

University of Toronto
Department of Political Science

POL 438 H 1 F / POL 2321 H 1 F
MEDIA & INDIGENOUS POLITICS
Fall 2017 | Mondays | 6-8 pm | TC 22

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Introduction

Course Description

This course explores the representations of Indigenous nations and issues in mainstream and alternative media in Canada. We will investigate how Indigenous peoples and issues affecting their communities have been made visible and invisible through various forms of media, including television and print news, state practices of documentation, photography, documentary film, and visual art. Issues explored in the course include historical and contemporary politics of representing Indigenous communities, stereotyping, appropriation, and celebratory narratives of reconciliation in settler colonial media forms. We will also engage a wide range of media forms produced by Indigenous artists, writers, filmmakers, musicians, and photographers and consider how these forms disrupt settler colonial narratives with expressions of visual sovereignty and self-representation.

This course is an opportunity to engage with the stories we tell about our communities and ourselves and to evaluate the media landscapes that such stories generate. Examining accounts from Indigenous artists, activists, and communities and learning through Indigenous methodologies, we will work towards becoming analysts of media texts as well as critical citizens of the settler colonial reality in which we live.

Learning & Teaching Methods

The aim of this course is to examine key perspectives on Indigenous politics, to compare the effects of different media forms, and to build expansive notions of “sovereignty” and “self-representation”. We will engage these issues and questions of visibility through both theoretical and reflective methods.

As this is a seminar course, your participation every week is crucial. You will be expected to come to class having read each text and be prepared to speak about them, raise questions, and make connections. The texts I have selected for us to read are a blend of academic and artistic works. In this course, we will give both kinds of works our critical attention.

Both the course content and the assignments are designed to nudge us out of our comfort zones. You will be asked to do some things that will likely be familiar to you, such as writing critical summaries of texts, posing thoughtful questions, and writing a paper. However, you will also be asked to engage in activities that might be new or unfamiliar, such as writing by hand and reflecting on works of art. I do not expect any of you to be trained critics of film, visual art, or museum curation. I do expect you to engage with in the reflective assignments with openness, honesty, and seriousness.

I know that we all arrive in this classroom with a range of starting points: some of you may have grown up in Indigenous communities and are experienced in the effects of colonial policies and their resistance, and others may be encountering Indigenous perspectives for the first time. While we do not all experience it in the same way, we are all implicated in the settler colonial present. Our abilities to understand colonial realities expand when we acknowledge that our perspectives are works in progress.

Learning Objectives

In looking at how different media forms are implicated in, products of, and themselves constitute politics, we will build towards five learning objectives:

- Identify key political issues affecting Indigenous nations in Canada and provide nuanced historical, social, legal, and cultural context for these issues.
- Discuss the affordances, limitations, and effects of different media forms.
- Cultivate your critical thinking skills, so that you are able to recognize the assumptions behind what you read—whether in a textbook, a novel, a film, or reporting on current events.
- Reflectively engage media texts both in the moment of reception and afterwards.
- Develop and support your own arguments about media narratives and representations in clear and creative written and oral forms.

Assignments, Evaluation, & Due Dates

Your final grade for the course will come from the following assignments:

- 1) Reflective Paper I – 20%
- 2) Reflective Paper II – 20%
- 3) Reading Intro & Critical Question Presentations – 15%
- 4) Sketchbooks – 15%
- 5) Critical Analysis Paper – 30%

Reflective Papers I & II: 20% each [total: 40%]

For each of these papers, students will formulate a reflective response to an art installation or museum exhibit. These papers will be a brief **4 pages**, but will create an opportunity for you to reflect substantively on different experiential media forms and to draw connections to other course texts.

For Reflective Paper I, you will visit the group show *In Dialogue* at the UofT Art Centre (UTAC, 15 Kings College Circle, free admission) **or** the group show *raise a flag* at the OCAD U Onsite Gallery (199 Richmond St W, free admission). The artworks included in this show are by Indigenous artists. Each piece differently grapples with questions of authenticity, identity, and belonging. I suggest that you do the reading for Week Four prior to visiting the gallery. I also suggest that you bring along your sketchbooks to jot down observations about the different artworks included in the show and to record your observations afterwards. To complete the Paper, document your reflections on one or two of the artworks included in the show and extend these reflections by making connections to Michelle Raheja’s concept of “visual sovereignty” and Robert Houle’s critique of authenticity. While it is not formally required, doing a bit of background reading on the artist(s) who made the work(s) you are reflecting on will help you ground the work(s) in a more specific context. **DUE: October 2, start of class.**

For Reflective Paper II, you will visit the *Walking With Our Sisters* installation. WWOS will be installed at the Aboriginal Education Centre, October 14-29. I strongly encourage you to do the readings for Week Eight prior to visiting the installation. These readings are brief, but have been selected to give you a brief overview of the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. I suggest that you bring along your sketchbooks to jot down observations and to perhaps write down your immediate feelings afterwards. To complete the Paper, document your reflections and extend them by making connections to at least one of the course readings from Week Seven or Week Eight. **DUE: October 30, start of class.**

For each paper, you might use the following prompts as starting points:

- What is the background or context for this piece?
- Who made it and why?
- What is the maker responding to?
- What feelings/affects does the piece evoke? Why?
- What is made visible or invisible by the mode of representation you are engaging?
- How is it similar to or different from other representations of the issue at hand?

Both papers must be **4 pages long**, double-spaced, typed, have complete citations, and must be submitted at the **beginning of class** on the week they are due. Only hard copies will be accepted. Late papers will lose 3% per day.

Reading Intro & Critical Question Presentations: 15%

Reading each assigned text thoughtfully and carefully will be crucial to the overall success of this seminar. To help prepare you for speaking to the different texts, each student will take a turn being responsible for introducing the readings and posing critical questions about the readings to the class. You will sign up for your introduction and question presentation during our Week Two class (September 18). Presentations will begin on Week Three (September 25). If there is more than one student signed up on a given week, it will be your responsibility to divide up the presentation. Each student will be expected to give a ten-minute presentation and you will be graded individually.

In your introductory remarks on the texts, you will be expected to identify the key insights, claims, or arguments of each text and articulate how the author (or maker) has developed this claim. The summary should provide some context for the critical questions you pose. To do well on this assignment, you will need to be concise and well-organized. I strongly encourage you to prepare speaking notes and to practice in advance of your presentation.

Given the nature of this assignment, late presentations will not be accepted. If you are unable to attend class in the week you signed up for, it is your responsibility to switch presentations with another student.

Sketchbooks: 15%

As a record of participation in our weekly seminars, you will be asked to write in a sketchbook. The ongoing sketchbook exercise is to provide you an opportunity to record your thoughts, reflections, and insights from our seminars in a flexible but handwritten way. An entry of two pages is required for each week we meet; however, how that entry looks is up to you. What you decide to include and how you do it is open-ended. You might consider notes, mind maps, pasted images, actual sketches, etc. When it comes to the form and style of your sketchbook, everyone is an expert and no one is an expert.

The sketchbook is a place for recording the starting point of ideas and I do not expect it to be neat or comprehensive. Rather, it is my hope that you will use this space to jot down thoughts, ideas, and reflections. Through using the sketchbooks for handwritten, free-formed entries, we will

experiment in associative and reflective thinking and writing—a practice that often provides a strong starting point for more formal critical, creative, and analytic writing. I encourage you to take your sketchbook to the *In Dialogue* or *raise a flag* exhibits and *Walking With Our Sisters* installation to make notes on your initial reactions to the work in these spaces and to record your thoughts afterwards.

The sketchbooks will be submitted along with your final paper on **December 6, by 4:00pm**. Late sketchbooks will lose 3% per day.

Critical Analysis Paper: 30%

The final paper for the course will require that you write a comparative critical analysis of two different media texts addressing the same (or very similar) issue relevant to Indigenous nations, peoples, or politics. These may be selected from the syllabus, from an extended list of texts/objects/works that will be circulated, or texts of your choosing that I have approved in advance.

Your paper might consider the following questions:

- How do they communicate their subjects differently?
- What is possible in each text?
- What are their limitations?
- What are the politics at work in these texts?
- Do these texts engage the concepts of visual or cultural sovereignty or self-representation? If so, how?

To ground your analysis, you will be required to briefly establish the historical/political/legal context of the issue the two texts analyze. To build on the reflective skills developed in your short papers, you will also use additional theoretical texts from the syllabus to articulate your observations and to support your arguments.

The critical analysis papers must be **10-12 pages**, double-spaced, typed, have complete citations, and must be submitted by **December 6 at 4:00pm**. Only hard copies will be accepted. Please note that your sketchbook is also due on **December 6** and can be submitted at the same time as your critical analysis paper. Late papers will lose 3% per day.

Course Texts

Required texts

Thomas King. 2003. *The Truth About Stories*. Toronto: House of Anansi Press.
Chelsea Vowel. 2016. *Indigenous Writes*. Winnipeg: Highwater Press.

All additional required readings will be academic journal articles or book chapters—available via the UofT Libraries—or will be posted to Blackboard.

Recommended texts

Glen Coulthard. 2014. *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
Thomas King. 2012. *The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Native People in North America*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
Audra Simpson. 2014. *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across Borders of Settler States*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Course Policies

1) Assignments

Formatting: All assignments must be handed in as hard copies. Emailed attachments will not be accepted. All papers should be printed, double spaced, 12 font (Times or equivalent), with proper margins (1”), page numbers, and securely stapled. Papers that go beyond the stated page limit for the assignment, or papers that do not conform to the directions above, may be penalized.

Citation: In all written assignments you must follow basic academic citation rules. You may use the referencing style of your preference (MLA, Chicago, APA, etc.), as long as you are consistent and provide complete references. If you are unsure about proper citation formatting, please consult a style guide.

Late Assignments: Late assignments will have 3% deducted from the total mark for each day the assignment is late, including weekends and holidays. This will be calculated from the date the assignment is received as a hard copy. To make a request for an extension, you will be required to submit supporting documentation. In the event of special circumstances, you must notify the instructor at least 24 hours in advance. Missing class the day of a presentation or the day an assignment is due does not give you an extension on the assignment. Late-assignments should be submitted to the main desk of the Political Science Department (on the 3rd floor of Sidney Smith Hall). Students should make sure that late submissions are signed and dated by staff. Only hard copies are acceptable, e-mailed or faxed assignments will not be accepted unless you have obtained prior approval from the professor.

Grading: If you have concerns regarding your grade of a specific assignment, you may submit a grade appeal. Appeals will only be considered if accompanied by a detailed ½ -1 page written explanation of why you feel the grade is unjustified. Once an appeal request is made, the instructor will reexamine the entire assignment, not just the specific issues raised in the appeal. The appeal process can result in one of three outcomes: no change to the original grade, a higher grade, or a lower grade. If you wish to submit a written appeal, you must submit it within two weeks of grade submission. Final grades are final. If you need to maintain a certain average, or get a specific minimum grade in this class, make sure that the quality your work warrants this grade. If you need help with any of the assignments, make an appointment with the instructor.

2) Class Conduct

This course is organized as a seminar. Students are expected to attend all classes, to have completed all readings in advance, and to be prepared to actively engage with each other and with the course materials. You are expected to treat one another with respect. This means listening carefully to the thoughts, reflections, and questions of your peers. You are not expected to always agree with one another. Indeed, critical discussion and debate are central to any seminar environment. However, disrespectful language will not be tolerated in our shared space.

The Digital: The slow, messy, open-ended practice of writing/drawing/marking-up sketchbooks is a key component to this course. Given this, and the physical constraints of table space, you are expected to leave laptops, tablets, and phones in your bags during seminars and to be prepared to take notes (in whatever form you wish) by hand. While all of our devices make our lives awesome in many ways, they are frequently a distraction in the classroom. Many of our seminar activities will involve close readings of the assigned texts. Along with your sketchbook, you must bring hard copies of all readings to seminars, every week. You are expected to acquire physical copies of the texts by King and Vowell. You are expected to print or photocopy the remaining required readings.

3) Communication with Instructor

If you need to contact the instructor, you are advised to look at this syllabus first (if you lose the hard copy, you will find a PDF posted on Blackboard). The answer to your question is very likely in this document. If you have carefully read through the syllabus and haven't found an answer to your question, then you may email the instructor. You can expect to receive a response in 1-2 days: if you email regarding an assignment the night before it is due, you will likely not receive a response before the deadline.

Do not email with questions regarding individual grades or the return of assignments. Grades will be posted to Blackboard and assignments will be returned in class when they are marked. Do not submit assignments as email attachments.

4) Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence and will be dealt with accordingly. Students are expected to be familiar with Section B of the UofT's *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters*. As the Code outlines, it is an offence for students to:

- Use someone else's ideas or words in their own work without acknowledging that those ideas/words are not their own with a citation and quotation marks, i.e. to commit plagiarism.
- Include false, misleading or concocted citations in their work.
- Obtain unauthorized assistance on any assignment.
- Provide unauthorized assistance to another student. This includes showing another student completed work.
- Submit their own work for credit in more than one course without the permission of the instructor.
- Falsify or alter any documentation required by the University. This includes, but is not limited to, doctor's notes.
- Use or possess an unauthorized aid in any test or exam

These and other offences constitute plagiarism under the Code. Plagiarism is a serious academic offence. For further clarification and information on plagiarism, please see Writing at the University of Toronto (<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources>)

5) Blackboard

The course uses Blackboard for its course website. Required readings, assignment descriptions, this syllabus, grades, and other important information will be posted to our Blackboard course website. You are expected to regularly check both the Blackboard website and your UToronto email for updates.

To access the course website, or any other Blackboard-based course website, go to the UofT portal login page at <http://portal.utoronto.ca> and log in using your UTORid and password. Once you have logged in to the portal using your UTORid and password, look for the My Courses module, where you'll find the link to our course website along with the link to all your other Blackboard-based courses. If you require assistance activating your UTORid, visit the Help Desk at the Information Commons on the ground floor of Robarts Library. The course instructor will not be able to assist you with this.

6) Accessibility Needs

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible:

disability.services@utoronto.ca or <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility>.

Course Schedule

Week One: Introduction

September 11

Michelle Raheja. "Visual Sovereignty". [Blackboard]
Chelsea Vowel. *Indigenous Writes*. Part One, 5-22.

Week Two: The Politics of Stories

September 18 ***Sign up for Intro & Question Presentations***

Thomas King. *The Truth About Stories*.

Further reading:

Jennifer Adese. 2015. "Behaving Unexpectedly in Expected Places: First Nations Artists and the Embodiment of Visual Sovereignty". In *More Will Sing Their Way to Freedom*. Edited by Elaine Coburn. Halifax: Fernwood Press, 129-149.

Emma LaRocque, "Representation and Resistance," *When the Other is Me: Native Resistance Discourse 1850-1990* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2010), 3-16.

Linda Tuhiwai Smith, "Imperialism, History, Writing, and Theory," in *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London: Zed Books, 1999), 19-37.

Week Three: Colonial Documentation & Other State Representations

September 25 ***Intro & Question Presentations begin***

Chelsea Vowel. *Indigenous Writes*. Part Two, 23-114.

John Milloy. "Indian Act Colonialism: A Century of Dishonour".

[Online: http://fngovernance.org/ncfng_research/milloy.pdf]

Alex Williams. 2015. *The Pass System* [To be screened in class]

Week Four: Identity, Authenticity, & Self-Representation

October 2 ***Reflection Paper I is due at start of class***

Class conversation with John Hampton, organizer of "In Dialogue" exhibit

Richard William Hill. "After Authenticity: A Post-Mortem on the Racialized Indian Body". Blackboard.

Further reading:

Deborah Doxtator. 1992. *Fluffs and Feathers: An Exhibit on the Symbols of Indianness*. Brantford, ON: Woodland Cultural Centre

France Trépanier and Chris Creighton-Kelly. 2012. "Understanding Aboriginal Arts in Canada Today: A Knowledge and Literature Review". Ottawa: Canada Council for the Arts. [Online: <http://canadacouncil.ca/research/research-library/2012/05/understanding-aboriginal-arts-in-canada-today>]

Week Five: STATUTORY HOLIDAY, NO CLASS

October 9 ***NOTE: WWOS opens on October 14***

Week Six: Stereotypes, National Mythologies, & the News Media

October 16

Chelsea Vowel. *Indigenous Writes*. Part Three

Journalists for Human Rights (JHR). "Buried Voices: Media Coverage of Aboriginal Issues in Ontario"

[Online: http://www.jhr.ca/en/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Buried_Voices.pdf]

Reporting in Indigenous Communities. [Online: www.riic.ca]

Further reading:

Canadaland Indigenous Media Roundtable, 09 Feb 2016 episode.

<http://www.canadalandshow.com/podcast/indigenous-media-roundtable/>

Rima Wilkes, Catherine Corrigan-Brown and Ricard, Danielle. 2010. "Nationalism and Media Coverage of Indigenous People's Collective Action in Canada". *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*. Vol 34, Iss. 4: 41-59.

Gail Valaskakis. 1994. "Rights and Warriors: First Nations, Media, and Identity". *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature*. Vol. 25, Iss. 1: 60-72.

Kristen Gilchrist. 2010. "'Newsworthy' Victims?: Exploring Differences in Canadian Local Press Coverage of Missing/Murdered Aboriginal and White Women". *Feminist Media Studies* 10 (4): 373-90.

Week Seven: Governing Race Through Gender Discrimination

October 23

Bonita Lawrence. 2003. "Gender, Race, and the Regulation of Native Identity in Canada and the United States: An Overview." *Hypatia* Vol. 18, Iss. 2 : 3-31

Pamela Palmater. 2010. "Bill C-3: Gender Equity in Indian Registration Act".

[Online: <http://www.pampalmater.com/updated-bill-c-3-gender-equity-in-indian-registration-act>]

Pamela Palmater. 2017. "Bill S-3 Amendments to the Indian Act and the Never-Ending Battle for Equality for Indigenous Women"

[Online: <http://indigenousnationhood.blogspot.ca/2017/06/bill-s-3-amendments-to-indian-act-and.html>]

Lenore Keeshig-Tobias. 1983. "(a found poem)" [Blackboard]

Further reading:

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

Publishing.

Gail Valaskakis. 1999. "Sacajawea and her sisters: Images and native women." *Canadian Journal of Native Education* 23, (1): 117-135

Week Eight: Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women

October 30 ***Reflection Paper on WWOS is due at start of class***

Amnesty International. 2009. *No More Stolen Sisters: The Need For a Comprehensive Response to Discrimination and Violence Against Indigenous Women In Canada*.
[Online: <https://www.amnesty.ca/sites/amnesty/files/amr200122009en.pdf>]

Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC). "Fact Sheet: Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women and Girls".
[Online: https://www.nwac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Fact_Sheet_Missing_and_Murdered_Aboriginal_Women_and_Girls.pdf]

Further reading:

Amnesty International. 2004. *Stolen Sisters: Discrimination and Violence Against Indigenous Women in Canada*.
<https://www.amnesty.ca/sites/amnesty/files/amr200032004enstolensisters.pdf>

Sarah Deer. 2015. *The Beginning and End of Rape: Confronting Sexual Violence in Native America*. University of Minnesota Press, 2015.

Sarah Hunt. 2013. "More Than a Poster Campaign: Redefining Colonial Violence."
<https://decolonization.wordpress.com/2013/02/14/more-than-a-poster-campaign-redefining-colonial-violence/>

NWAC. 2010. *What Their Stories Tell Us: Research Findings from the Sisters in Spirit Initiative*.
<https://www.nwac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/2010-What-Their-Stories-Tell-Us-Research-Findings-SIS-Initiative.pdf>

Jiwani, Yasmin and Mary Lynn Young. 2006. "Missing and Murdered Women: Reproducing Marginality in News Discourse." *Canadian Journal of Communication* 31 (4): 895-917.

READING WEEK, NO CLASS

November 6

Week Nine: Vanishing & Presence—Photography

November 13

Paul Chaat Smith. "Every Picture Tells a Story" [Blackboard]

Sherry Farrell Racette. "Returning Fire, Pointing the Canon: Aboriginal Photography as Resistance" in *The Cultural Work of Photography in Canada*. Edited by Carol Payne and Andrea Kunard, 70-92.

[Online at UT Library: <http://search.library.utoronto.ca/details?10500055>]

Further reading

Jeff Thomas. "Emergence from the Shadow: First People's Photographic Perspectives" in *The Cultural Work of Photography in Canada*, 212-230 [Online at UT Library]

Week Ten: Music, New Media, & Remixing

November 20

- Jarrett Martineau. 2014. "Indigenous Media, Remix, & Revolution". Video of remarks at *Indigenous New Media Symposium*
[Online: <http://mediastudiestech.wixsite.com/indigenous-new-media>]
- Jackson 2bears. "My Post-Indian Technological Autobiography" in *Coded Territories: Tracing Indigenous Pathways in New Media Art*. Edited by Steven Loft and Kerry Swanson, Section One: 1-30
[Free PDF available online: <http://press.ucalgary.ca/books/9781552387061>]

Further reading:

- Jarrett Martineau. 2015. Rhythms of Change: Mobilizing Decolonial Consciousness, Indigenous Resurgence and the Idle No More Movement". In *More Will Sing Their Way to Freedom*. Edited by Elaine Coburn. Halifax: Fernwood Press, 229-254.

Week Eleven: Indigenous Futurism

November 27

- Lou Catherine Cornum. 2015. "The Space NDN's Star Map". *The New Inquiry*. 26 January 2015. <https://thenewinquiry.com/the-space-ndns-star-map/>
- Karyn Recollet. 2016. "Gesturing Indigenous Futurities Through the Remix". *Dance Research Journal* Vol. 48, Iss. 1: 91-105.

Further reading:

- Lindsay Nixon. 2016. "Visual Cultures of Indigenous Futurisms" *GUTS Magazine* 20 May 2016. <http://gutsmagazine.ca/visual-cultures/>

Week Twelve: Representing "Reconciliation"

December 4 ***NOTE: Final paper and sketchbooks are due DEC 6, 4:00pm***

- Frankie Noone. 2015. "A Graphic Essay" in *GUTS Magazine*
<http://gutsmagazine.ca/conversations-in-the-dark/>
- Erica Violet Lee. 2016. "Reconciling in the Apocalypse". *The Monitor* 01 March 2016.
<https://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/monitor/reconciling-apocalypse>
- Nagy, Rosemary and Gillespie, Emily. 2015. "Representing Reconciliation: A news frame analysis of print media coverage of Indian residential schools," *Transitional Justice Review*. Vol. 1: Iss. 3, Article 2.

Further reading:

- Dylan Robinson and Keavy Martin (eds). 2016. *Arts of Engagement: Taking Aesthetic Action in and Beyond the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*. Wilfrid Laurier Univ. Press.
- Chelsea Vowel. *Indigenous Writes*. Parts Four & Five.