

Join us for Literacy Colloquy
Tuesday, November 24th, 2009

11:00am - 12:30pm in 116H Erickson Hall

Ellen Cushman

*The Cherokee Syllabary:
A writing system in its own right*

Reading, writing, culture, and identity have been a central focus in my research, and this book builds upon this trajectory. My first book, *The Struggle and the Tools: Oral and Literate Strategies in an Inner City Community* (SUNY 1998) presented results of ethnographic research on the literacy and language used in an inner city community. My next book, *Literacy: A Critical Sourcebook* (edited with Eugene Kintgen, Barry Kroll, and Mike Rose), included canonical texts in literacy studies. My third book, co-authored with Tom Holm, *Native American History for Beginners*, overviews Native American history as an instructional resource for high school and college students. *The Cherokee Syllabary: Writing Peoplehood and Perseverance* builds upon these works using ethnohistorical methods to trace the invention and continued use of the Cherokee syllabary.

About the Speaker: For the last 5 years, Dr. Cushman has been working with her tribe to learn the language, develop online educational resources, and teach Cherokee history as she's researched in archives and interviewed prominent Cherokee nation representatives. Chief Chad Smith recently appointed her to the Cherokee Nation Sequoyah Commission (2008-2011), a scholarly think tank that advises the Chief. With representatives of the Cherokee Nation, she has collaboratively authored new media installations on historical events, and she has taught history in the Johnson O'Malley Cherokee Nation Youth Leadership Institute (2007). As a citizen of the Cherokee Nation and literacy scholar, she currently holds the position of Associate Professor at Michigan State University.