

Land and Indigenous Politics

POL443 / POL2322 / USA403



Ahu at northern plateau of Mauna Kea on Hawai'i island (photo by Dr. Maile)

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines Indigenous politics *through* land. We explore transnational Indigenous politics by focusing on an array of global struggles over land. In doing so, the course considers how Indigenous land-based movements, connected across territories and oceans, are constituted through and cultivate relationships between Indigenous peoples and their social ecologies and more-than-human existents. As a seminar, we discuss Indigenous geontologies—ecological ways of being—of land, water, and air. Therefore, the seminar is oriented around unique Indigenous struggles over and relations with a sacred mountain, lakes and rivers, and the atmosphere, to name a few. We track new, critical, and groundbreaking research on Indigenous politics that intersects with fields like Latin American Studies, Pacific Island Studies, and Black Studies.

REQUIRED MATERIAL

- Maile Arvin, *Possessing Polynesians: The Science of Settler Colonial Whiteness in Hawai'i and Oceania* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019)

- Nick Estes, *Our History Is the Future: Standing Rock Versus the Dakota Access Pipeline, and the Long Tradition of Indigenous Resistance* (New York: Verso, 2019)
- Macarena Gómez-Barris, *The Extractive Zone: Social Ecologies and Decolonial Perspectives* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017)
- Dina Gilio-Whitaker, *As Long As Grass Grows: The Indigenous Fight for Environmental Justice, from Colonization to Standing Rock* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2019)
- Susan M. Hill, *The Clay We Are Made Of: Haudenosaunee Land Tenure on the Grand River* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2017)
- Tiffany Lethabo King, *The Black Shoals: Offshore Formations of Black and Native Studies* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019)
- Brittany Luby, *Dammed: The Politics of Loss and Survival in Anishinaabe Territory* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2020)
- Elizabeth A. Povinelli, *Geontologies: A Requiem to Late Liberalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016)
- All other required materials are available in Querqus on Library Reading List

COURSE OBJECTIVES

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

- Understand key conceptual issues related to Indigenous politics of land
- Evaluate environmental (in)justice through the lens of Indigenous politics
- Compare global formations of settler colonialism and extractive capital
- Engage scholarly debates about Indigeneity, land, sovereignty, and relationality
- Discuss and write analysis in the concentration of Indigenous politics

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

For this course, I expect you to:

- Closely read required material
- Attend seminar meetings and participate in synchronous discussion
- Submit assignments on time before deadlines
- Respectfully engage your peers and professor
- Contribute positively to a safe course climate free from hate, discrimination, and intolerance

PROFESSOR RESPONSIBILITIES

For this course, you should expect me to:

- Arrive to the seminar prepared and organized
- Convey ideas from required material in a clear, thorough, and engaging manner
- Respect your individuality as people and learners
- Accommodate you during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Encourage you to become excellent readers, writers, and critical thinkers

COURSE POLICIES

1. **Seminar Meetings:** The seminar will meet synchronously online via Zoom each week on Tuesday from 2–4pm EST. You will need technology like a computer, tablet, or smart phone with internet access to join seminar meetings, as well as video-audio capabilities to participate in seminar discussion. In accordance with [university policy](#), the first three (3) weeks of the course are mandated to be online. If in-person instruction becomes possible safely, in accordance with the same university policy, this course policy will be amended to delineate rules and procedures concerning health and safety.
2. **Absences:** You should complete the Absence Declaration form on [ACORN](#) anytime you are absent. No additional information or documentation is required.

3. **Accommodations:** If you require accommodations throughout the course, I will do my best to accommodate your particular needs. Register with Accessibility Services on the phone (416-978-8060), via email (accessibility.services@utoronto.ca), or at their office (455 Spadina Avenue, 4th Floor, Suite 400, Toronto, ON, M5S 2G8). Contact me, or have a representative from Accessibility Services contact me, as soon as possible so I can accommodate you in a timely manner. Likewise, contact me if you require specific accommodations related to access to online course content.
4. **Academic Integrity:** This course follows U of T policy, rules, and protocols on academic integrity. According to the International Center for Academic Integrity's definition endorsed by the university, 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.
5. **Submitting Assignments:** Assignments are typically due on Sundays at 11:59pm EST, with the exception of the seminar paper. Assignments must be submitted electronically through Querqus (q.utoronto.ca). Normally, students will be required to submit their papers to the university's plagiarism detection tool 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 tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the university's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site (<http://uoft.me/pdt-faq>).
6. **Late Work:** Late submissions for assignments are generally not accepted. However, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, you are granted one (1) "pandemic reason" that you may exercise to submit late work up to one week (7-days) after an assignment's deadline.
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 Querqus, 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-jitremininders/#remarkingpolicy.
8. **Communication:** Use Querqus messenger to contact me. Do not email me concerning the course. I will try my best to respond to your Querqus message within 24–48 hours after receiving a message during the week. If you are experiencing an emergency and need to be in touch, send me an email.

PARTICIPATION – 20 total points

Participation is evaluated based on individual contributions—verbal and textual—during discussions throughout the term. You are expected to actively and consistently engage required material in discussions. This means you should *closely read* material and be prepared to *closely discuss* it: (1) reiterating case studies and facts *accurately*; (2) offering synthesis *coherently*; (3) posing *organized* analysis and *relevant* questions. This includes participating in group work that will be assigned during facilitations. The point scale for participation marks is as follows:

0	No contribution to discussion
1–4	Very little activity and consistency in discussion
5–8	Little activity and consistency in discussion
9–12	Moderate activity and consistency in discussion
13–16	Active and consistent discussion
17–20	Very active and consistent discussion

FACILITATION – 30 total points

Discussions in each seminar meeting will be facilitated by student groups. Facilitated discussions are expected to be 75- to 90-minutes, after an introductory prologue lecture. Undergraduate students are required to facilitate one seminar discussion, whereas graduate students are required to facilitate three seminar discussions. In the opening Querqus module, students will sign up for discussions to facilitate. I will compile and upload a schedule, immediately thereafter, for facilitator groups. You are responsible with coordinating amongst your respective facilitators. The objective of the facilitation is to *accurately identify* and *thoroughly discuss* the main argument(s) and supporting analysis in required material, and also *develop and posit thoughtful questions* for consideration in the seminar. Groups are required to compose and submit facilitation plans—samples are provided in Querqus—detailing the structure and content of the facilitation including dynamic discussion questions for small and/or large groups, as well as relevant media to understand required material. Groups are required to send me a Querqus message with the facilitation plan attached by Sunday at 11:59pm EST at the beginning of the week for the selected facilitation.

BOOK REVIEW – 10 total points

Each student is required to write a review of one book concerning the Indigenous politics of land which is not from the required material. Sample book reviews are provided in Querqus. You are expected to locate and select a call for book reviews from a scholarly journal—a sample will be provided. After selecting the call for review, identify a book with the intention of composing a review of it in accordance with the journal’s *particular guidelines*; the review must be submitted *with* the call. Although not required, I highly encourage you to submit reviews for publication.

SEMINAR PAPER – 40 total points

The paper should be written on a topic of your choice related to the theories, case studies, and issues discussed in the seminar regarding land and Indigenous politics. The seminar paper can be empirical (i.e., analyzing observable and/or documented data) or theoretical (i.e., analyzing ideas, concepts, and theories)—or both. The objective of the paper is to advance research questions and offer preliminary answers from analysis. For example: (1) What political understandings do Indigenous peoples construct about their relationship to land?; (2) How do Indigenous sovereignty and decolonization play a role in the environmental justice movement?; (3) In what ways are Indigenous ecological ways of being co-opted by the settler-state? An abstract of no more than 250-words is due on March 6. For undergraduate students, the seminar paper is required to be 10–12 pages (~3,000–3,500 words) not including a bibliography. For graduate students, the seminar paper is required to be 15–20 pages (~4,500–5,000 words) not including a bibliography. Papers should be written in Chicago 17th edition format with 1-inch margins, double-spaced, and endnotes. Sample papers are provided in Querqus.

MARKING SCHEME

<i>Term Work</i>	<i>Due Date</i>	<i>Weight in Percentage</i>
Participation	n/a	20%
Facilitation	n/a	30%
Book Review	Feb. 20	10%
Seminar Paper	Apr. 8	40%

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 & Required Material</i>		<i>Assignment Due</i>
<u>Week 1:</u> January 11	Introduction Complete opening tasks in Querqus	
<u>Week 2:</u> January 18	Geontology <i>Geontologies: A Requiem to Late Liberalism</i> by Elizabeth A. Povinelli	
<u>Week 3:</u> January 25	Social Ecology <i>The Extractive Zone: Social Ecologies and Decolonial Perspectives</i> by Macarena Gómez-Barris *Last day to enroll: January 23*	
<u>Week 4:</u> February 1	Lake <i>Dammed: The Politics of Loss and Survival in Anishinaabe Territory</i> by Brittany Luby	
<u>Week 5:</u> February 8	Clay <i>The Clay We Are Made Of: Haudenosaunee Land Tenure on the Grand River</i> by Susan M. Hill	
<u>Week 6:</u> February 15	Grass <i>As Long As Grass Grows: The Indigenous Fight for Environmental Justice, from Colonization to Standing Rock</i> by Dina Gilio-Whitaker	Book Review Due

Week 7: February 22	Reading Week	
Week 8: March 1	River <i>Our History Is the Future: Standing Rock Versus the Dakota Access Pipeline, and the Long Tradition of Indigenous Resistance</i> by Nick Estes	Abstract Due
Week 9: March 8	Shoal <i>The Black Shoals: Offshore Formations of Black and Native Studies</i> by Tiffany Lethabo King	
Week 10: March 15	Ocean <i>Possessing Polynesians: The Science of Settler Colonial Whiteness in Hawai'i and Oceania</i> by Maile Arvin *Last day to drop: March 14*	
Week 11: March 22	Mountain “At Home on the Mauna” by Hi‘ilei Julia Hobart “A Fictive Kinship” by Iokepa Casumbal-Salazar “On Being Late” by Uahikea Maile	
Week 12: March 29	Atmosphere “Settler Atmosphericities” & “Expanse” by Kristen Simmons “To Breathe Together” by Sefanit Habtom & Megan Scribe	
Week 13: April 5	Seminar Paper Presentations	Seminar Paper Due: April 8