

**Centre for the Study of Theory and Criticism
Winter 2021**

COURSE TITLE: Land, Language, Locatives

COURSE NUMBER: 9203B

COURSE FORMAT: On-line, Zoom

INSTRUCTOR: Regna Darnell - WINTER 2021

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DATE AND TIME: Friday, 2:30-5:30

INTRODUCTION:

The interdisciplinary mandate of the Theory Centre arises out of the standpoints of faculty and students from multiple home disciplines who ground their common interests in widely diverse theoretical traditions that must work to attain mutual intelligibility of concepts and methods of analysis. Since 1990, my own engagement with the Centre (also with anthropology, women's studies, ecosystem health and public health) has taken a somewhat different track. Interdisciplinary in much of the academy is an uphill battle in which vested interests favour established discipline boundaries. When results of social science theory are applied in the real world, however, it is always already obvious that ideas the academy must work to integrate are in fact interconnected in everyday experience without such disjuncture. We can test our theories in praxis.

LLL addresses a current impasse in legal reasoning and practice. This is the working title of a manuscript I am assembling and framing for publication. It began with a conference here in London in 2018. The question proved more complicated than first envisioned, resulting in follow-up regional conferences in Winnipeg and Vancouver in 2019 and meetings of contributors at meetings of several academic societies including the American Anthropological Association, the American Society for Ethnohistory, the Society for Documentary Editing, and the Algonquian Conference. The seminar will engage Centre students with the process of pulling together how relationship to land, understanding of environment as a broad ecology of social and natural interactions, and specification of location widely shared across the languages and language families spoken in Canada through a variety of linguistic structures.

Persistent miscommunication between the adversary-based British common law system conducted in English and Indigenous relational systems of governance creates a double bind that constrains effective presentation of Indigenous concepts of sovereignty, personhood and community, property, self-government, and land claims to traditional territory. The recent explosion of scholarship on Indigenous law has failed to bridge this divide because expertise in

Indigenous and “Canadian” law have remained separate in practice. This divide implies that cultural sensitivity would require 630+ separate protocols for indigenous bands in Canada, obviously an unrealistic goal for the mainstream legal system; it also fails to facilitate sharing of experience in the intersection of the LLL variables across different First Nations language families.

I hypothesize that the polysynthetic (compounding) structure of traditional languages as spoken by elders and other fluent speakers cannot be translated directly into English because personhood, both individual and community, entails location in relation to land/space. Speakers are not conscious of the grammatical distinctions that cause their frustration and impede expression in English. The breakthrough is that the entailment crosses language and language family boundaries although it takes quite different surface forms. English fails to convey the literal inseparability of the self from its location in relation to land.

Cross-cultural evidence of alternative epistemologies and ontologies underlying the LLL entailment are grounded outside modernity as a product of Enlightenment thought. I argue that these alternative traditions are not incommensurable with the relational Indigenous thought-worlds of the First Nations peoples with whom my fieldwork-based research has occurred over the past five decades in Alberta, Ontario and B.C. Some familiar theorists have posed arguments that resonate well with Indigenous positions. A larger consensus of effective communication is possible if these sources of Indigenous and Western knowledge can be merged. We will attempt to build such bridges.

Many of the readings are taken from volumes in press to which I have access as a contributor or editor. We will be able to use these materials among ourselves in various drafts in order to trace the construction of an editorial project. The idea of LLL is complex and contributors to it cross disciplines. We will sample the mix and the bibliography will emerge in more detail. Depending on the number of students and their interests, students will lead class discussion for one or more sessions and explore readings for that week in more detail.

TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS:

Friday January 15	Introduction: How Discourses Intersect READINGS: Selections from Darnell on the LLL framework
Friday January 22	The Legal Quagmire READINGS: John Borrows; other selected essays
Friday January 29	The Indigenous Dilemma READINGS: Selections from Asch, Borrows, Tully, esp. Tully
Friday February 5	Rhizomes and Arbors READINGS: Selections from Deleuze and Guattari

Friday February 12	<p>Social Studies of Science READINGS: Bruno Latour</p> <p>SHORT ESSAY DUE IN CLASS Analyze the commensurability of an ethnographic text and a theoretical one covered in Readings – 30% of final mark</p>
Friday February 19	READING WEEK
Friday February 26	<p>The Political and Legal Science READINGS: Benedict Anderson, Isabelle Stengers, Michael Asch</p>
Friday March 5	<p>Fieldwork and Archive, READINGS: Hayden White, selections from <i>Metahistory</i> and essays on discourse. Claude Levi-Strauss, <i>The Way of the Masks</i>; <i>Tristes Tropiques</i>. Selections from Adrianna Link et al.</p> <p>OUTLINE OF FINAL PAPER TOPIC Due in Class - 10% of Final Mark</p>
Friday March 12	<p>Place/Space READINGS: Keith Basso, Walter Benjamin. Joseph Gone, Claude Lévi-Strauss, <i>The Way of the Masks</i>, selections from Graham et al.</p>
Friday March 19	<p>The Linguistics READINGS: Bernard Perley, Mikhail Bakhtin; selections from Darnell and Smith, eds., George Lakoff and Mark Johnson</p>
Friday March 26	<p>Narrative in oral and Written Tradition READINGS: Benjamin Selections, the storyteller Science Fiction and the Ethnographic Imagination (selections from various volumes forthcoming)</p> <p>SHORT ESSAY DUE IN CLASS – Discuss the interrelationship of the LLL Variables from the perspective of at least two disciplines, using the Readings as your starting point – 30% of Final Mark</p>
Friday April 2	GOOD FRIDAY, RESCHEDULED FOR REVIEW BY CLASS DECISION FINAL PAPER DUE April 7 – 30%
Friday 20 April	Last Possible Extension of final paper to avoid incomplete

THEORETICAL READINGS:

Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (creoles, critique of nation-state)
Mikhail Bahktin, *The Dialogic Imagination*
Walter Benjamin, *Arcades Project, The Storyteller*
Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus, Anti-Oedipus, Selections*
George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*
Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*
Isabelle Stengers, *Cosmopolitics* (selections)
Hayden White, *Metahistory, Tropics of Discourse*, essays on history as trope

ETHNOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE:

Michael Asch, *On Being Here to Stay*
Michael Asch, John Borrows and James Tully, eds., *Reconciliation and Resurgence* (selections)
Keith Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places*; selected essays
John Borrows, *Law's Indigenous Ethics*
A.I. Hallowell, *Culture and Experience* – selected essays on Ojibwe ontologies
Regna Darnell, selections - animacy in Algonquian languages, the LLL framework
Regna Darnell, Joshua Smith, eds., forthcoming. *LLL*, selected chapters
Joseph Gone on intergenerational and historical trauma (selected essays)
Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Way of the Masks*
Adriana Link et al. ed., volume in press on language revitalization, selections - Darnell introduction)
Selections from Janice Graham, Christina Holmes, Fiona McDonald and Regna Darnell, eds., in press, *The Social Life of Standards* (selections on medicine wheel/public health and environment)
Bernard Perley, selected essays on translocality and home as the centre of the world

SELECTED PAPERS FROM LLL CONFERENCES:

John Borrows on Indigenous law (plenary speaker for original LLL conference)