

# INDIGENOUS STUDIES 2251G: Indigenous Health and Healthcare Environments

(Winter 2024) – *Special Topics*

Short Title: Indigenous Healthcare Spaces

**Class Location: WLL 0220 (the Wampum Learning Lodge Classroom)**

**Tuesdays, January - April 2024**

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

Office Hours: Monday's 12pm -1:00pm via zoom

Email: [vambtman@uwo.ca](mailto: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.

**Antirequisite(s):** None.

**Please note:** In Winter 2024, this course is taught as a special topics course through the Indigenous Studies program; the course is currently standing before senate approval as a curricular addition to be added to cross-listed as an integrated course in the department of Geography and Environment and with the Indigenous Studies Program as GEOG 2412 F/G.

### **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.

### **Course 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.

### **Anticipated Grading Structure**

#### **Method of Evaluation: Evaluation Breakdown:**

More information about the assessments will be provided in class and posted to the class site on OWL. All written assignments must be submitted independently and contain unique content from other learners in the course.

<b>Evaluation components</b>	<b>Assignment Schedule</b>	<b>Value</b>
<b>In-class discussion activities and reflections:</b> 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.	In-class discussion activities will occur in-person	5 activities valued at 5% = 20%

		(you can drop the lowest scored one)
<b>Proposal: for the final ‘Meaning Making’ assignment:</b> 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? Why does it matter to you.	Proposal due (video or written format) end of <b>Week 4</b>	5%
<b>Oral Presentation:</b> 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.	Story due end of <b>Week 7</b>	15%
<b>Story-telling assignment:</b> 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).	Oral presentation due in class for <b>Week 10</b>	20%
<b>Final project: Meaning Making/ Essay Assignment:</b> 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 4 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 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	Final project due end of <b>Week 12</b>	40%

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 5 scholarly sources beyond course material and follow a well-organized and clearly written paper.			
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. Readings and assignment information will be posted in OWL.			

Required course text:

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. Langara College.