



POLI 2215: Indigenous Politics in Canada

Winter 2022

Professor Leah Sarson

Schedule: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:05-11:25
Location: Online/Dunn 135
Office Hours: Online, by appointment via booking app on Brightspace
Email: Leah.Sarson@dal.ca
Website: Brightspace

Dalhousie University is located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores the colonial relationship between Indigenous peoples in what we call Canada and the Canadian settler-state, or the Crown. Dominant themes include nationhood, identity, autonomy, colonialism, and the state. We discuss Indigenous ways of knowing and being in Canada and how the settler state attempts to subvert these ideas. Our conversation will begin with an overview of the colonization process in British North America, moving to Canada's historical relationship with Indigenous peoples. We will then focus on forms of contemporary colonization before moving to new opportunities for self-government, and – more importantly – self-determination. We examine the key political and legal issues, cases, and events that shape the relationship between Indigenous peoples and Canada. Some key questions include how Indigenous peoples conceptualize self-determination; how the state is understood and experienced by Indigenous peoples; and how misogyny and the patriarchy have shaped colonialism and self-determination.

This course is taught by a non-Indigenous professor. As such, we will welcome Indigenous scholars and knowledge holders at least once a week to offer their perspectives and comments on the course material. Expertise and knowledge come from a variety of sources, including lived experience, and we will celebrate knowledges from inside and outside the academy. Please note that the schedule below may change to accommodate our speakers.

Learning Objectives

- Identifying and critically assessing key issues in Indigenous-state relations in Canada and Indigenous communities;
- Recognizing the legacies of colonialism and the ways in which colonialism continues to violently manifest in our daily lives;
- Constructing and communicating compelling analytical arguments and a broader analytical perspective in response to the course material;

- Encouraging curiosity about our place in the Canadian state and our responsibilities and relationships within it.

Course Materials

A textbook is not required for this course. Most journal articles and news media are available on the library website and most book chapters are available on our Brightspace page. I will not post scholarly articles readily available on the Dal library website because learning to access scholarly material is an essential element of a university education. The librarians are available if you have trouble sourcing articles. Some weeks will be heavier than others, but you can expect to read around 50+ pages per week of scholarly material and popular media, view videos, listen to podcasts, review lecture slides, and participate in regular discussions.

Academic Integrity

At Dalhousie University, we are guided in 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 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.

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. We will be using Urkund in this class as a tool to avoid academic integrity issues.

In your work, please be sure to:

- Make sure you understand Dalhousie's policies on academic integrity. Please visit http://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/academic-integrity/academic-policies.html
- Do not cheat in examinations or write an exam or test for someone else.
- Clearly indicate the sources used in your written or oral work (including diagrams, videos, etc.).
- 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 through collaboration or previously submitted for another assignment without permission from all instructors involved.
- This is not a comprehensive list. If you are ever unsure about any aspect of your academic work, please contact me or a TA. The library also offers services to help you ensure your academic integrity.
- Academia can be incredibly stressful. Whatever you do, do not be tempted to plagiarize or otherwise cheat. It is not worth it. Instructors are required to report every suspected offence.

Classroom Etiquette

The classroom (both online and in-person) must be a safe, equitable, and professional learning environment in which students are encouraged to express their views in a collegial and respectful manner. To maintain a healthy learning environment, there is a zero-tolerance policy on discrimination and harassment of any sort.

Please familiarize yourself with the Dalhousie University rules and regulations on student rights and responsibilities, which can be found here: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/safety-respect/student-rights-and-responsibilities.html

Communication with the Professor

In all email communications with me, please include proper greetings (e.g. Dear Professor Sarson) and salutations (e.g., Best, Jane Jones). Always sign-off with your full name. During the work week, I will do my best to respond in 24 hours.

Office hours are by appointment and will be conducted online via MS Teams. You may make an appointment at your convenience using the booking app on the Brightspace page.

Course content will be posted on Brightspace. Please check it twice weekly for announcements, assignments, discussions, and other resources.

Assessment (full details below)

1. Reflection Journals – 4 x 5% = 20%
2. Group Engagement with Reflection Journals = 5%
3. Film Review = 20% (Due March 1 at 11:59 pm)
4. Term Paper = 30% (Due March 31 at 11:59 pm)
5. Final Exam = 25% (Date TBD)

Letter grades have a grade point assigned that is used to calculate your GPA (Grade Point Average). The following table explains and defines Dalhousie's grading system and shows the GPA value that corresponds with each letter grade.

Grade	Grade Point Value		Definition	Notes
A+	4.30	90-100	Excellent	Considerable evidence of original thinking; demonstrated outstanding capacity to analyze and synthesize; outstanding grasp of subject matter; evidence of extensive knowledge base.
A	4.00	85-89		
A-	3.70	80-84		
B+	3.30	77-79	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.
B	3.00	73-76		
B-	2.70	70-72		
C+	2.30	65-69	Satisfactory	Evidence of some understanding of the subject matter; ability to develop solutions to simple problems; benefitting from his/her university experience.
C	2.00	60-64		
C-	1.70	55-59		
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.
INC	0.00		Incomplete	
W	Neutral and no credit obtained		Withdrew after deadline	
ILL	Neutral and no credit obtained		Compassionate reasons, illness	
P	Neutral		Pass	
TR	Neutral		Transfer credit on admission	
Pending	Neutral		Grade not reported	

Accessibility

I have attempted to offer multiple representations of our course content (e.g. providing information through both video and text). If you encounter any content that is not accessible or perceptible for you, please do not hesitate to inform me. Our course should be equally accessible to all students.

For students experiencing or anticipating barriers to their learning environments or other issues, please see the Accommodations Office. Accommodation levels the playing field to support your success. It reduces or removes barriers to your learning to ensure fair and equitable access to your classroom, testing or co-op/fieldwork environments. Accommodations can be introduced when a protected characteristic (as defined by provincial human rights legislation) may place you at a disadvantage compared to other students who are not affected by a protected characteristic. I encourage these students to work with the office to ensure that their needs are met.

If you face a serious unexpected challenge during the course for which you require special accommodations, please notify me as far in advance as possible.

Assignments

Reflection Journals – 4 x 5% = 20%

The reflection journal is an exercise designed to help you dissect and engage with scholarly work. Every week you select (choose 4 weeks), you must compose a journal entry reflecting on what you learned from the readings and other media assigned that week. Your objectives are to analyze the argument(s) at the centre of the readings and develop your own perspective in response to those ideas. These are not summaries or discrete analyses of each reading, but rather a chance to develop your ideas and articulate your perspective. For instance, did you find the argument compelling, what questions were raised by the text, etc. These should be about 250 words. Journal entries are due before the start of class that week (e.g. week 3's journals are due

before class on January 25). You must refer to all readings from the relevant week. Please post your entry in your group's discussion space.

Group Engagement with Reflection Journals = 5%

In assigned groups, you will respond to at least five of your group member's posts throughout the term. Responses are due on Fridays.

Film Review = 20% (Due March 1 at 11:59 pm to the relevant folder on Brightspace)

Students will select four films to watch from the provided list. You will review all four films and select one film to recommend. Which film would you select and why? Why not the others? Please submit your review to the relevant folder on the Brightspace page. More information will be posted on Brightspace.

Term Paper = 30% (Due March 31 at 11:59 pm)

Students will draft an argumentative essay responding to one of the following questions. More information will be posted on Brightspace.

- How do you understand the concept of "land back"?
- How do you understand the concept of "free, prior, and informed consent"?
- How do you understand the concept of "settler colonialism"?
- How do you understand the concept of "self-determination"?

Final Exam = 25% (Online, via Brightspace. Date TBD)

SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNED READINGS

Week of January 6: Introduction

Tuhiwai Smith, Linda. 2012. "Introduction," *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. Zed Books. (N.B. This book is available as an e-book on the library website. I recommend that you peruse the entire book.)

Week of January 11: Conceptualizing Indigeneity

- Scheduled speaker: Patrick Small Legs-Nagge, Mount Saint Vincent University Special Advisor to the President on Aboriginal Affairs

Vowel, Chelsea, Chapters 1-3, In *Indigenous Writes*, Highwater Press, 2016.

Taylor, Drew Hayden (2021), "For some, the definition of 'settler' is as difficult to pin down as reconciliation," *The Globe and Mail*, 20 July 2021, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/article-for-some-the-definition-of-settler-is-as-difficult-to-pin-down-as/>.

Week of January 18: Pre-Contact and Treaty-Making

- Scheduled speaker: Heidi Kiiwetinepinesiik Stark, assistant professor in Political Science at the University of Victoria

Miller, J. R. (2017). "Introduction," *Skyscrapers hide the heavens: a history of Native-newcomer relations in Canada*. University of Toronto Press, pp. 3-18.

Olive Patricia Dickason and William Newbigging (2019), Chapter 4: On the Eastern Edge of the Mainland,” In *Indigenous Peoples within Canada: A Concise History*, 4th ed. OUP.

Blackburn, Carole, (2019) “The Treaty Relationship and Settler Colonialism in Canada,” In *Shifting Forms of Continental Colonialism*, eds. Dittmar Schorkowitz, John R. Chávez, Ingo W. Schröder, Palgrave Macmillan.

Week of January 25: Colonization and the Indian Act

- Scheduled speaker: Mercedes Peters, PhD candidate in History at the University of British Columbia

Anaya, S. (2015). Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the Situation of Indigenous Peoples in Canada. *Arizona Journal of International and Comparative Law*, 32(1), 143-153.

Joseph, Bob (2015) “21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act,” *Indigenous Corporate Training*, 2 June 2015. <https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/21-things-you-may-not-have-known-about-the-indian-act-> (Please follow the links in the blog post.)

Asch, Michael, (2018), “Chapter 1: Confederation Treaties and Reconciliation: Stepping Back into the Future,” In *Resurgence and Reconciliation : Indigenous-Settler Relations and Earth Teachings*, eds. M. Asch, J. Borrows, and J. Tully, University of Toronto Press.

Week of February 1: Contemporary Colonization, part I

- Scheduled speaker: John Sylliboy, Executive Director at Wabanaki Two-Spirit Alliance
Health and Housing

Dallas Hunt and Gina Starblanket, (2020), “COVID-19, the Numbered Treaties, and the Politics of Life,” *The Yellowhead Institute*, <https://yellowheadinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/yi-special-report-covid19-and-treaties.pdf>

Starblanket, G., Hunt, Dallas, (2020). “Introduction,” *Storying violence: Unravelling colonial narratives in the Stanley trial*. Winnipeg: ARP Books.

Anaya, S. (2015). Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the Situation of Indigenous Peoples in Canada. *Arizona Journal of International and Comparative Law*, 32(1), 143-153.

Week of February 8: Modern Treaties and Self-Government

- Scheduled speaker: TBD

Miller, J. R. (2017). Chapter 14: “Land Claims and Self-Government from the White Paper to Guerin,” *Skyscrapers hide the heavens: a history of Native-newcomer relations in Canada*. University of Toronto Press.

Yale D. Belanger & David R. Newhouse (2008), Chapter 1: “Reconciling Solitudes: A Critical Analysis of the Self-Government Ideal,” In *Aboriginal Self-Government in Canada*, 3rd ed. Ed. Yale Belanger, UBC Press.

James (Sa'ke'j) Youngblood Henderson (2008), Chapter 2: "Treaty Governance," In *Aboriginal Self-Government in Canada*, 3rd ed. Ed. Yale Belanger, UBC Press.

Week of February 15: Contemporary Colonization, part II

Land and Resources

- Scheduled speaker: TBD

CBC, The Doc Project, 2020. "Canada declared the Sinixt extinct. But the Sinixt say they are alive and well." <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/docproject/canada-declared-the-sinixt-extinct-but-the-sinixt-say-they-are-alive-and-well-1.5428244>

Kuokkanen, R. (2019). At the intersection of Arctic indigenous governance and extractive industries: A survey of three cases. *The Extractive Industries and Society*, 6(1), 15-21.

Simpson, Leanne (2010), "Niimkiig," In *This Is Not an Honour Song: Twenty Years Since the Blockades*, eds. L. Simpson and K. Ladner, Arbeiter Ring Publishing.

Week of March 1: Contemporary Colonization, part III

Economy and Justice

- Scheduled Speaker: Dallas Hunt, assistant professor in the Department of Department of English Language and Literatures at the University of British Columbia

Arthur Manuel, "Criminalization of Protest," *The Reconciliation Manifesto*, (Toronto: The James Lorimer and Company Ltd, 2017): 224 -228.

Nancy Macdonald, "Canada's Prisons are the "New Residential School," *Macleans* (February 18, 2016). <https://www.macleans.ca/news/canada/canadas-prisons-are-the-new-residentialschools/>

Week 7: Contemporary Colonization, part IV

Gender

- Scheduled speaker: Gina Starblanket, associate professor of Indigenous Governance at the University of Victoria.

Brodsky, Gwen, (2014), Chapter 5: "McIvor v Canada: Legislated Patriarchy Meets Aboriginal Women's Equality Rights," In *Indivisible: Indigenous Human Rights*, ed. Joyce Green, Ferwood Publishing.

Kuokkanen, Rauna, (2014), Chapter 6: "Confronting Violence: Indigenous Women, Self-Determination, and International Human Rights," In *Indivisible: Indigenous Human Rights*, ed. Joyce Green, Ferwood Publishing.

Williamson, Tara. "Why gender is such a critical part of the national MMIW inquiry," CBC, March 8, 2017, <https://www.cbc.ca/2017/why-gender-is-such-a-critical-part-of-the-national-mmiw-inquiry-1.4013949>

Week of March 15: Self-Government and Self-Determination

- Scheduled speaker: TBD

Alfred, Taiaiake (2005), "Sovereignty." In *Sovereignty Matters: Locations of Contestation and Possibility in Indigenous Struggles for Self-Determination*. Ed. Joanne Barker. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press.

Ladner, Kiera, (2019), "Beyond Crown Sovereignty: Good Governance and Treaty Constitutionalism" In *Canada: The State of the Federation 2017*, eds. Kyle Hanniman ; Elizabeth Goodyear-Grant. MQUP.

Monture-Angus, Patricia (1999), "Introduction: Where I Am Standing," In *Journeying Forward: Dreaming First Nations' Independence*, Fernwood Publishing.

Week of March 22: Self-Determination and Indigenous Global Politics

- Scheduled speaker: Morgan Mowatt, sessional instructor at the University of Victoria

Simpson, Leanne. 2008. "Looking after Gdoo-naaganinaa: Precolonial Nishnaabeg Diplomatic and Treaty Relationships." *Wicazo Sa Review*, 23.3, 29-42.

Lightfoot, Sheryl. 2016. "Introduction," *Global Indigenous Politics: A Subtle Revolution*, Routledge.

Hall, Thomas D. and James V. Fenelon. (2009). Chapter Two: "Indigenous Global Struggles: Models of Revitalization and Resistance," In *Indigenous Peoples and Globalization: Resistance and Revitalization*. Boulder: Paradigm.

Week of March 29: Resurgence, Resistance, and Reclamation

- Scheduled speaker: Rachel George, assistant professor of Indigenous Politics at the University of Alberta

Michael Asch, John Borrows, and James Tully, (2018), "Introduction," In *Resurgence and Reconciliation : Indigenous-Settler Relations and Earth Teachings*, eds. M. Asch, J. Borrows, and J. Tully, University of Toronto Press.

von der Porten S, Corntassel J, Mucina D. "Indigenous nationhood and herring governance: strategies for the reassertion of Indigenous authority and inter-Indigenous solidarity regarding marine resources." *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*. 2019;15(1):62-74.

Week of April 5: Debrief