

The University of Western Ontario
Centre for the Study of Theory and Criticism and Department of English
Theory 9617A / English 9163A

Contact Information:

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Class Meetings: Thursdays from 9:30 a.m. – 12:20 p.m. in Somerville House Room 2348

Office Hours: Tuesdays from 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. and Thursdays from 2:45 – 3:45 p.m.

Course Description:

In her groundbreaking work, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith considers the historical forces and power asymmetries that have created a hegemonic intellectual “text world in which the centre of [...] knowledge is either in Britain, the United States, or Western Europe” (Smith 35) and, moreover, where theory is naturalized as the invention and provenance of the West. And yet, at the core of much Western thought, Indigeneity constitutes the sometimes repressed and sometimes overt catalyst for theorization—the figure of radical alterity, the bearer of “the gift,” the carrier of knowledge to be colonized for the West’s own self-reinvention. This graduate seminar is premised upon the urgent need to do more than re-trace the spectres of Indigeneity in Western thought or examine the West’s unacknowledged appropriation of Indigenous intellectual cultures. Instead, the course will challenge the limits of academic theory’s traditional “text world” by engaging with the transdisciplinary field of contemporary Indigenous thought, a field in which Indigenous peoples are the agents, instead of the objects, of theory. In so doing, the course will lay a critical foundation for understanding key concepts and debates in the field of Indigenous studies.

In this context, the course will grapple with the following questions: How might we engage with Indigenous theory beyond paradigms of “writing back” or “theorizing back” against Empire? How are Indigenous thinkers theorizing forms of intellectual and cultural resurgence focused upon their own languages, practices, and intellectual traditions? What is the relation between theory and practice? How might theory be mobilized to better address Indigenous rights and social justice? How do a range of Indigenous cultural practices constitute forms of theorizing and how might we read them for their theoretical innovations? In exploring these and other questions, the course will consider how both thinking Indigeneity and Indigenous thinking enable nothing less than the decolonization of questions of identity, subjectivity, temporality, sovereignty, citizenship, and power. While the emphasis will be on Indigenous thought and cultural production in Canada and the United States, the course will also consider broader global concerns and contexts.

Course Texts:

All readings are available online (where URLs are provided) or as PDF documents.

Assignments:

- Two 4-page (double-spaced) response papers. **[10% of final grade]**
- One seminar presentation (30 minutes max.) and subsequent leading of class discussion (15 minutes). **[35% of final grade]**
- One research paper, 18-20 pages in length. **[45% of final grade]**
- A mark will also be assigned for overall class participation (which includes attendance, insightful engagement with course readings, attentiveness to the comments of other class participants, and thoughtful and collegial contributions to class discussions). **[10% of final grade]**

Guidelines for Class Participation:

- The participation grade for the semester will take into account attendance and attentiveness in class meetings, evidence of preparedness for class (i.e. demonstrated detailed engagement with the readings, questions about readings brought to class), as well as the quality of verbal contributions to class discussion.
- Students should have carefully read and thoughtfully engaged with the assigned readings prior to class.
- At the graduate level, students are encouraged to assume the stance of professional learners—ones who have the critical maturity to be open to broadening their intellectual horizons and to engaging with a diverse range of scholarship across multiple disciplines.
- Effective participation in a graduate course involves being open to asking questions about things one doesn't understand, thoughtfully engaging with the course readings, remaining attentive to the comments of other class participants, and debating ideas with respect and sensitivity to both the subject matter and all participants in the discussion.
- The quality of a student's contributions is more important than sheer quantity, though speaking regularly in class is a goal to work towards. At the same time, effective participation in a seminar course also, in certain cases, means learning when one has contributed enough to a particular discussion and providing opportunities for others to share their thoughts.

Guidelines for Response Papers:

- Over the course of the semester, students are required to write **two** 4-page response papers to the assigned readings for the week.
- Students are able to choose which weeks they would like to submit their response papers. Please note, however, that students are not eligible to submit a written response paper on the readings for which they have agreed to present a seminar.
- Response papers should be submitted via email (as Microsoft Word or RTF attachments) to pwakeham@uwo.ca no later than **24 hours** prior to the weekly class (i.e. by **9:30 a.m. on Wednesday mornings**). Response papers for the assigned readings for the week will not be accepted after this deadline.
- The goal for these papers is not to offer a comprehensive summary of all the points expounded in the readings. Instead, the responses should succinctly outline the main argument of each assigned reading for the week (where applicable) and then proceed to critically analyze the texts and draw connections or reflect on points of divergence between them. In this sense, the goal is

to put the assigned readings for the week together in critical conversation. Students might also wish to raise a question or two for further thought or discussion.

Guidelines for Seminar Presentations:

- Seminar presentations should succinctly and briefly outline the arguments developed in the critical essays and analyze key themes and strategies of the readings assigned for the day. A strong presentation, however, should go much further than merely rehearsing the articles' arguments or the plot and structures of a cultural text. Seminar presentations should engage thoughtfully and critically with the readings, analyzing the connections and points of divergence between the texts as well as reflecting upon the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments.
- In other words, a seminar presentation should have an argument—a nuanced and thoughtful analytic position on the readings/cultural texts assigned for the week. Linking the readings to previous texts studied in the course and/or previous class discussions is also a useful strategy.
- Presentations should also consider how the arguments expounded in the readings could be developed further and, most importantly, how the texts relate to the broader questions under investigation throughout this course. Lastly, presentations should conclude with at least two thoughtful and engaging questions for class discussion.
- Please also note that your presentations will be timed and should not exceed 30 minutes.
- After the presentation, the seminar presenter will also be responsible for leading the ensuing class discussion for about 15 minutes.
- Students will be asked to submit a hard copy version of their seminar presentation notes (whether they be just point form notes or a scripted paper—if you like to talk without a set script, that is certainly fine and can make for a very engaging seminar) to the Professor on the same day that their presentation is given orally.
- Please note that plagiarism rules apply to oral presentations. Oral presentations should clearly signal when a speaker is quoting someone else's words. The majority of a presentation should be offered in the speaker's own words.

Important Information Regarding Assignments:

- Any assignments submitted after the scheduled due date will be assessed a late penalty (2% per day, including weekends). Assignments (with the exception of the weekly reading responses) must be submitted in hard copy. Email and faxes will not be accepted.
- Extensions will be granted only with medical certification or under other extenuating circumstances and should, when possible, be arranged 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 website:

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, idea, or phrasing from another source, it is imperative to signal the direct borrowing of words with quotation marks and to register the borrowing of ideas and concepts via the use of explanatory footnotes and parenthetical citations (or verbal explanation in the case of seminar presentations).

Graduate Course Health and Wellness:

As part of a successful graduate student experience at Western, we encourage students to make their health and wellness a priority. Western provides several on-campus health-related services to help you achieve optimum health and engage in healthy living while pursuing your graduate degree. For example, to support physical activity, all students, as part of their registration, receive membership in Western's Campus Recreation Centre. Numerous cultural events are offered throughout the year. For example, please check out the Faculty of Music web page (<http://www.music.uwo.ca>) and our own McIntosh Gallery (<http://www.mcintoshgallery.ca/>). Information regarding health- and wellness-related services available to students may be found at <http://www.health.uwo.ca/>. Students seeking help regarding mental health concerns are advised to speak to someone they feel comfortable confiding in, such as their faculty supervisor, their program director (graduate chair), or other relevant administrators in their unit. Campus mental health resources may be found at http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/resources.html.

Schedule of Readings

Please Note: The Professor reserves the right to make minor changes to the schedule throughout the course of the academic term. Any changes will be announced in class.

September 7: Welcome and Introduction

September 14: Keywords 1: Theory

Sean Kicummah Teuton, "Introduction: Imagining an American Indian Center" from *Red Land, Red Power: Grounding Knowledge in the American Indian Novel* (Duke UP, 2008)

Audra Simpson and Andrea Smith, "Introduction" to *Theorizing Native Studies* (Duke UP, 2014)

Lee Maracle, "Oratory: Coming to Theory"

Leanne Simpson, "Please be careful when you're getting smart"

September 21: Keywords 2: Indigeneity

Kim TallBear, "Racial Science, Blood, and DNA"

Watch Kim TallBear's Keynote, "Molecular Death and Redface Reincarnation: Indigenous Appropriations in the U.S. and Canada" (talk starts around 17:30 min. at:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0ByjVyw1QZGPDZk9KS0ZPWlk3c0k/view>)

"NAISA Council Statement on Indigenous Identity Fraud" (<https://www.naisa.org/naisa-council-statement-on-indigenous-identity-fraud-2.html>)

September 28: Keywords 3: Settler Colonialism

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

J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, “‘A Structure, Not an Event’: Settler Colonialism and Enduring Indigeneity” (read here: <http://csalateral.org/issue/5-1/forum-alt-humanities-settler-colonialism-enduring-indigeneity-kauanui/>)

Emma Battell Lowman and Adam J. Barker, “Canada and Settler Colonialism”

Eden Robinson, “Terminal Avenue”

October 5: Settler Colonialism and The Colonial Politics of Recognition

Glen Coulthard, “Introduction: Subjects of Empire” and “The Politics of Recognition in Colonial Contexts” from *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (U of Minnesota P, 2014)

Audra Simpson, “Introduction” to *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States*

October 12: Class Cancelled for Fall Reading Week**October 19: Reconciliation: Recognition Politics Reboot?**

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Final Report, “Introduction” in *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future* (available here:

http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Exec_Summary_2015_05_31_web_o.pdf) and “Calls to Action” (available here:

http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf)

David Garneau, “Imaginary Spaces of Conciliation and Reconciliation”

Glen Coulthard, “Seeing Red: Reconciliation and Resentment”

October 26: Economies of Abandonment in Late Liberalism

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

Elizabeth Povinelli, “Introduction: The Child in the Broom Closet” and “Events of Abandonment” from *Economies of Abandonment: Social Belonging and Endurance in Late Liberalism* (Duke UP, 2011)

November 2: Economies of Abandonment in Canada

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.org/islands>)

November 9: Resurgence Theory

Eve Tuck and Wayne K. Yang, “Decolonization is not a Metaphor”

Glen Coulthard, “The Plunge into the Chasm of the Past: Fanon, Self-Recognition, and Decolonization”

Leanne Simpson, from *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom Through Radical Resistance*

November 16: Colonial Heteropatriarchy and Indigenous Feminisms

Audra Simpson, "Histories of Being Refused: The Indian Act in Canada"

Excerpt from *The Indian Act*

Lenore Keeshig-Tobias, "(a found poem)"

Lee Maracle, "I am Woman"

Lee Maracle, "Indigenous Women and Power"

November 23: Queer Indigenities

Mark Rifkin, Introduction to *When Did Indians Become Straight?: Kinship, the History of Sexuality, and Native Sovereignty* (Oxford UP, 2011)

Quo-Li Driskill, "Double-Weaving 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

November 30: Indigeneity, Decolonization, and Alliances beyond Regimes of Whiteness

Tiffany King, "Labor's Aphasia: Toward Antiblackness as Constitutive to Settler Colonialism"

(available here: <https://decolonization.wordpress.com/2014/06/10/labors-aphasia-toward-antiblackness-as-constitutive-to-settler-colonialism/>)

Shona Jackson, "Humanity beyond the Regime of Labor: Antiblackness, Indigeneity, and the Legacies of Colonialism in the Caribbean" (available here:

<https://decolonization.wordpress.com/2014/06/06/humanity-beyond-the-regime-of-labor-antiblackness-indigeneity-and-the-legacies-of-colonialism-in-the-caribbean/>)

Listen to The Henceforward Podcast #13 (available here:

<http://www.thehenceforward.com/episodes/2017/5/17/episode-13-a-conversation-between-dr-eve-tuck-dr-rinaldo-walcott>)