



Western University
INDIGENOUS STUDIES 2412F
GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENT 2412F
Indigenous Health and Healthcare Environments
Fall 2024

Instructor: Vanessa Ambtman-Smith, PhD Candidate, Assistant Professor, Department of Geography & Environment and Assistant Professor, Indigenous Studies Program

Office Hours: Tuesdays 12pm -1:00pm via zoom or by appointment

Email: vambtman@uwo.ca

I take this opportunity to welcome students to the traditional lands of the Anishinaabek (Ah-nish-in-a-bek), Haudenosaunee (Ho-den-no-show-nee), Lūnaapéewak (Len-ahpay-wuk) and Attawandaron (Add-a-won-da-run) peoples, on lands connected with the London Township and Sombra Treaties of 1796 and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum. This land continues to be home to diverse Indigenous peoples (e.g., First Nations, Métis and Inuit) whom we recognize as contemporary stewards of the land and vital contributors of our society.

Course Description:

The health of Indigenous people - individuals, families, populations, and communities, are deeply affected by colonization and other distal, Indigenous determinants of health, including structural ones that have become embedded within places and spaces of health, such as hospitals. This course provides historic and conceptual foundations for understanding contemporary Indigenous health through the lens of colonial disruption and dispossession, situating contexts of health and healthcare environments as important places of reconciliation. In this course, you will have the opportunity to develop an understanding of spatial practice and policy through exploring concepts from multiple perspectives on Indigenous health – from professional/ clinical perspectives to people/patients, and inclusive of traditional knowledge keepers/ Elders. The focus will be on spatially examining spaces of Indigenous health practice and policy grounded in decolonizing, critical theory. Themes and concepts in Indigenous health geography are examined as they relate to creating equitable spaces, practice and policy. This course enhances learners' awareness about critical thinking skills through course readings and discussions related to case studies in various learning activities, as well as through personal reflection.

Prerequisite(s): None.

Antirequisites(s): None.

Required Text(s):

Greenwood, M., Leeuw, D. S., Stout, R., Larstone, R., & Sutherland, J. (2023). *Introduction to determinants of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples' Health in Canada*. Canadian Scholars.

Course Objectives:

This course informs an understanding of determinants of health for Indigenous peoples in Ontario, Canada, and in international contexts. The course will provide a foundation to help recognize, distinguish, and respect the diversity of Indigenous nations and the evolving nature of culturally specific and individually appropriate healthcare practices with a goal of achieving healthcare equity. Readings, lectures, and other class activities will contextualize processes of reconciliation to address and redress historical and ongoing acts of systemic colonialism against Indigenous peoples. Ultimately, this course reflects on cultural bias and how it may shape personal, professional, and interprofessional beliefs that negatively affect the lives of Indigenous peoples.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

- Critically appraise Indigenous health practices and research.
- Compare and contrast processes of colonization and reconciliation in healthcare.
- Recognize and respect core concepts and approaches to cultural safety and equity in healthcare environments.
- Advocate for equitable healthcare for Indigenous peoples.
- Assess Indigenous health related research that is used to inform policy and healthcare practices.

Method of Evaluation: Evaluation Breakdown:

More information about the assessments will be provided in class and posted to the class site on OWL.

Course Assessments that Require Supporting Documentation Instructors are permitted to designate one assessment per course per term as requiring supporting documentation to receive academic consideration. For this course the following assessment has been designated as requiring supporting documentation: **Final project: Meaning Making/ Essay Assignment, due 11:55pm EST, Dec. 6th, 2024.**

Evaluation components	Assignment Schedule	Value
<p>In-class discussion activities and reflections: There are six discussion activities embedded in this course to promote respectful sharing and discussion of content where you will engage in discussion with your peers, contribute your own ideas, reflections, and questions. At the end of the week, you will submit a written reflection based on the weeks' topic and discussion. Please note that because the submission deadline for this assessment - in-class discussion - already includes flexibility in the form of a 48-hour submission window, the instructor reserves the right to deny academic consideration for assignments which are submitted following the end of the period of flexibility.</p>	<p>In-class discussion activities will occur in-person (weeks 2,4,6,8,10); due end of day Thursdays.</p>	<p>4 activities valued at 5% = 20% (you can drop the lowest scored one)</p>

<p>Proposal: for the final ‘Meaning Making’ assignment: You have a choice to demonstrate understanding of course content. For this you can choose between two options (see below). For either option, you will need to submit a proposal, either in written format (max. 300 words) or video, that addresses the following: a) what topics you will cover in your final project; b) what will the result of your project be (original art piece, graphic novel, poetry, final essay, etc.); and c) Why are you choosing to do this?</p>	<p>Proposal due (video or written format) end of Week 3 (Sept. 27)</p>	<p>5%</p>
<p>Oral Presentation: Students are to choose a contemporary Indigenous health/healing place and present for 5 minutes on this site to the class, identifying the approaches to healthcare, location, population served and defining characteristics. You may choose to pre-record your presentation to have played in class, or you may choose to deliver live, in-person. Please note that this assessment is considered to be central to the learning objectives for this course. Accordingly, students seeking academic consideration for this assessment will be required to provide formal supporting documentation. Students who are granted academic consideration for this assessment will be provided with the following opportunity to make up this work: [alternate presentation format – pre-recorded presentation is acceptable].</p>	<p>Present in-class on Week 6 (Oct 23)</p>	<p>15%</p>
<p>Story-telling assignment: Stories are powerful, compelling, and cultural ways of sharing information and effective ways of challenging public opinion on complex issues (Pappas 2021). This assignment asks students to write a story (700-800 words not including references) about a topic relevant to this course, do basic research and seek to bridge difference in opinion about this topic. How you choose to present this information is open (poster with captions; 700-800-word op-ed or news article; video, art piece with captions, pre-recorded class presentation with PowerPoint, or webpage format). Please note that this assessment is considered to be central to the learning objectives for this course. Accordingly, students seeking academic consideration for this assessment will be required to provide formal supporting documentation. Students who are granted academic consideration for this assessment will be provided with the following opportunity to make up this work: [alternate presentation format – self-recorded presentation is acceptable].</p>	<p>Story-telling assignment due end of Week 9 (Nov 13)</p>	<p>20%</p>
<p>Final project: Meaning Making/ Essay Assignment: Your final project in the course is your choice: wither a meaning making assignment or traditional essay. I encourage you to demonstrate learning in a way that is self-expressive, immersive, and meaningful. Choose your own topic and approach – based on your proposal in Week 3 and build on skills learned in and outside the classroom. The goal is to bring your unique perspective and lived experience to course content. If you choose to do a different format than a conventional written essay, I require a 3-page written reflection on what you have learned from completing the project to accompany your completed work (or images of your</p>	<p>Final project due end of Week 12 (Dec 4)</p>	<p>40%</p>

completed work), as well as a biography of sources used (minimum of 5 unique sources beyond the required text/ course material). For essay formats, papers are to be 2500 words in length based on your examination of a topic relevant to the course. The paper should demonstrate critical engagement with the course material and the core content of the paper should be both problem analysis and critical reflection. You must show a minimum of 3-5 scholarly sources beyond course material and follow a well-organized and clearly written paper.		
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Grade Breakdown	Explanation
90-100	Excellent. You have surpassed my expectations (rare).
80-89	Very good. You have fulfilled my expectations.
70-79	Good. Expectations are mostly fulfilled with weak areas.
60-69	Satisfactory. There are problems such as confusing writing or expectations are not fulfilled.
50-59	Less than satisfactory. There are major problems.
<50	Unsatisfactory, Fail.

This course is designated as in person, meaning we will meet every week for class time. This will provide the opportunity for us to interact, share ideas, and learn from one another as a community. This critical exchange of ideas is an integral part of learning. Although Zoom instruction can be offered, utilizing this resource should be limited to when students are unable to attend due to illness/ extreme weather. Readings and assignment information will be posted in OWL.

Academic Consideration for Course Components with Flexible Deadlines

This course has 5 in-class assignments with only 4/5 reflections counted towards your final grade. Academic consideration will not be granted for missed reflections. If students miss 1/5 reflections, the remaining 4 reflections will be used in the calculation of the final grade. If students miss greater than 2 reflections, they will receive a grade of zero on each missed reflection. This course employs flexible deadlines for assignments. The assignment deadlines can be found above in the course outline. For each assignment, students are expected to submit the assignment by the deadline listed. Should illness or extenuating circumstances arise, students are permitted to submit their assignment up to 72 hours past the deadline without academic penalty. Should students submit their assessment beyond 72 hours past the deadline, a late penalty of 4% per day will be subtracted from the assessed grade. As flexible deadlines are used in this course, requests for academic consideration will not be granted, with the exception of the final project. If you have a long-term academic consideration or an accommodation for disability that allows greater flexibility than provided here, please reach out to your instructor at least one week prior to the posted deadline.

How to Contact Me:

You may contact me by email: Prof. Van Smith: vambtman@uwo.ca - but it may take up to 24 hours for a response on weekdays (e.g., Monday – Friday) or up to 48 hours for a response on weekends (e.g., Saturday – Sunday and stat holidays). If I cannot provide an immediate response, or if the matter is something that requires more time for discussion, I will direct you to meet with me during office hours, or via zoom. Please ensure that your emails are worded professionally and include the course number in the subject line (2412F).

Office Hours: Tuesdays 12pm -1:00pm or by appointment

Topic: Vanessa Ambtman Smith's Office Hours

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://westernuniversity.zoom.us/j/97488745606?pwd=YvEgZeFzWAa62btdreYffNUwLuku8E.1>

Meeting ID: 974 8874 5606

Passcode: 737856

Email: vambtman@uwo.ca

Important Policies***Policies for Assignment Deadlines:***

All written assignments are to be submitted electronically to the instructor and are due on or before the date and time specified under “methods of evaluation” for each assignment. Extension of deadlines or alternate dates for tests will be granted only for documented illness or compassionate reasons. Workloads (i.e., other class work, projects, readings, employment) do not count as a reasonable excuse. Late submissions will be penalized at a rate of 5% per day, including papers submitted after a specified time. If your assignment is submitted 5 days or more past the due date without sufficient grounds for lateness as specified above, it will be marked purely for your educational benefit. Your mark will not count towards your final grade for the course.

All course material will be posted to OWL Brightspace: <https://westernu.brightspace.com/>. If students need assistance with OWL Brightspace, they can seek support on the [OWL Brightspace Help](#) page. Alternatively, they can contact the [Western Technology Services Helpdesk](#) online or by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800 for technical support. Current versions of all popular browsers (e.g., Safari, Chrome, Edge, Firefox) are supported with OWL Brightspace; what is most important is that you update your browser frequently to ensure it is current. All JavaScript and cookies should be enabled.

Should you have a concern regarding the grade you received for an assignment, you must wait 24 hours from the receipt of the grade (on Brightspace) to contact the instructor. In doing so, please make an appointment and prepare in writing, with evidence, why you feel your grade is inappropriate. Please be aware that in requesting a grade reassessment, your grade could go up/down/or stay the same. Note that calculations errors (which do occur!) should be brought to my attention immediately.

Contingency plan for an in-person class pivoting to 100% online learning. In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away from face-to-face