

## Land and Indigenous Politics

POL 444 & 2344 / Spring 2024 / Dr. Uahikea Maile  
Mondays / 9am–11am



Ahu (stone alter) at the 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. Specifically, we explore Indigenous politics by focusing on an array of local and global socio-political struggles over land. Connected across territories and oceans, the course considers how Indigenous land-based movements are constituted through, and cultivate further, the unique relationships between Indigenous peoples and their social ecologies. As a seminar, we discuss Indigenous geontologies—ecological ways of being—of land, water, and air. Therefore, the seminar is oriented around unique Indigenous relations with and struggles over a sacred mountain, lakes and rivers, and the atmosphere, to name a few. We track groundbreaking research, intersecting the fields of Latin American Studies, Pacific Island Studies, Black Studies, and more, toward a critical study of Indigenous Politics that is global, international, and transnational.

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### 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)
- Other required materials are available in the Library Reading List in Querqus

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

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

- ☐ Understand key conceptual issues concerning Indigenous politics of land
- ☐ Evaluate environmental (in)justice through the lens of Indigenous Politics
- ☐ Compare global forms of settler colonialism & transnational forms of extractive capitalism
- ☐ Engage scholarly debates about Indigeneity, relationality & sovereignty
- ☐ 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 & carefully engage in prologues & discussion
- ☐ Submit assignments on time
- ☐ Interact respectfully with peers & professor
- ☐ Contribute positively to a safe course climate free from discrimination, hate & intolerance

## PROFESSOR RESPONSIBILITIES

For this course, you should expect me to:

- ☐ Provide enriching prologues
- ☐ Convey content, ideas & material in clear ways
- ☐ Facilitate inclusive & active discussions
- ☐ Respect each student's individuality as a learner & person
- ☐ Encourage excellence in reading, writing & critical thinking

## COURSE POLICIES

1. **Health and Safety:** This course follows U of T policy, rules, and protocols for health and safety. It is designed to adapt to potentially shifting policy, rules, and protocols and, most importantly, keep you and all our communities healthy and safe. Although the COVID-19 pandemic may seem over, it remains a health and safety concern which the federal and provincial governments as well as university continue evaluating and responding to. In this context, I encourage students to remain up-to-date on COVID-19 vaccinations and wear face masks as needed to prevent the spread of airborne viruses. I will test weekly for COVID-19 to contribute to protecting the health and safety of our classroom.
2. **Accommodations:** If you require accommodations in 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.
3. **Absences:** If you become ill and it affects your ability to do your academic work, consult me right away. I will ask you for documentation in support of your specific medical circumstances. This documentation can be an Absence Declaration or the University's Verification of Student Illness or Injury (VOI) form. The VOI indicates the impact and severity of the illness, while protecting your privacy about the details of the nature of the illness. If you cannot submit a VOI due to limits on terms of use, you can submit a different form like a letter from a doctor, as long as it is an original document and contains the same information as the VOI including dates, academic impact, practitioner's signature, phone and registration number. For more information on the VOI, see <http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca>. For information on Absence Declaration Tool for Arts & Science students, see <https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/absence>. Lastly, if you get a concussion, break your hand, or suffer some other acute injury, you should register with Accessibility Services as soon as possible.
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. **Generative AI:** Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools like ChatGPT is permitted in limited instances. Students may only use AI as a learning aid to create outlines for the construction of the book review and seminar paper. Written assignments must be original work produced by individual students alone. Students may not copy or paraphrase from any AI tools for the purpose of completing written assignments in this course. The knowing utilization of AI tools, apart from creating outlines as learning aids for written assignments, may be considered an academic offense in this course.
6. **Submitting Assignments:** All assignments are due on Sundays at 11:59pm. Assignments must be submitted electronically via [Querqus](#). Typically, 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 and Innovation web site here: <http://uoft.me/pdt-faq>.

7. **Late Work:** Late submissions for assignments are not accepted.
8. **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 via Querqus messenger, must include a rationale for remarking, which will be evaluated to determine whether remarking is granted. I will remark submissions and return them 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](http://teaching.artsci.utoronto.ca/teachinginas/academichandbook-jitremininders/#remarkingpolicy).
9. **Communication:** Use Querqus messenger, instead of email, 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, send me an email: [uahikea.maile@utoronto.ca](mailto:uahikea.maile@utoronto.ca).

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

Participation is evaluated based on individual contributions during discussions throughout the term. You are expected to engage required material actively and consistently in seminar meetings. This means you should *closely read* material and be prepared to *carefully discuss* it: (1) reiterating case studies and facts *accurately*; (2) posing *organized* thoughts, *appropriate* comparisons, and *relevant* questions; (3) offering synthesis and reflection *coherently*. This includes participating in small group work 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**

Seminar discussions are facilitated by student groups. Each seminar meeting is divided into two parts: prologue and facilitation. After opening prologues that introduce authors, main arguments, methodologies, and interventions, student groups are expected to facilitate discussions for 45- to 60-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 are required to submit preferences for discussions to facilitate. Based on these preferences, a facilitation schedule will be constructed. You are responsible with accessing the schedule and coordinating among your respective facilitators.

The primary objective of the facilitation is to lead and develop a discussion of the required material. There are three suggested methods of accomplishing this. First, facilitators should closely read and study the required material with the purpose of becoming an expert on the text(s). Second, facilitators ought to collaborate on designing a seminar plan to discuss the *Three T's*: themes, threads, and take-aways. What are the main themes in the text? What case studies, theories, analyses, and arguments in a text are threaded, or woven together and connected, with other texts? What are the most important take-aways from the text? This is not to suggest that facilitators merely pose these exact questions but, instead, to design a guided discussion in the seminar around the *Three T's*. Third, facilitators should implement their designed plan and execute a guided discussion during the latter part of the meeting, including at least one small group discussion, to spark seminar engagement on Indigenous politics of land.

Groups are required to compose and submit facilitation plans—samples provided in Querqus—that detail the structure, individual responsibilities, and content of the facilitation, including discussion questions for large and/or small 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 by Friday at 11:59pm EST at the end of the week prior to the facilitation. Feedback may be provided no later than Sunday before the seminar meeting on Monday.

### **BOOK REVIEW – 10 total points**

Each student is required to write a review of one (1) book. The review should highlight how the selected book contributes to the study of land in Indigenous Politics. Samples are provided in Querqus. For this assignment, you are expected to locate and select a call for book reviews from a scholarly journal, such as the [Journal of the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association](#), [American Indian Culture and Research Journal](#), and [AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples](#). After selecting the call for review, identify a book to construct a review in accordance with that journal's particular guidelines. The book may be selected from the required material, and the review must be submitted with the journal's call for review. Although not required, I highly encourage graduate students to submit reviews for publication.

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

The paper should be written on a topic of your choice covered in the seminar. This 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 paper's main objective is to present a *novel research question* and offer a *preliminary answer* 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 settler states? An abstract (~250 words) is due on March 3, 2024. 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.

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**MARKING SCHEME**

<i><b>Term Work</b></i>	<i><b>Due Date</b></i>	<i><b>Weight in Percentage</b></i>
Participation	n/a	20%
Facilitation	n/a	30%
Book Review	Feb. 18	10%
Seminar Paper	April. 21	40%

**GRADING SCALE**

<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>GPA Value</b>	<b>Grade Definition</b>
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><b>Topics &amp; Required Material</b></i>		<i><b>Assignment Due</b></i>
<u>Week 1:</u> January 8	<b>Introduction</b>	Opening tasks in Querqus
<u>Week 2:</u> January 15	<b>Geontology</b>  <i>Geontologies: A Requiem to Late Liberalism</i> by Elizabeth A. Povinelli	
<u>Week 3:</u> January 22	<b>Social Ecology</b>  <i>The Extractive Zone: Social Ecologies and Decolonial Perspectives</i> by Macarena Gómez-Barris	
<u>Week 4:</u> January 29	<b>Lake</b>  <i>Dammed: The Politics of Loss and Survival in Anishinaabe Territory</i> by Brittany Luby	
<u>Week 5:</u> February 5	<b>Clay</b>  <i>The Clay We Are Made Of: Haudenosaunee Land Tenure on the Grand River</i> by Susan M. Hill	

<u>Week 6:</u> February 12	<b>Grass</b>  <i>As Long As Grass Grows: The Indigenous Fight for Environmental Justice, from Colonization to Standing Rock</i> by Dina Gilio-Whitaker	Book Review
<u>Week 7:</u> Feb. 19	<b>Spring Reading Week — No Seminar Meeting</b>	
<u>Week 8:</u> February 26	<b>River</b>  <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
<u>Week 9:</u> March 4	<b>Shoal</b>  <i>The Black Shoals: Offshore Formations of Black and Native Studies</i> by Tiffany Lethabo King	
<u>Week 10:</u> March 11	<b>Ocean</b>  <i>Possessing Polynesians: The Science of Settler Colonial Whiteness in Hawai‘i and Oceania</i> by Maile Arvin	
<u>Week 11:</u> March 18	<b>Mountain</b>  “At Home on the Mauna” by Hi‘ilei Julia Hobart “A Fictive Kinship” by Iokepa Casumbal-Salazar “On Being Late” by Uahikea Maile	
<u>Week 12:</u> March 25	<b>Atmosphere</b>  “Settler Atmospheric” & “Expanse” by Kristen Simmons “To Breathe Together” by Sefanit Habtom & Megan Scribe “Let Gaza Change You” by Uahikea Maile	
<u>Week 13:</u> April 1	<b>Seminar Paper Workshop</b>	Seminar Paper due April 21