

Reading Report Assignments

By April 15th, you should read a short story or series of poems of your choosing from the list below. After reading the literary work(s), write a 1-2 page (double-spaced) response that does two things:

1. Your response should summarize plot/content of the literary work(s). Be sure to summarize the entire reading and to use your own words in the summary. Keep this section to 50% or less of the paper.
2. Your response should also add your thoughts on how the literary work(s) use folklore. **You might consider questions like why the author uses the folklore I describe below. Or how does the author adapt and change the folklore? How does the folklore help the work convey its themes? Is there other folklore “in” the text?** I don't have set answers that I'm looking for. Rather, I want to see evidence that you thought about the reading.

This report is worth 50 points.

On Reserve in the Library

(ask for the book title, which is italicized)

- Ann Sexton, “Cinderella” and “Red Riding Hood” and “Hansel and Gretel.” *The Complete Poems*. Pages 255-258 and 267-272. In these poems, Sexton retells the Grimm Brother tales with modern references. Each poem concludes with an addition commentary on the tale.
- Todd Robert Peterson, “Parables from the New World.” *Long after Dark*. Pages 49-58. As you read, watch for a retelling of the David and Bathseba story (hint: Koenig is German for “king.”). Also watch for a Native American trickster tale fused with Mormon fiction.
- Gerald Vizenor, “Naanabozho and the Gambler.” *Native American Literature*. Pages 161-164. Compare the Nanabozho story and the gambling motif to what we read in *Four Souls* and “Fleur.”
- Four Poems on Material Culture. *The Folklore Muse*. Pages 178-183. Consider how material culture and heirlooms have significance beyond simply being objects.
- Terry Tempest Williams, “The Clan of One-Breasted Women.” *The Portable Western Reader*. Pages 546-553. In the minds of many, Nevada atomic testing caused an increase in cancer rates in many parts of Utah (places that were downwind from the tests). Williams writes about her family folklore and sense of place in relation to these tests.
- Nathaniel Hawthorne, “Egotism, or the Bosom Serpent.” *Tales and Sketches*. Pages 781-794. In the early nineteenth-century there were urban legends about snakes that would grow inside of someone (this give a folklore perspective to the movie *Aliens!*). Watch how Hawthorne uses the urban legend to explore one of his favorite themes: hidden guilt.
- Mark Twain, “The Story of the Old Ram.” *The Complete Short Stories of Mark Twain*. Pages 77-81. Focus both on the legend being told and how it is told.

Note: If you want to substitute another reading for one of these, see me.