

Teaching Observation of  
Michelle Boyer-Kelly  
April 11, 2016  
AIS 160A  
Many Nations of Native America  
GTA Lecture

Michelle,

Thank you for the opportunity to sit in on your lecture on April 11, 2016 entitled “Literary Representations of American Indian Environments: Literature, Film, and Popular Culture.” The way in which you started your presentation with a “Who I Am” slide and a "Why Research Lit and Film?" slide was beneficial to the class as a whole, as it helped to acquaint those students who are not in your regular Friday sections with who you are as a scholar and why your topic is important for them to know about. I greatly appreciated how you explained the relevancy of your topic in terms of the larger mainstream American population and provided your students with a basic understanding of how literature and movies provide this majority of the citizenry with their main “understanding” and images of Native peoples, and how this contributes to the continuation of stereotypes about them.

One of the first things I noticed about your teaching style was your ability to engage your 100+ students despite the auditorium-styled classroom from the very beginning of class to the very end. I felt that the way you posed questions directly to the class as a whole enabled students to feel less like a blank face in the crowd and more like individuals that had something to contribute to the class. One of the ways that I observed this was in the speed and consistency that your students tended to raise their hands in response to your questions – this kind of response can be a very difficult thing to achieve in such a setting.

The organization of your presentation felt smooth and logical throughout the entire class, as you first presented students with a timeline of the eras that you were going to be discussing, explained how they relate to each other, and then addressed each one individually with examples and proficient explanations for each. Providing video clips as examples of films made in each era was helpful to the students because it provided them with visual and audio aids to comprehending the material. The way in which you presented students with questions to think about prior to watching the films helped prepare students to think about the way in which they should be analyzing the material they are about to observe. Your follow up of these questions in relation to the film clips was a nice way to gauge student acquisition of material and to engage students more with you and the presentation as a whole.

Overall I was greatly impressed by the organization of the class and the level of student involvement throughout. Thank you again for the opportunity to observe your class and teaching style.

Best Wishes,

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