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

Rewriting the Narrative of American History: American Indian Identity and the Process of Recovery

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This unit centers around the study of American Indian history and federal Indian policy through the study of three central texts: Tulsa: From Creek Town to Oil Capital by Angie Debo, Custer Died for Your Sins by Vine Deloria, Jr., and Winter in the Blood by James Welch. These three texts (two non-fiction and one fiction), are tied together thematically in how they each respond to a particular crisis in American Indian history, and both loss and recovery of cultural identity. These books each respond to a particular crisis of misunderstanding in American Indian history. Students will explore the primary concerns of each text, and how they are conveyed through the author's rhetorical choices (their particular context, purpose, topic, audience and voice).

Activities include a research project focused on Tulsa's early Creek history, analysis of non-print texts (comparing and contrasting photographic representations of American Indians from different time periods), and writing "Where I'm From" poems.

This unit was written for 11th grade English Language and Composition students, but it would also be well suited for any 11th or 12th grade American Literature or American Studies class.

(Developed for AP English Language and Composition, grade 11; recommended for American Literature/English and American Studies/History, grades 11-12, and AP English Language and Composition, grades 11-12)