

IGOV 520

INDIGENOUS GOVERNANCE

(Fall 2011)

Tuesdays, 10 am – 2:30 pm, HSD A250

This course engages with students on their understandings of history, politics, and themselves within a context of colonization and decolonization. It presents students with a framework for understanding the contemporary character and dynamics of Indigeneity, and brings a critical perspective to bear on Indigenous-State relationships on both societal and personal levels.



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EVALUATION AND GRADING

Students have been assigned sessions in which they are responsible for writing and presenting a one-page description and critique of the week's supplemental reading. The critiques and presentations should not only demonstrate comprehension and engagement with the readings, but also pose serious and interesting questions to motivate the class discussion. There will be higher than normal expectations for engagement and contribution to the class discussion overall for students during their assigned sessions. Students will also submit a 25-30 page final paper on one of the course themes - topics must be pre-approved by Dr. Alfred. The papers should represent a high standard of Indigenous ethics and scholarly writing in terms of technique, substance and style. Final papers are due on Tuesday, December 6th by Noon and will receive a failing grade if late.

Grading Scheme: Participation (20%), Critiques (20%), Presentations (10%), and Final Paper (50%).

REQUIRED READINGS

Taiaiake Alfred, *Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto*, 2nd Edition, Oxford UP, 2009.

_____, *Wasáse: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom*, Broadview/UTP, 2005.

John Borrows, *Recovering Canada: The Resurgence of Indigenous Law*, UTP, 2002.

Jeff Corntassel, *Forced Federalism: Contemporary Challenges to Indigenous Nationhood*, University of Oklahoma Press, 2008.

Vine Deloria, *Red Earth, White Lies: Native Americans and the Myth of Scientific Fact*, Fulcrum, 1997.

Pamela Palmater, *Beyond Blood: Rethinking Indigenous Identity*, Purich Publishing, 2011.

Leanne Simpson, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back: Stories of Nishnaabeg Re-Creation, Resurgence, and a New Emergence*, Arbeiter Ring, 2011.

Andrea Smith, *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide*, South End Press, 2005.

Robert Williams, *The American Indian in Western Legal Thought: The Discourses of Conquest*, Oxford University Press, 1990.

COURSE OUTLINE

September 6th **Indigenous Civilizations of the Western Hemisphere**

The substantial work of the course will begin with a review and consideration of the pre-European history of the Western Hemisphere. The discussion will generate an awareness of the scope and depth of Indigenous civilizations, and we will gain an understanding of the social and physical landscapes and dynamics of the world inhabited by Indigenous peoples before colonization.

Text: Deloria, *Red Earth, White Lies*
Supplement: Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel* (WW Norton, 1999)
Presenter: Robyn Heaslip

September 13th **Discourses of Conquest and Colonialism**

The session will introduce the intellectual conflicts that emerge when dominant historical narratives are read against Indigenous and other truthful perspectives. The mainstream understanding of history has been prejudiced by white and colonized people's situation within an imperial mental and cultural framework. Ours will be a decolonized reading of history, and we will come to understand colonial mythologies as the foundation of imperial power.

Text: Williams, *The American Indian in Western Legal Thought*
Supplement: Albert Memmi, *Decolonization and the Decolonized* (U of Minnesota, 2006)
Presenters: Desiree Louie

September 20th **Indigenous Governance in a Contemporary Context**

Indigenous peoples have organized consistently at all levels to protect their nations in the face of imperial forces seeking to undermine their connections to each other and to the land. But Indigenous societies today are facing crises of leadership and organization; the political and social realities facing contemporary Indigenous leaders are shifting radically, and the post-modern state's neo-imperialist challenge to Indigenous existences is overwhelming Indigenous leaders and governments. We will investigate and evaluate the various strategies and approaches of Indigenous leaders and organizations.

Texts: Alfred, *Peace, Power, Righteousness*
Supplement: Stephanie Irlbacher-Fox, *Finding Dahshaa* (UBC Press, 2009)
Presenters: Jessica Benson & Ian Caplette

September 27th

Colonial Mentalities and Indigenous Worldviews

We will examine the psychophysical impacts of the historical trauma suffered by Indigenous peoples as a result of conquest and colonization. Our objective will be to gain a full appreciation of the colonized person: the values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours that define people who manifest colonial mythologies in their lives and cause their continuance in communities.

Text: Andrea Smith, *Conquest*
Supplement: Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (Grove Press, 1967)
Presenters: Deanne Payton Grant & Tina Powell

October 4th

The Politics of Being Indigenous

Our focus this week will be on the legacies of colonial policies of racial and cultural annihilation. The state continues its legal and political manipulation of membership definitions and legal entitlements, and this furthers the assimilationist agenda, creating serious social and psychological crises and foment within communities on basic questions of identity, gender, membership and the representation of Indigenous nationhood. The session will start with a viewing of a film titled, *Club Native: How Thick is Your Blood?* (2008), by Kahnawake Mohawk filmmaker Tracey Deer, and the readings will illustrate the sources and manifestations of these conflicts in a broader historical and political context. Our discussion will focus on developing perspectives on Indigenous identity questions that are disentangled from colonial mentalities.

Texts: Pamela Palmater, *Beyond Blood*
Supplement: Ty Tengan, *Native Men Remade* (Duke University Press, 2008)
Presenters: Colette Arcand & Luke Jeffries

October 18th

Aboriginalism

Settler societies continue their attempt to control Indigenous nations through legal fictions that support the colonial enterprise and its foundational myths. This session will expose and interrogate these fictions and their proponents, considering the issue in the broad context of Western philosophy and law and domestic and international state institutions, with particular attention on the “domestication” or “aboriginal” agenda as it is practiced in Canada.

Texts: Borrows, *Recovering Canada*
Supplement: John Ralston Saul, *A Fair Country* (Viking Canada, 2008)
Presenters: Isabella Marble & Mylan Tootoosis

October 25th

Indigenous Resurgence

This session will focus on developing a sense of how we can apply, in a real and immediate way in our lives and in our communities, Indigenous teachings, traditional knowledge and political philosophy. The importance of re-establishing reconnections to land, culture and community will be discussed, and the ways in which Indigenous people have moved toward regenerating their indigeneity and freedom in their homelands will be considered.

Texts: Alfred, *Wasáse*
Supplement: Niezen, *The Rediscovered Self* (McGill-Queen's, 2009)
Presenters: Ryan Day & Lauren Kelly

November 1st

The Political Economy of Indigenous Nationhood

In this session, we will come to understand how the capitalist ideological underpinnings of mainstream approaches to nation-building are reshaping Indigenous communities, and how Indigenous peoples are facing renewed pressures and unforeseen threats from capitalism and the liberal assimilationist forces embodied in Settler states and their institutions of government.

Text: Corntassel, *Forced Federalism*
Supplement: Gordon Gibson, *A New Look at Canadian Indian Policy* (Fraser Institute, 2009)
Guest: Jeff Corntassel, Ph.D., Cherokee Nation and Associate Professor of IGOV
Presenter: Erika Chase & Geoff Rankin

November 8th

Indigenous Resistance and Regeneration

In our final session, we will focus on the real ways Indigenous people defend themselves, their communities, the land, and their rights. There is a great tradition of resistance among Indigenous peoples and we will examine it in a historical and contemporary sense. We will also investigate the psychological and organizational complexities involved in generating a resurgent Indigenous movement, as well as on developing and sustaining action against colonialism.

Text: Simpson, *Dancing on Turtle's Back*
Supplement: Chomsky, et al., *New World of Indigenous Resistance* (City Lights, 2010)
Presenter: Lona Lee Mackay & Pablo Miss