

## Land and Indigenous Politics

POL443 / POL2322

University College, Room 67

Tuesdays, 2–4pm



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

---

Dr. Uahikea Maile | [uahikea.maile@utoronto.ca](mailto:uahikea.maile@utoronto.ca) | Drop-In Hours (SSH 3067): Mon. 10am–12pm

---

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

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

---

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

### STUDENT

#### RESPONSIBILITIES

For this course, I expect you to:

- Closely read all required material
- Attend seminars and carefully engage in prologues and participate in discussion
- Submit assignments on time
- Respectfully relate to your peers and professor
- Contribute positively to a safe course climate free from discrimination, hate, and intolerance

### PROFESSOR

#### RESPONSIBILITIES

For this course, you should expect me to:

- Provide enriching prologues
- Convey content, ideas, and material with clarity
- Facilitate inclusive and active discussion
- Respect each student's individuality as a learner and person
- Encourage and support excellence in reading, writing, and critical thinking

## COURSE POLICIES

1. **Health and Safety:** This course follows U of T policy, rules, and protocols for health and safety. I strongly encourage everyone to remain up-to-date on vaccinations and upload your vaccination documents to [UCheck](#). Maintaining updated information on the vaccination status of our community will help inform future health and safety planning. It will also minimize disruption should conditions require vaccine requirements to be reimposed. If you are feeling unwell or experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms, you

should stay home and self-isolate. [The provincial self-assessment tool](#) can help provide guidance and information for those that may have been exposed and/or have symptoms. While the current pause in our mandatory mask requirement continues, the use of a [medical mask](#) in high-density indoor spaces when physical distancing is not possible is strongly encouraged during the period when cases are rising in Ontario. U of T is a mask-friendly environment, and we ask everyone to respect each other's decisions, comfort levels, and health needs. The COVID-19 pandemic is a rapidly changing public health crisis, which national and provincial governments as well as the university are responding to in real time. This course is designed to adapt to such responses and, most importantly, keep you and our communities healthy and safe.

2. **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](mailto:accessibility.services@utoronto.ca)), or at their office (455 Spadina Avenue, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Suite 400, Toronto, ON, M5S 2G8). Contact me, or have a representative from Accessibility Services contact me, as soon as possible so you can be accommodated in a timely manner. Likewise, contact me if you require specific accommodations related to access to online course content.
3. **Absences:** Students are expected to complete the Absence Declaration form, available on [ACORN](#), anytime they are absent from class. No additional information or documentation is required. In relation to the policy on health and safety, if you are not feeling well, you are highly encouraged to stay home. In that case, contact me for accommodations.
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](http://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019).
5. **Late Work:** Late assignment submissions are not accepted.
6. **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 messenger, must include a rationale for remarking, which will be evaluated to determine if 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-jitreminders/#remarkingpolicy](http://teaching.artsci.utoronto.ca/teachinginas/academichandbook-jitreminders/#remarkingpolicy).
7. **Communication:** Use Querqus messenger to contact me. Do not email me concerning the course. I will try my best to respond via Querqus within 24–48 hours after receiving a message during the week. If you are experiencing an emergency and need to be in touch with me, send me an email.

### **PARTICIPATION – 20 total points**

Participation is evaluated based on individual contributions 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 *carefully 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 scale for participation marks is as follows:

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

### **FACILITATION – 30 total points**

Discussion in each seminar will be facilitated by student groups. After opening prologues, facilitated discussions are expected to be 75- to 90-minutes. Undergraduate students are required to facilitate one (1) seminar discussion, whereas graduate students are required to facilitate three (3) seminar discussions. In the introductory Querqus module, students will submit preferences for discussions to facilitate. I will compile and distribute a facilitation schedule. You are responsible with accessing the schedule and coordinating amongst your respective facilitators. The main objective of the facilitation is to *accurately identify* and *thoroughly discuss* the main argument(s) in required material and, in doing so, *develop and pose thoughtful questions* about the supporting analysis for consideration in the seminar. Groups are required to compose and submit facilitation plans—samples provided in Querqus—that detail the structure, responsibilities, and content of the facilitation, including discussion questions for small and/or large groups as well as potentially relevant case studies, media, and/or creative activities. 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 facilitation week.**

### **BOOK REVIEW – 10 total points**

Each student is required to write a review of one (1) book that is not from the required material. The review should highlight how the selected book contributes to Indigenous politics of land. Samples are provided in Querqus. You are expected to locate and select a call for book reviews from a scholarly journal. After selecting the call for review, identify a relevant book to construct a review of it in accordance with that journal’s particular guidelines. The review must be submitted with the journal’s call for review. Although not required, I highly encourage students to submit reviews for publication.

### **SEMINAR PAPER – 40 total points**

The required paper should be written on a topic of your choice related to case studies, theories, and issues concerning land and Indigenous politics covered in the seminar. The paper can be empirical (i.e., analyzing observable and/or documented data) or theoretical (i.e., analyzing ideas, concepts, and theories)—or both. The paper’s main objective is to construct a novel research question and offer a preliminary answer to it based on critical analysis. For sample questions, here are a few examples: (1) What political understandings have Indigenous peoples constructed 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 (~250 words) is

due on March 5. For undergraduate students, the seminar paper is required to be 10–12 pages (~3,000–3,500 words). For graduate students, the seminar paper is required to be 15–20 pages (~4,500–5,000 words). Papers should be written in Chicago 17<sup>th</sup> edition format with 1-inch margins, 12-point font, 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. 19         | 10%                         |
| Seminar Paper    | Apr. 6          | 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 &amp; Required Material</i>  | <i>Assignment Due</i> |
|------------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| <u>Week 1:</u><br>January 10 | <b>Introduction</b><br><br>Complete opening tasks in Querqus   |                       |
| <u>Week 2:</u><br>January 17 | <b>Geontology</b><br><br><i>Geontologies: A Requiem to Late Liberalism</i> by Elizabeth A. Povinelli                           |                       |
| <u>Week 3:</u><br>January 24 | <b>Social Ecology</b><br><br><i>The Extractive Zone: Social Ecologies and Decolonial Perspectives</i> by Macarena Gómez-Barris |                       |
| <u>Week 4:</u><br>January 31 | <b>Lake</b><br><br><i>Dammed: The Politics of Loss and Survival in Anishinaabe Territory</i> by Brittany Luby                  |                       |
| <u>Week 5:</u><br>February 7 | <b>Clay</b><br><br><i>The Clay We Are Made Of: Haudenosaunee Land Tenure on the Grand River</i> by Susan M. Hill               |                       |

|                        |  |                              |
|------------------------|--|------------------------------|
| Week 6:<br>February 14 | <b>Grass</b><br><br><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: February 19 |
| Week 7:<br>February 21 | <b>Reading Week</b>  |                              |
| Week 8:<br>February 28 | <b>River</b><br><br><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: March 5        |
| Week 9:<br>March 7     | <b>Shoal</b><br><br><i>The Black Shoals: Offshore Formations of Black and Native Studies</i> by Tiffany Lethabo King   |                              |
| Week 10:<br>March 14   | <b>Ocean</b><br><br><i>Possessing Polynesians: The Science of Settler Colonial Whiteness in Hawai‘i and Oceania</i> by Maile Arvin                                   |                              |
| Week 11:<br>March 21   | <b>Mountain</b><br><br>“At Home on the Mauna” by Hi‘ilei Julia Hobart<br>“A Fictive Kinship” by Iokepa Casumbal-Salazar<br>“On Being Late” by Uahikea Maile          |                              |
| Week 12:<br>March 28   | <b>Atmosphere</b><br><br>“Settler Atmospheric” & “Expanse” by Kristen Simmons<br>“To Breathe Together” by Sefanit Habtom & Megan Scribe                              |                              |
| Week 13:<br>April 4    | <b>Seminar Paper Presentations</b>   | Seminar Paper due: April 6   |