

# Indigenous Feminist & Queer Theories

POL 377 H1S | Sidney Smith 1087 | Thursdays 10-noon



*Walking a path; never alone* by Nadzin Degagné (Algonquin)

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Dr. Uahikea Maile | uahikea.maile@utoronto.ca | Sidney Smith 3108 | Office Hours Mondays 10-noon

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## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores concepts and perspectives from Indigenous feminist and queer theories. We trace an assortment of critical theorizations about race, class, gender, sexuality, and Indigeneity as identity formations and categories of power in relation to settler colonialism. Looking specifically at scholarship in the field of Indigenous, gender, and feminist studies, the course tracks two important genealogies. First, we examine how Indigenous feminisms expand the discipline of Indigenous Studies and intervene into feminist thought. Second, we investigate how queer Indigenous studies extend Indigenous feminist ideals and contribute to queer theory. Along the way, the course mines a myriad of Indigenous feminist and queer theories on affect, decolonization, demilitarization, erotics, utopia, and much more.

## REQUIRED MATERIAL

- All required material is available in Querqus on Course Reserve

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Understand an array of Indigenous feminist and queer theories
- Comparatively analyze intersections of race, class, gender, sexuality, and Indigeneity in relation to settler colonialism
- Engage scholarly and theoretical debates on feminist and queer theories within Indigenous gender, sexuality, and feminist studies
- Discuss, imagine, and create theory about feminism and queerness in the concentration of Indigenous politics

### STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

When we meet, I will expect you to:

- Closely read required material before lectures
- Complete and submit assignments by deadlines
- Participate actively and consistently in discussion
- Respectfully engage your professor and peers
- Contribute positively to a safe classroom climate

### PROFESSOR RESPONSIBILITIES

When we meet, you should expect that I will:

- Arrive to class prepared and organized
- Convey passion for the material
- Conduct class in a manner that is thorough and engaging
- Respect each student's individuality as a person and learner
- Encourage you to become close readers, critical thinkers, and excellent writers

### COURSE POLICIES

1. **Accommodations:** If you have or acquire a disability that may affect your participation in class, I will do my best to accommodate your needs (e.g., you may need more time on assignments, material in Braille, alternative assignments because of PTSD triggers). To help in this process, please register with Accessibility Services. You can do this over the phone (416-978-8060) or via email ([accessibility.services@utoronto.ca](mailto:accessibility.services@utoronto.ca)). You can also go to their office (455 Spadina Avenue, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Suite 400, Toronto, ON, M5S 2G8). To ensure that necessary accommodations are made, contact me or have a representative from Accessibility Services contact me as soon as possible so your needs can be accommodated in a timely manner.
2. **Emergency Absences:** If you are absent from class for personal issues, injury, illness, or other medical reasons, you can submit one type of official medical documentation so that it can be excused. There are four types of documentation: UofT Verification of Illness or Injury Form ([illnessverification.utoronto.ca](http://illnessverification.utoronto.ca)); Student Health or Disability Related Certificate; College Registrar's Letter; Accessibility Services Letter. An excused absence will not count against your attendance grade. Absences that are unexcused will count against your attendance grade.
3. **Academic Integrity:** This course follows the UofT rules and regulations on academic integrity. According to the International Center for Academic Integrity's definition endorsed by UofT, we should communicate and act in our class community and coursework with honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage. You are required to understand and adhere to the Faculty of Arts and Science's Code of Behavior on Academic Matters. More information on academic integrity and what constitutes misconduct is available online: [governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019](http://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019).
4. **Laptops and Phones:** I recommend that you avoid using laptops in class. Additionally, I recommend that you avoid using phones and smartphones in class, as well as handheld or tablet devices. If your phone rings during lectures, you may be asked to leave the classroom. If you are texting, or using your phone, tablet, or laptop in a distracting manner, you may be asked to leave.

5. **Submitting Assignments:** All assignments are due on Wednesday by 11:59pm EST and to be submitted electronically through Quercus ([q.utoronto.ca](http://q.utoronto.ca)). Normally, students will be required to submit their written submissions to Turnitin.com for review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their submissions to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site. You may opt-out of using Turnitin.com. In that case, I will offer alternative methods for written submissions.
6. **Late Work:** Late submissions for assignments will not be accepted.
7. **Remarking:** You may submit a formal request for remarking after receiving work back, but no later than 2 weeks after it was returned. The request, submitted through Quercus, should include a rationale for remarking that will be evaluated to determine whether or not remarking is granted. I will remark the submission and return it no later than 2 weeks from the date remarking was granted. There is an appeal process that you can read more about online: [teaching.artsci.utoronto.ca/teachinginas/academichandbook-jitreminers/#remarkingpolicy](http://teaching.artsci.utoronto.ca/teachinginas/academichandbook-jitreminers/#remarkingpolicy).
8. **Online Communication:** Use the message function in Quercus to contact me. If you encounter an emergency, you may send an email message to notify me. In both cases, I will respond no later than 48 hours after receiving a message.

### **PARTICIPATION – 10 total points**

Participation is evaluated through attendance and discussion during the term. At the beginning of each class meeting, I will take attendance with a sign-in sheet. Your signature next to your printed name documents your presence. Attending class is critical to performing well on assignments. The point scale for attendance marks is as follows:

- 0 – attended one class or none**
- 1 – attended at least 3 classes**
- 2 – attended at least 5 classes**
- 3 – attended at least 7 classes**
- 4 – attended at least 9 classes**
- 5 – attended at least 11 classes**

You are expected to attend class meetings prepared to discuss required material. This means being prepared to closely discuss the material, reiterating case studies and facts as well as offering analysis, synthesis, and questions, during class. This also means participating in group work within discussions.

The point scale for discussion marks is as follows:

- 0 – Inconsistent and inactive discussion**
- 1 – Very little consistency and activity in discussion**
- 2 – Little consistency and activity in discussion**
- 3 – Moderate consistency and activity in discussion**
- 4 – Consistent and active discussion**
- 5 – Very consistent and active discussion**

### **READING SUMMARIES – 15 total points**

You are required to submit five reading summaries. Each reading summary is worth 3-points. There are three components to reading summaries: thesis, summary, and application. Each component is worth 1-point and will be evaluated for accuracy and completeness. For this assignment, you will select a single journal article or single book chapter of required material to summarize. **You may choose a journal article or book chapter from the week(s) of a respective deadline, but not before the previous deadline.** For instance, Reading Summary 2 could be written about Jennifer Nez Denetdale's article but not Dian Million's article which is eligible only for Reading Summary 1. Reading summaries should be single-spaced and 1-page in length. Use the following format:

1. **Citation Information:** Write the author's name and article/chapter title at the top of the page.
2. **Thesis:** Write the author's thesis in your own words. What I mean by this is I want you to summarize the problem and proposed solution that the text discusses.
  - a. *Thesis Tips:* To assist in making sure you write the thesis as an argument, one trick is to start the sentence with the phrase, "The author argues that [problem goes here] and suggests that we must [solution goes here]." To grasp an author's thesis, you need to read the full article/chapter, but you will notice hints early on. For example, the title often reflects a central part of the thesis (problem and/or solution), and there typically is an overview paragraph or two in the introductory section that will point towards the thesis. Furthermore, although the "problem" tends to be discussed in the introduction, "solutions" are often explicated in the conclusion. It is common to get distracted by smaller main points, so to identify the thesis you'll need to thoroughly read, pull out the main points first, and then reflect: what is the overall problem that is being posed and overall solution that encompasses the whole reading?
3. **Summary:** In 1-2 paragraphs, identify the main points of the text. This should be the supporting arguments, not the examples the author uses to make a point. Cover the key points, but don't get overwhelmed by small examples. One way to weed out the less significant points is to consider what is essential to the thesis.
4. **Application:** Take one or two arguments from the article/chapter and offer an analysis of them, a discussion of why they matter, and how such arguments connect to previous readings and/or course theories and critiques. An analysis is not a personal evaluation, nor is it a discussion of superficial details such as writing style. Rather, it is a short but in-depth discussion of what you think the significance of these arguments is and, and more importantly, why they are significant. If you are struggling with this part, consider what a reading contributes to the concentration of this course: Indigenous politics. Conclude by offering one or two questions to aid in discussing the reading. These questions should generate discussion so as not to be merely factual, but for helping us unpack part of the author's argument, and/or helping us understand the author's argument in relation to other work.

### **PAPER – 25 total points**

The paper is a literature review of Indigenous feminist theories. Select two to three articles or book chapters from the required material on Indigenous feminisms from Week 2 to Week 5. Put the selected authors' theoretical contributions into conversation with one another. Review their work and how they theorize Indigenous feminism. Based on your review, develop and advance a thesis that identifies theoretical contributions as well as gaps in the articles or book chapters that you've selected. Papers should be 6-8 pages not including the bibliography, with 1-inch margins, double-spaced, and in Chicago 17<sup>th</sup> edition style and format.

### **FINAL EXAM – 50 total points**

The final exam is an essay. The exam is open book and you may use non-electronic materials: required readings, notes, reading summaries, and the literature review paper. Three weeks before the final exam period, on March 19, ten essay questions will be distributed during class. The questions will be comprehensive, covering all required material and lectures on Indigenous feminist and queer theories. On the day of the exam, five of the ten essay questions will be on the final. You will select three of the five questions to answer in an essay.

### **MARKING SCHEME**

<b><i>Term Work</i></b>	<b><i>Due Date</i></b>	<b><i>Weight in Percentage</i></b>
Participation	n/a	10%
Reading Summaries	Jan. 22, Feb. 5, Mar. 4, Mar. 18, Apr. 1	15%
Paper	Feb. 12	25%

Final Exam	n/a	50%
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### GRADING SCALE

Percentage	Grade	GPA Value	Grade Definition
90-100	A+	4.0	Excellent
85-89	A	4.0	
80-84	A-	3.7	
77-79	B+	3.3	Good
73-76	B	3.0	
70-72	B-	2.7	
67-69	C+	2.3	Adequate
63-66	C	2.0	
60-62	C-	1.7	
57-59	D+	1.3	Marginal
53-56	D	1.0	
50-52	D-	0.7	
0-49	F	0.0	Inadequate

### COURSE SCHEDULE

	<i>Topics and Readings</i>	<i>Assignment Due</i>
<u>Week 1:</u> January 9	<b>Introduction to Indigenous Feminist &amp; Queer Theories</b>	
<u>Week 2:</u> January 16	<b>What is Indigenous Feminism?</b> “Who Is Your Mother?” Paula Gunn Allen “From the ‘F’ Word to Indigenous/Feminisms” by Luana Ross “Indigenous Feminisms” by Joanne Barker	
<u>Week 3:</u> January 23	<b>Affect, History &amp; Geography</b> “Felt Theory” by Dian Million “Captivating Eunice” by Audra Simpson “Notes Toward a Native Feminism’s Spatial Practice” by Mishuana Goeman	Reading Summary 1
<u>Week 4:</u> January 30	<b>Tradition &amp; Law</b> “Securing Navajo National Boundaries” by Jennifer Nez Denetdale “Decolonizing Rape Law” by Sarah Deer	
<u>Week 5:</u> February 6	<b>Sovereignty, Decolonization &amp; Demilitarization</b> “Women’s Mana and Hawaiian Sovereignty” by Haunani-Kay Trask	Reading Summary 2

	<p>“Navigating Our Own ‘Sea of Islands’” by Lisa Kahaleole Hall</p> <p>Introduction to <i>Nā Wāhine Koa</i> by Noelani Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua</p>	
<p><u>Week 6:</u> February 13</p>	<p><b>Queer Settler Colonialism</b></p> <p>“Extermination of the Joyas” by Deborah A. Miranda</p> <p>“Settler Homonationalism” by Scott Laura Morgensen</p>	Paper
<p><u>Week 7:</u> February 20</p>	<p><b>Winter Reading Week: No Class</b></p>	
<p><u>Week 8:</u> February 27</p>	<p><b>What is Queer Indigenous Studies?</b></p> <p>“Queer Theory and Native Studies” by Andrea Smith</p> <p>“<i>Love Unbecoming</i>” by Jodi A. Byrd</p>	
<p><u>Week 9:</u> March 5</p>	<p><b>Doubleweaving</b></p> <p>“Doubleweaving Two-Spirit Critiques” by Qwo-Li Driskill</p> <p>“Indigenous Queer Normativity” by Leanne Betasamosake Simpson</p>	Reading Summary 3
<p><u>Week 10:</u> March 12</p>	<p><b>Drag</b></p> <p>“Aloha in Drag” by Stephanie Nohelani Teves</p> <p>“‘Indians on Top’” by June Scudeler</p>	
<p><u>Week 11:</u> March 19</p>	<p><b>Erotics</b></p> <p>“Indigenous Fantasies and Sovereign Erotics” by Lisa Tatonetti</p> <p>“The Erotics of Sovereignty” by Mark Rifkin</p>	Reading Summary 4
<p><u>Week 12:</u> March 26</p>	<p><b>Anomaly &amp; Utopia</b></p> <p>“Notes Toward a Theory of Anomaly” by Daniel Heath Justice</p> <p>“Sodomy, Sovereignty, and Other Utopian Longings” by Juana María Rodríguez</p>	
<p><u>Week 13:</u> April 2</p>	<p><b>Unsettling Decolonization</b></p> <p>“Everyday Decolonization” by Sarah Hunt &amp; Cindy Holmes</p> <p>“Unsettling Queer Politics” by Scott Lauria Morgensen</p>	Reading Summary 5

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