The Poetics and Politics of Water: Readings by American Indian Writers
at the University of Arizona Poetry Center

December 10, 2014, Tucson Arizona— The Poetry Center is proud to host a four part series “The Poetics and Politics of Water,” featuring four major American Indian poets who will read their work to Tucson audiences over the course of the Spring. Sherwin Bitsui, Simon J. Ortiz, Ofelia Zepeda, and Natalie Diaz will read work that offer insight into the central role that the character of water plays in contemporary American Indian literature. (For exact dates, see calendar below.) A graduate seminar will accompany the series.

Global water shortages are imminent, and by the year 2050, as much as 75 percent of the world’s population could face freshwater scarcity, according to news sources such as waterpolitics.com. The on-going drought in the Colorado River basin (the source of our water in Tucson,) underlines the urgency of this issue in our region. Given such projections it is important to give the stage to artist’s voices that lend humanity to and expand awareness of the urgency of such complicated political issues.

D. H. Lawrence wrote that “Water is H2O, hydrogen two parts, oxygen one, but there is also a third thing, that makes water and nobody know what it is.” This elusive cultural and literary dimension takes clarified form in the work of contemporary American Indian writers.

The Poetry Center, in its ongoing mission to be a bridge between regional voices and the national stage has hosted all three of the previous Poetics and Politics series. The archives of previous events can be found http://poeticsandpolitics.arizona.edu.

This Series was developed and curated by Professor Larry Evers of the Department of English and poet Ofelia Zepeda of American Indian Studies program, and is co-sponsored by the American Indian Language Development Institute, the Institute of the Environment, the Southwest Center, the Confluencenter, and the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS
February 12: Sherwin Bitsui, author of Flood Song, Shapeshift, and other works.
February 26: Simon J. Ortiz, author of Going for the Rain, Woven Stone, and other works.
March 12: Ofelia Zepeda, author of Ocean Power, Where Clouds are Formed, and other works.
April 2: Natalie Diaz, author of When My Brother Was an Aztec and other works.
All readings are held at 7:00pm at the University of Arizona Poetry Center, 1508 E. Helen Street. The readings are free and open to the public.

The University of Arizona Poetry Center is housed in one of three landmark buildings for poetry in the nation. In addition to its world-renowned collection of contemporary poetry, the Poetry Center is known for its long running readings and lecture series, international symposia, classes and workshops, writers’ residencies, and a wide range of programs for children and youth. For more information, please visit poetry.arizona.edu or call (520) 626-3765.