

The University of Toronto

Department of Political Science

Fall 2020

POL 485 H 1 F/POL2027 H F:

**Topics in Political Thought II: Wittgenstein and Indigenous Politics in
Canada**



Lecturer: Dale Turner (dale.turner@utoronto.ca)

Lecture Time: Weds 12-2 pm

Classroom: Online Synchronous (live lecture, recorded and posted on Quercus)

Office: Indigenous Studies Program, Room 220, 563 Spadina Avenue

Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:00-3:00pm and by appointment (over Zoom)

STATEMENT ON ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL LAND

We would like to acknowledge this sacred land on which the University of Toronto operates. It has been a site of human activity for 15,000 years. This land is the territory of the Huron-Wendat and Petun First Nations, the Seneca, and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River. The territory was the subject of the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy and Confederacy of the Ojibwe and allied nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. Today, the meeting place of Toronto is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work in the community, on this territory.

Revised by the Elders Circle (Council of Aboriginal Initiatives) on November 6, 2014.

Available at <https://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/fnh>

Seminar Description:

The goals of this upper level seminar in political theory are twofold. The first goal is to explore the philosophical thought of Ludwig Wittgenstein. We will read at least the first part of the *Philosophical Investigations* and his *Remarks on Frazer's Golden Bough*. We will cast several of Wittgenstein's main ideas and concepts – language games, objects of comparison, family resemblances, surveyable representation, forms of life, and rule following – by “applying” them to a discussion of contemporary Indigenous politics in Canada. There is an enormous amount of secondary scholarship on Wittgenstein, and we will definitely read some of it. In particular, we will read the work of Canadian philosopher James Tully, who weaves a *Wittgensteinian* approach to meaning, language, and the nature of philosophical thinking into his writing on Indigenous politics. For those who are keen about discussing Wittgenstein's philosophy more closely, I will host **an optional** reading group where we will read the *Investigations* at what will seem like a snail's pace (time to be decided later).

A “Wittgensteinian” approach to philosophical thinking is by means of examples, or *exemplars*. The second goal of the seminar is to, broadly speaking, discuss Wittgenstein's thought in the context of three exemplars in contemporary Indigenous politics (though we will undoubtedly add to this initial list):

- the White Paper of 1969, the Chiefs of Alberta's response in the form of the Red Paper, and the creation of s.35(1) of the Canadian constitution;
- the evolution of aboriginal and Indigenous rights and nationhood from Oka (1990), to the final report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996), to the Supreme Court decisions of *Van der Peet* (1996) and *Delgamuukw* (1997);
- and third, we will discuss the recently ratified constitution of the Anishinaabek Nation of Ontario, the *Chi Naaknigewin*.

You do not require an extensive background in Indigenous politics in Canada to take this seminar – and it is perfectly acceptable if you have never heard of Ludwig Wittgenstein before now. The starting point of this seminar is your perspective. The seminar begins with the question, “What matters most to you, and why?”, which you will post to the class discussion board. Our starting point will be to understand better where each of us is coming from before we gather to discuss Indigenous politics. As you will see, individual perspectives matter in Wittgenstein's philosophical thinking, as it does for Indigenous ways of engaging in a philosophical dialogue.

The philosophical question that we will return to throughout the term of the seminar is, “What does it mean to listen to Indigenous peoples *in and on their own terms*?” During the course of our discussions we will raise new examples revealing different ways of thinking about politics in general, and Indigenous politics more specifically. We will create a kind of philosophical landscape (what Wittgenstein calls a “perspicuous” or “surveyable” representation) that highlights connections between various ways of thinking about the issues at hand (in this seminar, centred around a discussion of Indigenous politics, the philosophical thought of Ludwig Wittgenstein, and your individual perspectives). In other words, your voice matters!

Books to purchase:

If you can, try to read this book before the start of the seminar. However, we will make time in the first two weeks of the seminar to discuss the life of Wittgenstein, so no worries if you can't get to it. This is an excellent intellectual biography of Wittgenstein's life:

Ray Monk, *The Duty of Genius* (Vintage, 1991).

https://www.amazon.ca/Ludwig-Wittgenstein-Genius-Ray-Monk/dp/0140159959/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=the+duty+of+genius&qid=1599508419&sr=8-1

The Wittgenstein text you will need to purchase (any version is fine):

Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*

All other readings will be available on Quercus

Optional background or preparatory reading:

If you are not familiar with the history of the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the Canadian state, then you can't go wrong with JR Miller's now classic book, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens*. Allan D. McMillan and Eldon Yellowhorn's *First Peoples in Canada* (Douglas & McIntyre, 2004) is a little dated if you are looking for contemporary content, but it remains a reliable text. There is a recent book out by James Frideres titled *Arrows in a Quiver: From contact to the courts in Indigenous-Canadian relations* (U Regina Press, 2019) that has more up-to-date information on the legal and political relationship. Harold R. Johnson's *Peace and Good Order: The case for Indigenous justice in Canada* (Penguin, 2019) is worth a read, too. Another interesting book is *Indigenous Relations: Insights, tips & suggestions to make reconciliation a reality* Ed. Bob Joseph & Cynthia F. Joseph (Raincoast Books, 2019).

As for Indigenous writers, well, I will make suggestions for further reading during the course. However, anything by Leanne Simpson is worth reading, perhaps start with *Dancing on our Turtle's Back* (2011) or *As We Have Always Done* (2017).

For background reading on Wittgenstein:

K.T. Fann, *Wittgenstein's Conception of Philosophy* (Partridge Publishing, 2015)

A.C. Grayling, *Wittgenstein: A very short introduction* (Oxford Paperbacks, 2001)

Severin Schroeder, *Wittgenstein* (Polity Press, 2006)

Grading:

1 - Each student will have a "Writing Folder" on Quercus where you will post your assigned essays, drafts of your longer paper, and your final paper.

2 - I will create a "Discussion Folder" to facilitate class discussions. We may end up with several folders depending on how the class discussions evolve.

3 - The seminar time slot (W 12-2 pm) will be devoted to part-lecture and class discussion.

- Three short reflective essays. 3x10% = **30%**
 - Essay 1: “What matters most to you, and why?”
 - Essay 2: What is the relationship between “language-games” and a “form of life”?
 - Essay 3: In what sense is Indigenous politics a “politics of Indigenous translation”?
- A 20-page final paper (Graduate student requirement is 25 pages). Topic and writing style to be chosen in consultation with me. (Due on the last day of exams) **40%**
 - Seminar Presentation: Surveyable Representation of your paper (weeks 11 or 12) **10%**
- Participation in class discussions and on the Quercus Discussion page. **20%**

Late penalty policy: Papers will be accepted after the due date but will receive a 10 percent penalty and an additional penalty of 2 percent per day for each additional day the paper is late.

A note about participation. Undertaking a seminar in this online synchronous format is new pedagogical territory for me, and probably for many of you. I appreciate that some of you are not as comfortable speaking up in class (or Zoom), and it is not my style to call on students in class (though I do occasionally, especially if I’m confident you have something relevant or interesting to say). For me, “participation” has more to do with the level of interest that you show in the course material and problems at hand. There are four ways to participate in this seminar:

- 1 – in class discussions;
- 2 – contribute to the Discussion Folder;
- 3 – meet with me during office hours and/or individual appointments (over Zoom, e-mail, or exchanges in your Writing Folder); and, of course,
- 4 – by the “quality” of your writing (assignments).

I will say more about these criteria in the first class.

Grading Scheme:

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

Seminar Policies:

Online communication policy: I prefer personal correspondence to be over e-mail. Please put **LW** in the subject line, I will try to get back to you as soon as possible. If you have not heard back from me in a day, please don't hesitate to send me another e-mail!

Academic integrity:

Please familiarize yourself with the University of Toronto's *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>). I like these quotes from the Preamble:

“What distinguishes the University from other centres of research is the central place which the relationship between teaching and learning holds. It is by virtue of this relationship that the University fulfills an essential part of its traditional mandate from society, and, indeed, from history: to be an expression of, and by so doing to encourage, a habit of mind which is discriminating at the same time as it remains curious, which is at once equitable and audacious, valuing openness, honesty and courtesy before any private interests.”

And later,

“This Code is concerned, then, with the responsibilities of faculty members and students, not as they belong to administrative or professional or social groups, but as they co-operate in all phases of the teaching and learning relationship.

Such co-operation is threatened when teacher or student forsakes respect for the other--and for others involved in learning--in favour of self-interest, when truth becomes a hostage of expediency. On behalf of teacher and student and in fulfillment of its own principles and ideals, the University has a responsibility to ensure that academic achievement is not obscured or undermined by cheating or misrepresentation, that the evaluative process meets the highest standards of fairness and honesty, and that malevolent or even mischievous disruption is not allowed to threaten the educational process.”

The following is a direct quote from the Quercus site on integrating turnitin.com into the course:

“Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays 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. https://q.utoronto.ca/courses/46670/pages/integration-turnitin#h_9602525431531923949892

You are not required to use Turnitin.com. If you choose not to submit your papers through Turnitin.com please see me. You will have to hand in your outline and rough drafts and detailed bibliography along with the final draft of your paper.”

Plagiarism is a very serious offence. Here's some good advice on how not to plagiarize: <https://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize/> . If you have any doubts about your writing please run it by me. For more information on the writing process at UofT visit the website “Writing at the University of Toronto” at <https://writing.utoronto.ca>.

Accessibility: The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations or have any accessibility concerns, please don't hesitate to see me during the first week of the semester. For more information visit <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility>.

Religious observances: This is from the university's policy *Religious Observances, Policy on Scheduling of Classes and Examinations and Other Accommodations*: It is the policy of the University of Toronto to arrange reasonable accommodation of the needs of students who observe religious holy days other than those already accommodated by ordinary scheduling and statutory holidays.” See <https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/religious-observances-policy-scheduling-classes-and-examinations-and-other>. Don't hesitate to see me if you have any concerns or questions about observing religious or spiritual practices.

Seminar Schedule

Week 1 (September 16th, 2020): Introduction

- Course Syllabus
- The seminar brings into conversation two topics:
 - The philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein
 - Contemporary Indigenous Politics
- Learning through discussing examples

Readings:

Ray Monk, *The Duty of Genius*, (read over the first 6 weeks)

Week 2 (September 23rd, 2020): Wittgenstein's life

- A brief biography of LW

Readings:

Ray Monk, *The Duty of Genius*

Daniel C. Dennett, "Ludwig Wittgenstein," in Time Magazine, The Century's Greatest Minds, March 29, 1999, pp. 88-90.

“Ludwig Wittgenstein”, in Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2009)

Background reading:

Norman Malcolm, Ludwig Wittgenstein: A Memoir (OUP, 2001)

First Essay: “What matters most to you, and why?”

- Due Tuesday September 22, 2020 (my mother will be 81)
- Post on Discussion folder (yes, this essay is shared with the class)

Week 3 (September 30th, 2020): Contemporary Indigenous Politics

- Indigenous Rights in Canada
- Modes of resistance and resurgence

Readings:

The Calder Case [here](#)

Sparrow Decision [here](#)

Van der Peet Decision [here](#)

Delgamuukw Decision [here](#)

RCAP’s final report [here](#)

Background Stuff:

Unist’ot’en [website](#)

The Anishinaabek Nation of Ontario website

Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s vision [website](#)

Week 4 (October 7th, 2020): Early Wittgenstein to *The Investigations*

- *The Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*
- Transition to the *Philosophical Investigations*
- What is a “treaty”?

Readings:

A.C. Grayling, “The Early Philosophy”, from *Wittgenstein* (OUP, 1988)

David Pears, “Transition” from *The False Prison: The Study of the Development of Wittgenstein’s Philosophy*, Vol II (OUP, 1988)

Background Readings:

Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*

Week 5 (October 14th, 2020): *The Philosophical Investigations*

- Key concepts in the *Investigations*

Reading:

Philosophical Investigations, (1-108)

Week 6 (October 21st, 2020): The *Philosophical Investigations* II/RFGB

- **Key concepts in the Investigations**
- **Remarks on Frazer's *Golden Bough***

Readings:

Philosophical Investigations, (just keep reading...)
Wittgenstein, "Remarks on Frazer's *Golden Bough*"

Background readings:

Week 7 (October 28th, 2020): White Paper Liberalism

Readings:

The White Paper
The Red Paper
The Brown Paper
Sally Weaver

Optional Readings:

George Grant, Lament for a Nation

Documentary:

Constitutional Reform

Second Essay: What is the relationship between "language-games" and a "form of life"?

- **Due Tuesday October 27th, 2020**
- **Post in your Writing Folder (not shared with the class)**

Week 8 (November 4th, 2020): From Oka to RCAP

Readings:

John Borrows, "Frozen Rights"
Van der Peet
Delgamuukw
Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples summary of final report

Documentaries on the Oka conflict:

270 Years of Resistance (NFB: Alanis Obomsawin)
Acts of Defiance (NFB: Mark Zannis)

Reading Week – November 9 – 13, 2020

***** Note: Last day to drop the seminar is November 9th, 2020 *****

Week 9 (November 18th, 2020): Chi Naaknigewin

- Guest Speakers – Jason Laronde and Mary Laronde

Readings:

The Chi Naaknigewin

Week 10 (November 25th, 2020): On the Politics of Indigenous Translation

- The “politics of language” and the “language of politics”

Reading:

Dale Turner, “On the politics of Indigenous translation”

Week 11 (December 2nd, 2020): Student Presentations – Surveyable Representations

Third Essay: In what sense is Indigenous politics a “politics of Indigenous translation”?

- Due Tuesday December 1st, 2020
- Post in your Writing Folder (not shared with the class)

Week 12 (December 9th, 2020): Student Presentations – Surveyable Representations