



INDIGENOUS STUDIES 2218G
Contemporary Indigenous Issues
COURSE OUTLINE
Winter 2023

Version date: December 12, 2022

Instructor: Dr. Kelly Linton (she/her)

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Credit value: 0.5 credit

Mode of Delivery: In-person Wednesdays 1:30-4:30 PM in SEB 2200 (and via Zoom, synchronous)

Office Hours: Wednesdays from 12:00-1:00 or by appointment

Location: Indigenous Studies Office Boardroom – Room 3207

Antirequisites: The former Anthropology 2218F/G

Prerequisites: None

Western University is located on the traditional grounds of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Chonnonton 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 whom we recognize as contemporary stewards of the land and we are thankful for the opportunity to teach and learn here.

Course Description:

This course offers an exploration of the complexities of contemporary Indigenous issues in the Canadian context including: language revitalization, Indigenous feminism, health and environment, Indigenous activism, and selfgovernance. With an emphasis on readings and understandings from Indigenous perspectives, this course seeks to illuminate both the challenges and resurgence experienced by Indigenous Peoples in Canada with particular attention to the distinctions between Western perspectives and Indigenous Knowledges. Topics may include, but will not be limited to: political mobilization, legal challenges, jurisdictional authorities, self-determination, land rights, treaty relationships, examination of significant policy documents, Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

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 is offered, utilizing this resource should be limited to when students are unable to attend due to illness. Readings and assignment information will be posted in OWL.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Apply critical thinking and analytical skills to representations of contemporary First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples and issues.
2. Understand the genesis of the contemporary issues and challenges faced by Indigenous peoples in Canada.
3. Critically reflect on colonization as an ongoing process that continues to shape contemporary Indigenous issues.
4. Identify Indigenous pedagogy and the importance of Indigenous Studies conducted with, by, and for First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples.
5. Identify critical social issues facing First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples in Canada.
6. Recognize the unique contributions of Indigenous science.
7. Critically reflect on the participation and contribution of Indigenous Peoples in contemporary Canadian society and the resurgence of Indigenous cultures, languages and knowledges that continue to grow despite the various forms of political, social, and economic violence that persist in Canadian society.

Course Materials:

Leanne Betasamosake Simpson. (2011). *Dancing On Our Turtle's Back : Stories of Nishnaabeg Re-Creation, Resurgence, and a New Emergence*. Arbeiter Ring Publishing.

The course text is available online via [Western's Library](#).

Additional readings will be made available for download through the Course Readings tool on the course's OWL site. *Registered students will be able to access additional course readings through the course site in OWL before the first day of class.*

Evaluation:

- In-Class Discussion Activities – 15%
- Meaning Making Assignment Proposal – 5%
- Story-Telling Assignment – 20%
- Biography Assignment – 20%
- Meaning Making Project – 40%

In-Class Discussion Activities

4 Activities worth 5% each, drop lowest 1, total 15%

There are four Discussion Activities embedded in this course that serve as opportunities to engage with course content, see the thoughts and opinions of your peers, contribute your own questions or ideas, and reflect on course concepts. Discussion activities will occur in-person on Wednesdays in Weeks 3, 5, 7, and 10. Students

will submit paper documentation of their discussion experience by 11:59 PM on the Friday after the discussion. Additional details for each discussion activity will be discussed in class and posted on the course OWL site.

Note: Discussion Activities are not accepted following the deadline given that each one is relevant to its own week. If you miss a deadline, you will not be able to complete that activity. However the lowest discussion activity mark is dropped, allowing students to miss one without penalty.

Meaning Making Assignment Proposal - 5%

You have a choice about how you demonstrate understanding of the course content. For the final project in this class you can:

Propose a project that draws on skills you have developed both in and out of the classroom, and which demonstrates what you have learned during the term. You could: create a textile project (quilting, embroidery, knitting); create a website; write a short graphic novel; make a music video; create a 3D map - the sky is the limit, all of your ideas are welcome! I want you to bring your unique perspective and lived experience to the course content. You will also turn in a 3 page written reflection on what you have learned from completing the project (plus images of your completed work), as well as a bibliography of sources used. More information about the assignment will be available in OWL.

OR

You can hand in a final research essay (2000-2500 words) based on your exploration of a topic relevant to the course. Your papers should demonstrate critical engagement with the course material and the core content of the paper should include both problem analysis and critical reflection. The research paper should be well organized, clearly written, and persuasively argued. Students must include a minimum of 5 scholarly sources beyond the course materials.

For either option, you will need to submit a proposal, due Friday January 27th (either in written form or via video) that addresses the following:

1. What topics you will cover in your final project.
2. What the end result of your project will be (a quilt, graphic novel, sculpture, final paper, etc.).

Story-Telling Assignment – 20%

Stories are powerful. Recent research has shown that stories are more effective than facts at changing peoples' opinions on complex public issues (Pappas 2021). For this assignment, students will choose a topic of relevance to the course, conduct some basic research, and then write a story (700-800 words) in an attempt to bring light to a contemporary Indigenous issue in Canada. Your story will bridge difference through an appreciation of diversity and attempt to show how change can happen when we have learned to work together on projects of shared interest and social significance. The Story-telling assignment is due Friday February 17th at 11:59 PM EDT. Detailed assignment information will be provided in the course OWL site and discussed in class.

Biography Assignment – 20%

Students will choose a contemporary Indigenous person (from Canada) and complete a short biography. How they choose to present the biography will be open. Some ideas would be a short written piece (500 word op-ed or mock news article format), a poster with captions, a video, a class presentation, or the creation of a webpage. If you choose a presentation format, please let me know ahead of time so that I can schedule it during our class

discussion. Your biography assignment is due Friday March 17th at 11:59 PM EDT. Detailed assignment information will be provided in the course OWL site and discussed in class.

Meaning Making Project - 40%

Your final project in the course (meaning making assignment or traditional essay) is worth 40% of your final grade and is due Monday April 10th at 11:59 PM PST. I encourage you to use the meaning making project as a way to demonstrate learning in a way that is self-expressive, immersive and meaningful. Choose your own topic, present it in any way that you please, and be evaluated on how compelling and effective you are. You must associate your topic and expression to the course content. Detailed assignment information will be provided in the course OWL site and discussed in class.

Weekly Schedule:

Week 1: January 11th – Introduction to the Course and Creating Community

Week 2: January 18th – Contemporary Challenges

Week 3: January 25th – What is Decolonization?

Week 4: February 1st – Gendered Violence and Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in Canada

Week 5: February 8th – Indigenous Feminisms

Week 6: February 15th – Zoom class Guest Lecture (TBA)

February 18th-26th – Reading Week

Week 7: March 1st – Children and Families

Week 8: March 8th – Environment and Health

Week 9: March 15th – Water

Week 10: March 22nd – Language Revitalization

Week 11: March 29th – Empowerment and Activism

Week 12: April 5th – Self-Determination and Indigenous Governance

Academic Policies and Procedures

Course Specific Conditions Required to Pass this Course

In order to pass an essay course, the student must exhibit some minimal level of competence in essay writing and the appropriate level of knowledge of the content of the course.

In order to pass *this* essay course, students must submit both writing assignments (Story and Meaning Making Project) and receive a passing grade on at least one of them. Note that you must write a minimum of 2500 words at the 2000-level to meet the requirement for an essay-designated course.

Course Specific Statements and Policies:

Course Structure and Philosophy

This course is in-person. Our class meetings are set for Wednesdays from 1:30-4:30 PM. I have created separate lesson pages for each week of the course OWL site. Lessons for each week will be made available on Sundays at midnight EDT. All required information for the week including links to readings, assignment instructions, etc., will be accessible through the weekly lesson page.

My approach to teaching and learning is based on a commitment to collaboration, engagement, and relationship building. I hope to inspire critical thinking and the ability to ask good questions. I will do my best to support you by providing useful feedback, answers to questions, and relevant examples. I look forward to your curiosity and engagement, as well as to receiving your feedback so that we can navigate the material together.

Commitment to equity, human rights, and respect for diversity:

All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect where all members of our community can express themselves, engage with each other, and respect one another's differences.

Statement on Email

You may contact me by email, but it may take up to 24 hours for a response (48 hours on weekends). If I cannot provide an immediate response, or if the matter is something we cannot address quickly, we will direct you to meet with me during office hours or through Zoom. Please ensure that your emails are worded professionally and include the course number (2218G) in the subject line.

Statement on Student Success

If you need support with your academic writing skills, please visit the [Writing Support Centre](#) in person or online. The Centre aims to (1) enhance your writing and communication skills and build your confidence, (2) equip you with tools, resources and knowledge to effectively communicate through writing, (3) increase your critical analysis abilities to effectively communicate scholarly ideas, (4) convey university level writing expectations, and (5) provide you with the skills you need to navigate academic transitions.

The staff at [Learning Skills Services](#) support your development as an excellent student by answering your questions and providing advice on how to succeed in your studies at Western. They can help you to develop new skills or strengthen existing academic skills. You can make an individual appointment with a learning skills counsellor, attend learning skills presentations, drop by the Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) Centre, or receive helpful information via e-mail. Information on important learning skills topics is also available online.

Visit the [Wellness Education Centre](#) if you need support in navigating any kind of mental health issue (e.g., anxiety, stress, etc.) WEC provides free assistance in connecting you with wellness services and resources on and off campus.

Indigenous Student Centre (ISC), is a resource available to Indigenous students through services that honour Indigenous cultures and languages, foster Indigenous presence and inclusion, and increase Indigenous access, engage Indigenous communities, and facilitate transition, retention, graduation and advancement of Indigenous students at Western. ([Indigenous Student Centre](#))

Statement on Seeking Special Accommodations:

Submission target date and grace period: For each assignment there will be a target date for submission (which will be on a Friday evening before midnight) and then a 48-hour grace period (ending on Sunday night before midnight) within which assignments can be submitted. While OWL will indicate the assignment is late if it is submitted past the Friday night date, you will not be penalized for submitting during the grace period. While some students prefer a Friday deadline so they can do other activities on the weekend, others may feel they need the weekend to complete their assignments. This submission window gives you an opportunity to manage your time and various commitments in the way that works best for you.

Late days bank: In addition to the grace period, each student can access a “late bank” of 5 extra days in total (for the semester, not each assignment), to submit their assignments past the end of the grace period. This gives students an opportunity to submit work late when they need to do so, without having to provide any documentation or any explanation. You just have to email me prior to the end of the Sunday 11:59 PM grace period to claim days from the late days bank so I know your assignment is coming.

No accommodations will be granted retroactively and assignments submitted after the deadline or beyond the late bank allotment will be assigned a late penalty of 10%/day. Please see your academic counsellor immediately if you will be seeking accommodations based on medical or compassionate grounds.

Accessibility:

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 519 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation.

Student Services: Students with disabilities or requiring accommodations are advised to contact [Student Accessibility Services \(SAS\)](#) as soon as possible in accordance with the Policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disability. Students with pre-existing accessibility plans arranged through SAS may not need to provide additional documentation when seeking academic consideration where such request for consideration relates to their disability and where their accessibility plans allow for coursework deferral or deadline extensions.

Students with academic or exam stress should access supports through [Student Health and Wellness and Learning Development & Success](#) in order to deal with this stress in a proactive and constructive manner.

Statement on Plagiarism:

Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing. It is also a scholastic offence to submit the same work for credit in more than one course. Plagiarism is a major scholastic offence.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (www.turnitin.com).

Institutional Statements and Policies

All students should familiarize themselves with Western's current academic policies regarding accessibility, plagiarism and scholastic offences, and medical accommodation. These policies are outlined in Western's academic policies using this link: [Western's academic policies](#).

