

**POLI 2215**  
**Canadian Indigenous Politics**  
Department of Political Science  
Dalhousie University  
Winter 2021  
11:35-12:55

**Instructor:**

Dr. Larissa Atkison

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Office hours: or by appointment on MS Teams



This course is hosted by Dalhousie University. Dalhousie University is located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq. We are all Treaty people.

**Course Overview:**

This course will explore the institutional, political, and legal relationship between the Indigenous peoples of Canada and the Canadian settler-state. The course will be driven by a handful of guiding questions. What are the key political and legal issues, cases, and events that have shaped this relationship? How is self-determination conceptualized, both by Indigenous peoples and the wider settler-population? How is the state understood and experienced by both of these populations? How has the institutional relationship between Indigenous peoples and the Canadian government contributed differently to the oppression and empowerment of Indigenous peoples? What are the institutional and political obstacles to First Nations self-determination and sovereignty? How has patriarchy shaped both colonialism and the assertions of self-determination?

## Course Objectives

1. Students will gain a broad understanding of Canadian Indigenous-settler politics;
2. Students will identify institutional and policy frameworks that have resulted from settler-colonialism and the impact of these policies on Indigenous communities from 1763 through to present day;
3. Students will build their awareness of acts of resistance by the Indigenous community, and how they can put reconciliation into action in their own lives ;
4. Students will thoughtfully consider debates around indigenous sovereignty and ongoing Indigenous concern;
5. Students will demonstrate capacity to research and critically analyse class topics in an original research paper.

### Assignments and Class Participation Overview:

Attendance`	10%
Discussion Leadership and Note Taking	15%
Midterm	20%
Paper proposal and Annotated bibliography	10%
Research paper	20%
Final exam	25%

**Attendance - 10%:** This synchronous course will have two weekly participation components. Each Tuesday, from 11:35 - 12:55 AST, I will lecture on Teams. You will be expected to attend these lectures synchronously and your presence will be documented on Teams. Each Thursday, 11:35 – 12:55 AST, we will have a short lecture and mandatory live discussion groups on the assigned readings.

### **Discussion Leadership and Note-Taking: - 15% (Discussion Leadership 10%; Note taking 5%):**

During our Thursday discussion sessions, you will be divided into regular breakout groups. In these groups you will spend 30 minutes discussing the assigned question prompt as a group. Each week a different student will be assigned a role as “group leader.” When it is your turn to lead, you are expected to come to class with prepared question prompts in case discussion stalls. Additionally, you will present the highlights of your conversation and any important take-away points or further discussion items your group has raised to the whole class.

Each week a different student will also be responsible for note-taking. The note-taker will take minutes of the conversation, including identifying speakers and points they raise. You will also submit a written summary of your group to review at the end of the session, and once approved you will post the discussion summary on Brightspace Discussion Board for the week. Discussion summaries are due on Brightspace by **Friday 5 pm.**

**Note:** Being open to different views is a hallmark of educated debate and I encourage you all to stretch your perspective to entertain views and ideas you might otherwise be inclined to reject. It is, however, NEVER okay to demean, insult, or ridicule a peer for their expression of ideas or

their identity. There will therefore be no tolerance in this class for racist, sexist, ageist, or ableist comments. Where such comments are expressed unintentionally, please feel free to gently call out your peers in a way that acknowledges that we all make mistakes and can be blind to our position and privilege. If you feel like you have been targeted by remarks intended to insult or demean, please do your best to resist returning the offence and instead report the incident directly to me. Above all, remember that even though we are engaging in discussion and debate online, we are all human behind the screen and deserve empathy and respect.

**Midterm – 20%:** Students will write a midterm examination online during regularly scheduled class time. As this is a synchronous class you will be expected to complete the exam within the scheduled class window. If you require additional time, please make sure to schedule this through the Student Accommodations office and follow-up with me to ensure your request has been documented.

**Research Paper Proposal and Annotated Bibliography 10% (Proposal 5% and AB 5%):** Submit a 250 word research paper proposal, including your topic, thesis statement, and a short paper abstract.

Your proposal should also include a short annotated bibliography which identifies at least four academic research sources you plan to engage (at least three of which should be assigned readings for this course). Following each entry should include a brief 2-3 sentence explanation of the relevance of the text to your analysis.

**Research Paper 20%:** Drawing on course readings, you will write a 2000-word research paper in response to an essay prompt provided by the instructor. Word count must be included on your title page. You may choose any method of citation as long as you are consistent.

**In Class Final - 25%:** Students will write a final exam reflecting on course themes, discussions, and core texts. This exam will take place on the last day of scheduled class. The exam should take you no more than 60-minutes of focussed writing time, however you will be allotted 75 minutes to complete the assignment. If you require additional time, please send an accommodation request and follow-up with me to ensure the accommodation has been noted.

### **Class Logistics and Policies:**

#### **Policy on Academic Integrity:**

##### **Statement on Academic Integrity (Source: Dalhousie University):**

“At Dalhousie University, we are guided in all of our work by the values of academic integrity: honesty, trust, fairness, responsibility and respect (The Center for Academic Integrity, Duke University, 1999). As a student, you are required to demonstrate these values in all of the work you do. The University provides policies and procedures that every member of the university community is required to follow to ensure academic integrity.

#### **What does academic integrity mean?**

At university we advance knowledge by building on the work of other people. Academic integrity means that we are honest and accurate in creating and communicating all academic

products. Acknowledgement of other people's work must be done in a way that does not leave the reader in any doubt as to whose work it is. Academic integrity means trustworthy conduct such as not cheating on examinations and not misrepresenting information. It is the student's responsibility to seek assistance to ensure that these standards are met.

### **How can you achieve academic integrity?**

[T]he following are some ways that you can achieve academic integrity:

- Do not cheat in examinations or write an exam or test for someone else
- Be sure not to plagiarize, intentionally or unintentionally
- Clearly indicate the sources used in your written or oral work. This includes ideas, figures of speech, graphical representations, diagrams, videos, and images.
- Do not use the work of another from the Internet or any other source and submit it as your own
- When you use the ideas of other people (paraphrasing), make sure to acknowledge the source
- Do not submit work that has been completed...previously [and] submitted for another assignment

### **What will happen if an allegation of an academic offence is made against you?**

I am required to report every suspected offence. If you are found guilty of an offence, a penalty will be assigned ranging from a warning, to failure of the assignment or failure of the class, to expulsion from the University. Penalties may also include a notation on your transcript that indicates that you have committed an academic offence.

### **Note that all written submissions in this class will be reviewed by plagiarism detector**

**Urkund.** For more information, see:

[http://www.dal.ca/dept/university\\_secretariat/academic-integrity.html](http://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/academic-integrity.html)

**Policy on Missed Classes:** Regular attendance in this synchronous online class is crucial to your success. As this is a pandemic year, you are granted up to two absences without penalty. Any further absences will result in a percentage point of your attendance grade. If you have a longstanding conflict with a class meeting or date, you must let me know at least ONE WEEK in advance to avoid a penalty. If you have an outstanding conflict with a schedule test or due date, you must let me know TWO WEEKS in advance to avoid penalty.

**Policy on Virtual Classroom Behavior:** Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate and respectful learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards will be subject to discipline and potentially removal from the class. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, colour, ethnicity, culture, religion, creed, politics, military status, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, and gender expression, age, disability, and nationality.

During class lectures and discussions you are expected to be **present** online. Class lectures will not be recorded and so it is your job to take notes and make sure you have eliminated all sources of distraction. Your computers should be in do not disturb mode for the duration of the course,

your browser should have only the class window open, and your phone should be off. During your breakout groups cameras should be on and you should be prepared to fully participate.

**Policy on Late Assignments:** Due dates in an online class are brutally firm because they are pre-set into Brightspace down to the very second. Submit assignments on time! If you anticipate that you will have trouble meeting a deadline due to **significant extenuating circumstances**, please contact me asap to explain your situation.

Late assignments will lose one half letter grade for every 24-hour period that they are late.

Also note: While Brightspace is usually on the reliable side of things, when a large number of people try to access it all at once, it might prove slow and/or unpredictable. For that reason, try not to leave things to the last second! In most cases, Brightspace submission folders will be open for several days before the assignment is due so feel free to hand in assignments before the due dates. Master your own schedule!

I highly encourage all students to visit me (at least once!) during Friday afternoon office hours prior to the first quiz. This will allow me to develop a better appreciation of your specific interests and goals in the class, as well as connect YOU with your online presence

**Dalhousie Grading Scheme:**

Each assignment will receive a numerical grade. Final grades will be translated into letter grades using the following scale:

Grade	Grade Point Value		Definition	
A+ A A-	4.30 4.00 3.70	90- 100 85- 89 80- 84	Excellent	Considerable evidence of original thinking; demonstrated outstanding capacity to analyze and synthesize; outstanding grasp of subject matter; evidence of extensive knowledge base.
B+ B B-	3.30 3.00 2.70	77- 79 73- 76 70- 72	Good	Evidence of grasp of subject matter, some evidence of critical capacity and analytical ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues; evidence of familiarity with the literature.
C+ C C-	2.30 2.00 1.70	65- 69	Satisfactory	Evidence of some understanding of the subject matter; ability to develop solutions to simple

		60-64 55-59		problems; benefitting from his/her university experience.
D	1.00	50-54	Marginal Pass	Evidence of minimally acceptable familiarity with subject matter, critical and analytical skills (except in programs where a minimum grade of 'C' is required).
F	0.00	0-49	Inadequate	Insufficient evidence of understanding of the subject matter; weakness in critical and analytical skills; limited or irrelevant use of the literature.

### **Required Texts & Readings:**

1. From Treaty Peoples to Treaty Nation: a roadmap for all Canadians. Greg Poelzer & Ken S. Coates. UBC Press (2015)
2. Ways of Knowing: An Introduction to Native Studies in Canada Yale D. Belanger. U of T Press (2018)

Additional readings may be posted to BrightSpace. I reserve the right to both decrease or substitute some readings. Both or either occur with ample notice.

Occasionally, ministers , governments and/or organizations hold press conferences or issue announcements, and events in society, as they unfold, become relevant news items. These will come to constitute required reading material which will be posted to BrightSpace.

### **Course Schedule**

#### **Week 1 Introduction**

TH/Jan. 7: Course welcome and overview of syllabus. Short lecture on major course themes and overview of class expectations. In lieu of an in-class ice-breaker, I request that all students to post a short introduction online with your preferred name and pronouns, your major, and a short description of what you hope to learn from your study of Canadian Indigenous politics this term.

#### **Week 2: The Indigenous Peoples of Canada and Ways of Knowing**

**Read:** Poelzer & Coates: pp. vii-xxi, pp. 3-27 & 102-125; Belanger, Chs. 1 & 2 "Ways of Knowing" and "The Land and Indigenous Political Economy"

**T/Jan. 12:** Lecture

**TH/Jan 14:** Lecture

**Week 3**            **Early Contact and Treaties**  
**Read:**            Poelzer & Coates, pp. 31-45; Belanger, Ch. 4 “Treaties”; Sébastien Grammond, “Treaties as Constitutional Agreements,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Canadian Constitution* (2017) (Brightspace)

T/Jan 19            Lecture  
TH/Jan. 21        Discussion

**Week 4**            **The Establishment of the Indian Act Regime**  
**Read:**            Belanger, Ch.5 “The Indian Act and Indian Affairs in Canada”; Pamela Palmater. “Legislated Identity: Control, Division, and Assimilation” (On Brightspace)

T/Jan. 26            Lecture  
TH/Jan. 28        Discussion

**Week 5**            **The White Paper and the Red Paper and Indigenous Activism**  
**Read:**            Poelzer & Coates, pp. 102-125; Poelzer & Coates, pp. 129-144; Belanger, Ch. 9 “Political Organizing in Canada”; Sheryl Lightfoot, “The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Forging Structural Change” (Brightspace),

T/Feb. 2            Lecture  
TH/Feb. 4        Discussion

**Week 6**            **Review and Midterm**  
T/Feb 9            Review Lecture  
TH/Feb 11        In-Class Midterm

**Week 7**            **Reading Week**

**Week 8**            **“The Metis” and “The Inuit and Nunavut”**  
**Read:**            Belanger Chs. 6 & 7 “The Metis” and “The Inuit and Nunavut”; Jennifer Anese “A Tale of Two Constitutions: Métis Nationhood and Section 35(2)’s Impact on Interpretations of *Daniels*” (Brightspace);

T/Feb. 23            Lecture  
TH/Feb/ 25        Discussion

**Recommended Readings:**

An Empty Shell of a Treaty Promise: R v. Marshall and the Rights of Non-Status Indians. Pamela Palmater (2002). *Dalhousie Law Journal*, pp. 100-148; I’m Métis, What’s Your Excuse? : On the Optics and the Ethics of the Misrecognition of Métis in Canada. Chris Andersen. *Aboriginal Policy Studies Journal* 1, 2 (2011): 161-165.

**Week 9**            **Indigenous Women and Girls**  
**Read:**            Anne Bayefsky “*The Human Rights Committee and the Case of Sandra Lovelace*” (Brightspace); Barker, “Gender, Sovereignty, Rights: Native Women's Activism against Social Inequality and Violence in Canada”(Brightspace); *Executive Summary of the Final Report: National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered*

*Indigenous Women and Girls*, Poelzer and Coates (On Brightspace), Poelzer & Coates Ch. 10, “Equality of Status”

**T/Mar 2**      **Lecture**  
**TH/Mar 4**      **Discussion**

**Week 10:      Indigenous Canadians and the Justice System**

**Read:** Belanger, Ch. “Native People and the Canadian Justice System”; John Burrows, Ch. 5, “Questioning Canada’s Title to Land: The Rule of Law, Aboriginal Peoples, and Colonialism” (on Brightspace)

**T/Mar. 9**      Lecture  
**TH/Mar. 11**      Discussion  
**F/Mar. 12**      **Paper proposal due**

**Week 11      Indigenous Sovereignty**

**Read:** Belanger, Ch. 11 “Self Government”, Poelzer & Coates, Ch. 11 “Citizenship and a Commonwealth of Aboriginal Peoples” & 12 “Aboriginal Self-Government,” Tom Flanagan “The Fiction of Indigenous Sovereignty” in *First Nations? Second Thoughts* (available on Novanet)

T/Mar 16      Lecture  
TH/Mar/ 18      Discussion

**Week 12:      Contemporary Issues: Health, Urban Issues, Economic Issues**

**Read:** Poelzer & Coates, “Community-Based Economic Well-being”; Belanger, Ch. 13 “Health and Well-being in Canada” and Ch. 15 “Urban Issues”

T/Mar. 23      Lecture  
TH/Mar. 25      Discussion

**Week 13      Review and Final Papers due**

**T/Mar 30**      **Papers due**  
**TH/April 1**      **Course Review**

**Week 14      Final Exam**  
**T/April 6**      **In Class Exam**

### ADDITIONAL CLASS POLICIES

#### SECTION B: UNIVERSITY POLICIES, STATEMENTS, GUIDELINES and RESOURCES for SUPPORT

“This course is governed by the academic rules and regulations set forth in the University Calendar and the Senate.

#### University Statements

Academic Integrity [http://www.dal.ca/dept/university\\_secretariat/academic-integrity.html](http://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/academic-integrity.html)

At Dalhousie University, we are guided in all of our work by the values of academic integrity: honesty, trust, fairness, responsibility and respect (The Center for Academic Integrity, Duke University, 1999). As a student, you are required to demonstrate these values in all of the work you do. The University provides policies and procedures that every member of the university community is required to follow to ensure academic integrity.

Accessibility [https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/academic-support/accessibility.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/accessibility.html)

The Advising and Access Services Centre is Dalhousie's centre of expertise for student accessibility and accommodation. The advising team works with students who request accommodation as a result of: a disability, religious obligation, or any barrier related to any other characteristic protected under Human Rights legislation (NS, NB, PEI, NFLD).

Student Code of Conduct

[https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/safety-respect/student-rights-and-responsibilities/student-life-policies/code-of-student-conduct.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/safety-respect/student-rights-and-responsibilities/student-life-policies/code-of-student-conduct.html)

Everyone at Dalhousie is expected to treat others with dignity and respect. The Code of Student Conduct allows Dalhousie to take disciplinary action if students don't follow this community expectation. When appropriate, violations of the code can be resolved in a reasonable and informal manner—perhaps through a restorative justice process. If an informal resolution can't be reached, or would be inappropriate, procedures exist for formal dispute resolution.

Diversity and Inclusion – Culture of Respect

Every person at Dalhousie has a right to be respected and safe. We believe inclusiveness is fundamental to education. We stand for equality. Dalhousie is strengthened in our diversity. We are a respectful and inclusive community. We are committed to being a place where everyone feels welcome and supported, which is why our Strategic Direction prioritizes fostering a culture of diversity and inclusiveness (Strategic Priority 5.2).

(read more: <http://www.dal.ca/cultureofrespect.html>)

Recognition of Mi'kmaq Territory

Dalhousie University would like to acknowledge that the University is on Traditional Mi'kmaq Territory. The Elders in Residence program provides students with access to First Nations elders for guidance, counsel and support. Contact the program at [elders@dal.ca](mailto:elders@dal.ca).

## University Policies and Programs

Important Dates in the Academic Year (including add/drop dates)

[http://www.dal.ca/academics/important\\_dates.html](http://www.dal.ca/academics/important_dates.html)

University Grading Practices: Statement of Principles and Procedures

[https://www.dal.ca/dept/university\\_secretariat/policies/academic/grading-practices-policy.html](https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/policies/academic/grading-practices-policy.html)

Scent-Free Program

<http://www.dal.ca/dept/safety/programs-services/occupational-safety/scent-free.html>

## Learning and Support Resources

General Academic Support – Advising

[https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/academic-support/advising.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/advising.html)

(Halifax)

<https://www.dal.ca/about-dal/agricultural-campus/student-success-centre/academic-support.html>

(Truro)

Fair Dealing Guidelines

<https://libraries.dal.ca/services/copyright-office/guidelines/fair-dealing-guidelines.html>

Dalhousie University Library <http://libraries.dal.ca>

Indigenous Students

[https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/communities/indigenous.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/communities/indigenous.html)

Black Students

[https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/communities/black-student-advising.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/communities/black-student-advising.html)

International Students

[https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/international-centre.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/international-centre.html)

Student Health Services

[https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/health-and-wellness.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/health-and-wellness.html)

Counselling

[https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/health-and-wellness/frequently-asked-questions-august-2017.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/health-and-wellness/frequently-asked-questions-august-2017.html)

Copyright Office

<https://libraries.dal.ca/services/copyright-office.html>

E-Learning website

<http://www.dal.ca/dept/elearning.html>

Dalhousie Student Advocacy Services

<http://dsu.ca/dsas>

Dalhousie Ombudsperson [https://www.dal.ca/campus life/safety-respect/student-rights-and-responsibilities/where-to-get-help/ombudsperson.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/safety-respect/student-rights-and-responsibilities/where-to-get-help/ombudsperson.html)

Writing Centre [https://www.dal.ca/campus life/academic-support/writing-and-study-skills.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/writing-and-study-skills.html)

Faculty or Departmental Advising Support: Studying for Success

Program: [http://www.dal.ca/campus life/academic-support/study-skills-and-tutoring.html](http://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/study-skills-and-tutoring.html)