



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2015 Volume I: Teaching Native American Studies

Contemporary Native American Fictional Accounts of Hope and Fear

Guide for Curriculum Unit 15.01.07
by Marialuisa Sapienza

This unit studies the themes of hope and fear in a rich selection of contemporary Native American writings. It starts with a close analysis and discussion of what causes fear and how the characters in a novel, a short story, a play, and poems struggle, fight and react to societal injustices with hope. The unit takes into consideration other causes for fear like poverty, alcohol, isolation, loneliness, and sometimes the feeling(s) of desperation. The students read the novel, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie (Spokane/Coeur d'Alene), the short story *The Red Convertible* by Louise Erdrich (Turtle Mountain/Ojibwe), the play *Sliver of a Full Moon* by Mary Kathryn Nagle (Cherokee), a rich selection of poems such as "Homeland" by Jayne Fawcett (Mohegan), "I Found Him on a Hill Top" by Ella Wilcox Sekatau (Narragansett), and "Sad Country Song" by John Christian Hopkins (Narragansett), as well as some paintings and photographs that represent Native American cultures. The goal is to read, analyze, reflect, research, discuss, and write about the reactions to hardships. The unit also aims to teach students to appreciate and understand American Indian arts while addressing Common Core Standards.

(Recommended for English, grade 10; AP English, grades 11 and 12)

<https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu>

©2019 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University
For terms of use visit <https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu/terms>