

Department of English, Western University
English 9108
Indigenous Critical Theory: Key Concepts and Debates
Fall 2014 and Winter 2015

Contact Information:

Instructor: Dr. Pauline Wakeham

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Class Meetings: Tuesdays from 3:30 – 6:20 p.m. in University College 377

Office Hours: Tuesdays from 12:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Course Description:

In her groundbreaking work, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*

Course Materials:

- Electronic copies of all readings are available on a USB key in Leanne Trask's office

Assignments:**Fall Semester:**

- One 30-40-minute seminar presentation and subsequent leading of class discussion. **[15% of final grade]**
- One conference paper proposal (maximum of 500 words). **[5% of final grade] Due November 6th, 2014**
- One 9-page (double-spaced) conference paper. **[20%] Due December 19th, 2014**
- Participation in class discussion (please see guidelines described below). **[10% of final grade]**

Note: For students who may be nervous about participation in class discussion and/or who wish to receive feedback on their writing and critical thinking skills earlier in the first semester, students may opt to split their fall participation grade into 5% for general participation and 5% for one 2-3 page response paper to a week's assigned readings. Students may choose the particular week of readings that they wish to write their response paper for, but the week must not coincide with the date of their seminar presentation. For further information, please see guidelines for participation and response papers below.

Winter Semester:

- Participation in class discussion. **[10% of final grade]**
- One 30-40 minute seminar presentation and subsequent leading of class discussion. **[15% of final grade]**
- One original research paper **[25% of final grade]**

Note: For this final assignment, students may opt to write a new research paper of approximately 20 pages in length OR to revise their conference paper into a journal article of 24-25 pages in length. If students opt for the latter, their assignment must include a 250-word abstract that accompanies the article as well as a one-paragraph rationale discussing the "fit" between their work and the peer-reviewed

- The quality of a student's contributions is more

- Students are allowed to consider a creative dimension for their seminar presentation. If students wish to use this option, however, they must meet with the Professor and obtain approval for their specific ideas at least two weeks in advance of their presentation.

Conference Proposals and Papers

- Because this is a full-year course, we have the wonderful opportunity to consider a greater variety of assignments than what may be included in typical graduate seminar fare. Additionally, we have time to consider how to combine our intellectual ideas with the honing of professional academic skills, including the writing of conference paper proposals and presentations. The guidelines below offer some important considerations for these modes of sharing intellectual work. Further discussion of these genres will also be provided in class.

- **Conference paper proposals** should not exceed 500 words. The task of introducing a topic and then specifying your argument in such a concise amount of words is a fine art. This assignment will help provide students with skills and experience in negotiating this academic genre.

- The proposal should include the following:

a.) A title that is specific enough to provide readers with key terms, texts, and/or contexts discussed in the paper.

b.) A succinct introduction to the topic that tells readers about what time period and geopolitical and cultural locations your paper addresses and the research questions or key concepts that your analysis takes up.

c.) A brief mention of your methodological approach and why/how it is important and useful.

d.) A clear and compelling articulation of what your hypothesis is (i.e. what you hope to argue or demonstrate in your paper).

- **Conference Papers** should be no longer than 9 double-spaced pages (which typically amounts to 20 minutes of reading time).

- The paper should include the following:

a.) An engaging introduction that provides the listener with the key coordinates necessary for understanding and appreciating your argument: the time period, geopolitical and cultural contexts, and research questions or key concepts for your paper.

b.) A recognition of existing scholarship on the topic and a delineation of how your paper intervenes in and/or extends current debates.

c.) A clear and compelling argument that is outlined toward the beginning of the paper and then further developed and supported throughout.

d.) Effective “sign-posting” or techniques for providing the listener with a map of where your paper is going and how you are getting there.

e.) Methods of engaging a listening audience. Conference papers are typically written with a view to effective oral communication. As a result, very long sentences that might be effective in written essays should be broken down into multiple sentences. Oral cues can also be included to provide readers with “signposts” or a.958863(e)317(s)-1.7465(t)-2.537 0 Td [(p)-0.956417(i)-2.53658(9(p)-0.9.7

- Extensions will be granted only with medical certification or under other extenuating circumstances and should, when possible, be arranged with the Professor in advance.
- All assignments should be submitted on 8.5 x 11" paper, with 1" margins, double spaced, and in a 12-point font (preferably Times New Roman). The title page should include the following information: the title of the essay, your name, the course number, and the date.
- Please retain one hard copy and one electronic version of each essay you submit in this class. As well, please retain all returned, marked assignments until you receive your final grade for the course.
- All bibliographic notation should follow the MLA method of parenthetical citation and essays should be accompanied with a Works Cited page.

Academic Offences

- Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf
- It is crucial that students create all assignments (both written and oral) using their own ideas and their own words. If a writer uses a concept, id

Audra Simpson and Andrea Smith, “Introduction” to *Theorizing Native Studies* (the complete chapter is included, but students are only required to read from pages 1-12)

Sherman Alexie, “How to Write the Great American Indian Novel”

Marvin Francis, “BNA Actor”

Supplementary: For students who are not familiar with the history of Indigenous peoples in Canada as well as the history of colonialism in this region, a PDF file of Jo-Ann Episkenew’s chapter “Policies of Devastation” from *Taking Back Our Spirits: Indigenous Literature, Public Policy, and Healing* is available on the USB key. I am also happy to recommend additional sources upon request.

September 18: Settler Colonialism

Patrick Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native”

Lorenzo Veracini, “Introduction: The Settler Colonial Situation”

Eden Robinson, “Terminal Avenue”

September 25: Settler Colonialism’s Social Contexts in Canada Since 1990, Part I

Alanis Obomsawin, *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance* (available for viewing in UC’s film library as well as through the Weldon library catalogue’s link to NFB access)

Ellen Gabriel, “Epilogue: Fraudulent Theft of Mohawk Land by the Municipality of Oka”

Peter H. Russell, “Oka to Ipperwash: The Necessity of Flashpoint Events”

October 2: Sovereignty

Laurelyn Whitt, “Transforming Sovereignties”

Jessica R. Catellino, “Sovereign Interdependencies”

Thomas King, “Borders”

Supplementary: For a clear and helpful summation of key debates regarding Indigenous sovereignty, please read the preface and dialogue on “Understanding Aboriginal Sovereignty” from *Philosophy and Aboriginal Rights* scanned as a single PDF file)

October 9: Indigenous Identity and Recognition in Contemporary Settler States

Glen Coulthard, “Subjects of Empire: Indigenous Peoples and the Politics of Recognition in Colonial Contexts”

Andrea Smith, “Native Studies at the Horizon of Death: Theorizing Ethnographic Entrapment and Settler Self-Reflexivity”

October 16: Settler Colonialism’s Social Contexts in Canada Since 1990, Part II

Alanis Obomsawin, *The People of the Kattawapiskak River* (available for viewing in UC’s film library as well as through the Weldon library catalogue’s link to NFB access)

Jennifer Henderson, “Transparency, Spectatorship, Accountability: Indigenous Families in Settler-State ‘Postdemocracies’”

Leanne Simpson, “A Love Song for Attawapiskat” (Please listen to the audio version of this poem online at <http://www.arpbooks.com/islands>)

October 23: Economies of Abandonment in Late Liberalism

Ursula LeGuin, “The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas”

Elizabeth Povinelli, "Introduction: The Child in the Broom Closet" (the complete chapter is provided, but students are only required to read fr

Qwo-Li Driskill, “Doubleweaving Two-Spirit Critiques: Building Alliances between Native and Queer Studies”

Kent Monkman’s art: view the images on the powerpoint slide and visit kentmonkman.com

Winter Semester 2015 (Schedule still subject to change)

Unit 3: Theory and/as Critical Practice

Building on the critical foundations established in the fall semester, our course now turns

March 26: Troubling Tricksters

Kristina Fagan, "What's the Trouble with the Trickster? An Introduction"

Margery Fee, "The Trickster Moment, Cultural Appropriation, and the Liberal Imagination in Canada"

Lenore Keeshig-Tobias, "Trickster Beyond 1992: Our Relationship"

April 2: Storytelling, Orality, and Cinema

Zacharias Kunuk, dir. *Atanarjuat, The Fast Runner* (this film should be viewed prior to class at: <http://www.isuma.tv/atanarjuat>)

Sophie McCall, "'I Can Only Sing this Song to Someone Who Understands It': Community Filmmaking and the Politics of Partial Translation"