with indigenous communities—exist in literatures of other countries as well as the United States. And these frontier tales are as important to their national imagination as they are to ours. This course will read frontier fiction of the US alongside similar tales from Australia, South Africa, and Canada in order to investigate why these stories are important to these national mythologies and what these novels can tell us about the time in which they were set, the time in which they were written (generally a generation later), and where we have gone since then. Over the course of the week, we’ll read tales about soldiers and forts, women fighting to maintain home and family, immigrants struggling to make a life, and settlers encountering “native” peoples of Africa, Australia and North America. We will pair these primary texts with criticism introducing theories and ideas useful for better understanding the frontier, like “the contact zone,” the captivity narrative, the lost child motif, the “vanishing Indian,” representations of landscape and ecology, and depictions of animals as real and symbolic.