

Indigenous Research Methods

Professor: Dr. Robert O. Smith, he/him

Course Description

Critical Indigenous Studies has emerged as a new field of inquiry in which American Indian and Indigenous scholars are rethinking their self-presentation in the global academy. This transdisciplinary course will survey the latest scholarship and invite emerging scholars into the conversation. After becoming acquainted with recent literature exploring Indigenous methodologies, we will explore a variety of topics addressed by Indigenous scholars with an eye toward identifying the distinctive features and insights surfaced by Indigenous research and communication methods. Students will be invited to bring their own research interests into the learning space to explore how the methods we encounter can enhance their projects.

Required Materials

- Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States* (Boston: Beacon, 2015). (\$15.00)
- Margaret Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts*, second ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2021). (\$29.95)
- Shawn Wilson, *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods* (Halifax: Fernwood, 2008). (\$24.95)

Additional texts provided and available as PDF files on Canvas or through the library.

Course Objectives

Learning objectives for this course are broad. Discussions responses on Canvas will be aimed at modeling these objectives and giving students an opportunity to see them in action; discussions, activities, assignments, and papers represent opportunities for students to practice these objectives and receive feedback that will be useful in improving as scholars. These objectives will be framed around the content of this particular course, and reflect the contemporary and ongoing conversations concerning an introduction to writing studies and its applications and implications in a multitude of fields and disciplines. The broad objectives are that students will:

1. Demonstrate proficiency in critical and constructive thought
2. Demonstrate proficiency in communicating complex ideas through writing
3. Possess an understanding of Indigenous concerns (historical, social, intellectual, etc.) and how those concerns inform distinctive approaches to academic methodology
4. Understand application of Indigenous methodology for framing discussion/analysis of disciplinary studies

Major Assignments and Grading

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Required Work [Assignment Sheets, if any, will be located on our course Canvas site]

Questions and Quotes (Q & Q's):

This assignment will be due at the beginning of each class period from week two through week twelve. Each week you will submit one question and one quote from each of the assigned readings (**i.e. if three texts were assigned, you will have, at minimum, three quotes—one from each text**). You should pose open-ended questions that generate conversation and cannot be answered with a “yes” or “no.” Your question can address a specific reading or a theme running through several readings. Quotes may be anything from the readings that resonate with you. Along with the quote you will discuss why you find the quote significant. Personal reflections that are connected with the readings/discussions are perfectly appropriate for this assignment. **Value: 40%**

Discussion Facilitation of Assigned Reading:

You are each expected to facilitate class discussion once in the semester. Sign up will be during week two. I will provide a detailed assignment sheet on Canvas. **You are required to meet with me by the Tuesday prior to your scheduled facilitation in order to discuss the approaches you are considering and any questions you may have.** By the time of your scheduled facilitation you should have carefully and critically read through the week’s readings. Before the day of your facilitation, you will submit to Canvas a handout that includes a summary a literary analysis for the assigned readings/authors and an accompanying list of discussion questions. Finally, you should feel free to suggest up to 20 pages of additional readings for the class in anticipation of your own facilitation. **Value: 20%**

Facilitation Reflection Paper:

A day or two after your facilitation, you will submit a 2-page reflection paper about your experience. Include a short summary of the discussion, including the ways it did and did not go according to your plan. Again, I will provide a detailed assignment sheet for this assignment on our course website. **Value: 5%**

Seminar Project:

One seminar project in Indigenous methodologies. Details forthcoming. **Value: 35%**

Grade Breakdown

Note: To earn a passing grade, you must complete all major writing assignments.

- 90-100%=A
- 80-89.99%=B
- 70-79.99%=C
- 60-69.99%=D
- 59.99% and less=F

Indigenous Research Methods

Reading Schedule

Jan 19 – Entering the Circle

- Setting the scene: syllabus overview and introductory sharing

Jan 26 – Introductory awareness

Readings:

- Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States* ([UNT Libraries e-book](#))
- Vine Deloria, Jr., *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto*

Feb 2 – Method, Session 1

FIRST STUDENT LEADER OPPORTUNITY

Readings:

- Shawn Wilson, *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods* (Nova Scotia: Fernwood, 2018).
- Sweeney Windchief and Timothy San Pedro, *Applying Indigenous Research Methods: Storying with Peoples and Communities*, *Indigenous and Decolonizing Studies in Education* (New York: Routledge, 2019). ([UNT Libraries E-book](#)) – selections

Feb 9 – Method, Session 2

Readings:

- Margaret Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts*, second ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2021). (selections)
- Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, Second ed. (London: Zed Books, 2012) ([UNT Libraries E-book](#), one reader at a time) Third edition, published 2021
- Shawn Wilson, Andrea V. Breen, and Lindsay Dupré, eds., *Research & Reconciliation: Unsettling Ways of Knowing through Indigenous Relationships* (Toronto: Canadian Scholars, 2019).
- Aja Y. Martinez, “Prologue: Encomium of a Storyteller”

Feb 16 – No Class Meeting (reading catch-up)

Feb 23 – Historical Method

Readings:

- Ned Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West* ([online here](#))
- Thomas King, *The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Native People in North America* ([online here](#))

- Nepia Mahuika, *Rethinking Oral History and Tradition: An Indigenous Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019). ([UNT Libraries E-book](#))
- Fixico, ed., *Rethinking American Indian History* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997). ([UNT Libraries E-book](#))

March 2 – Settler Colonial Theory

Readings:

- Patrick Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native,” *Journal of Genocide Research* (2006)
- E. Tuck & K.W. Yang, “Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor,” *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* (2012)
- J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, “‘A Structure, Not an Event’: Settler Colonialism and Enduring Indigeneity” (2016)
- Andrew Woolford, *This Benevolent Experiment: Indigenous Boarding Schools, Genocide, and Redress in Canada and the United States* (2018)

March 9 – Latinx / Chicax Historiography

Readings:

- Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands / La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (selections)
- Emma Pérez, *The Decolonial Imaginary: Writing Chicanas into History*, *Theories of Representation and Difference* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999). ([UNT Libraries E-book](#))
- Priscilla Solis Ybarra, “Borderlands as Bioregion: Jovita González, Gloria Anzaldúa, and the Twentieth-Century Ecological Revolution in the Rio Grande Valley” (2009)

March 16 – No Class Meeting (Spring Break)

March 23 – Philosophy and Environmentalism

Readings:

- Brian Burkhart, *Indigenizing Philosophy through the Land: A Trickster Methodology for Decolonizing Environmental Ethics and Indigenous Futures* (2019)
- Robin Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants* (Minneapolis: Milkweed, 2013). ([UNT Libraries E-book](#))

March 30 – Indigeneity and US Law

Readings:

- David E. Wilkins, *Hollow Justice: A History of Indigenous Claims in the United States* ([online here](#)); Chapters 1, 2, 8
- Robert A. Williams, *Like a Loaded Weapon: The Rehnquist Court, Indian Rights, and the Legal History of Racism in America*; Introduction, Part III
- Robert J. Miller, “The Doctrine of Discovery, Manifest Destiny, and American Indians”

April 6 – Black/Native Relations

Readings:

- Kyle T. Mays, *An Afro-Indigenous History of the United States*
- Alaina E. Roberts, *I've Been Here All the While: Black Freedom on Native Land*
- Alaina E. Roberts, "Who Belongs in Indian Territory?"

April 13 – International Perspectives

Readings:

- Mohamed Adhikari and Alfred J. Andrea, eds., *Destroying to Replace : Settler Genocides of Indigenous Peoples* ([UNT online](#))
- Steven Salaita and Eric Cheyfitz, "Special Forum: Perspectives on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict from Indigenous Studies," *Journal of the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association* 1.2 (Fall 2014): pp. 105–148.
- Ilan Pappé, "Indigeneity as Resistance," in *Rethinking Statehood in Palestine: Self-Determination and Decolonization Beyond Partition*, ed. Leila H. Farsakh (Oakland: University of California Press, 2021), pp.276–294.

April 20 – Religion / Christianity

Readings:

- Vine Deloria, Jr., *God Is Red*
- Robert Warrior, "Canaanites, Cowboys, and Indians: Deliverance, Conquest, and Liberation Theology Today" (1989)
- Edward P. Antonio, "Christianity, Compromise, and Colonialism as Existential Threats to Indigenous Peoples"
- Tink Tinker, "jesus, the gospel, and Genocide"

April 27 – Visual Culture and Sound

Readings:

- Angela M. Haas, "Wampum as Hypertext: An American Indian Intellectual Tradition of Multimedia Theory and Practice" (2006)
- Victoria Levine Lindsay Levine and Dylan Robinson, *Music and Modernity among First Peoples of North America* (2018) ([UNT e-book](#))
- Dylan Robinson, *Hungry Listening : Resonant Theory for Indigenous Sound Studies* (2020) ([UNT e-book](#))
- Craig Harris, *Heartbeat, Warble, and the Electric Powwow: American Indian Music* (2016) ([UNT e-book](#))
- John William Troutman, *Indian Blues: American Indians and the Politics of Music, 1879–1934* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2009).

May 4 – American Indian Literary Method

Readings:

- Robert Warrior, *People and the Word: Reading Native Nonfiction*, Indigenous Americas (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005). ([UNT Libraries E-book](#))
- Billy-Ray Belcourt, *This Wound Is a World: Poems*
- Joy Harjo, selections
- Selections from Robin Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants* (Minneapolis: Milkweed, 2013). ([UNT Libraries E-book](#))