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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2016 Volume I: Contemporary American Indian History

First and Second Wave Native American Literature

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This unit analyzes the two novels, *Ceremony* by Leslie Marmon Silko and *Winter in the Blood* by James Welch, comparatively with the contemporary text; Sherman Alexie's *The Absolutely True-Diary of a Part Time Indian*. These texts will collectively suggest that Contemporary American Indian literature spans identifiable waves: A First Wave is the return to reservation life and tradition, ceremony and ritual of tribal peoples; a Second Wave acknowledges the struggle of identity in America, but also asserts the need for life and interaction outside of the reservation as means to complete one's identity. The First Wave finds and satisfies a deficiency of identity; the second signals a need for integrated experience to fully form that same identity. Students will complete reading analysis and other formative assessments during their reading of these novels which will help them connect the historical themes introduced at the beginning of the unit. This unit combines visual and textual narratives as response to the racialized public misunderstandings about American Indian life and identity in our contemporary era.

(Developed for English 1, grade 9; recommended for English, American History, and Native American Studies, grades 9-12)

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