

GEOGRAPHY 400 | FALL 2019
Special Topics: Indigenous Geographies

Instructor: Dr. Michelle Daigle
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Seminar Discussion: Wed 2-4pm
Classroom: BA 2145



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**** Contact Dr. Daigle for an extended version of the syllabus****

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Indigenous peoples have always theorized space from embodied experiences of place-making and movement across relational geographies. This course draws on theoretical texts of Indigeneity, with a primary focus on Indigenous spaces and places in the Americas. Specifically, the course will examine how core geographic concepts such as place, territory, land, movement and the scale of the body are sites of colonial dispossession and violence, as well as sites for decolonial and liberatory thought and practice. The course is divided into 3 parts: part 1 examines historical and contemporary formations of Indigenous geographies, including those in urban spaces (we will go on a walking tour of Tkaronto during week 3); part 2 examines the spatial workings of settler colonialism with a particular focus on cartographic practices, colonial law, and biopolitical tactics; and, part 3 examines Indigenous theories and practices of resistance, refusal, resurgence, decolonization and freedom. We will primarily engage with Indigenous-led scholarship within Geography and Indigenous Studies, in addition to works that are generated by non-Indigenous scholars who collaborate with Indigenous communities, and are in conversation with Indigenous Studies scholars.

¹ Art/logo credits: Decolonize, [Decolonizing Media](#)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this class, students will be able to:

- Critically synthesize central course concepts and themes to understand the role of place, territory, land, movement, and the scale of the body in Indigenous ontologies and political praxes, as well as in colonial processes of dispossession and violence
- Identify and explain the spatial workings of settler colonialism, including historical and contemporary processes of dispossession and violence reproduced through cartographic practices, legal frameworks and biopolitical tactics
- Demonstrate knowledge on theories and practices of decolonization and Indigenous resurgence, including the multiple strategies, sites and scales in which decolonization and freedom is activated
- Identify the role of multiple actors in decolonial and liberatory movements such as Indigenous women, youth, Two-Spirit people, activists, and other-than-human actors
- Demonstrate Indigenous and decolonial re-mappings of space, place, land and movement

COURSE EXPECTATIONS & APPROACHES

All students are expected to come to class each week prepared to discuss the weekly readings in depth. Students are expected to bring a copy of their readings and any additional notes and questions that will contribute to the class discussion. It is important to me that we cultivate a space in which seminar members engage course readings and themes based on their own experiential knowledge (to the extent that you feel comfortable doing so). I want our work together to feel experimental and collaborative, where we can build ideas together as a group. I want us to be able to reconsider taken-for-granted assumptions about Indigenous peoples and places, to listen to one another, and to challenge each other in respectful and generative ways.

COURSE EVALUATION

35% Weekly Critical Writing Reflections, Attendance & Participation

- 20% for weekly participation
- 15% for weekly critical writing reflections (except for weeks 1, 12 and reading week)

25% Short Paper due on Monday, November 11th

30% Decolonial Mapping Project due on Friday, December 13th

- Don't worry, you do not need to be a skilled cartographer, or have any kind of proficiency in GIS! The final mapping project is open to a range of projects, including a final research paper, the production of visual representations, an analysis of existing artistic works or the production of your own artistic work. The final project is intended to encourage students to apply course concepts in a way that will be generative, meaningful and exciting to them. We will discuss the details of the project on the first day of class and throughout the semester.

10% Final Presentations

COURSE WEBSITE

This course is managed on Quercus at <https://q.utoronto.ca/courses/122193>. You must have a UTORid to access information about course assignments, grading guidelines & grades. You should also ensure that your UTORid is properly entered in the ROSI system. Forwarding your utoronto.ca e-mail to an external account (Gmail, Outlook, etc.) is not recommended, since in some cases messages sent to these accounts are filtered as junk mail.

COURSE READINGS

There is no assigned textbook or course reader for this course. All required course readings are available on Quercus.

Please Note: Sometimes, I change the readings slightly based on class interest, discussions and current events. I will announce changes in class but please check Quercus regularly for any announcements I might send regarding readings.

Notes on Reading: This is an upper level course that is discussion based and requires careful and intentional reading. As outlined in the course evaluation section, it is crucial that you do all of the required reading before class, as the seminar discussion and activities center on the topics, themes, debates and arguments explored in them. Please take the time to carefully read the weekly readings, take time to reflect on them, and how you are coming into relationship/conversation with each piece. There will likely be terms and concepts that will come up in the reading that you will not be familiar with (this still happens to me after 3 degrees!) When this happens, take the time to look up the term or key word. The International Encyclopedia of Human Geography is a great place to start. If you are not familiar with the author(s), look them up to learn more about their work.

POLICIES FOR ATTENDANCE & MISSED OR LATE ASSIGNMENTS

I will accept late assignments IF you have discussed the reason with me **PRIOR** to the due date or if you bring a doctor's note. I cannot grant last minute extensions except in cases of medical emergency. If you do not turn in your assignment and you do not have a valid reason or doctor's note, then it will be subject to a **5% per day late penalty**. If you find yourself in a difficult situation that is causing you to miss class and assignments, please contact [Health & Wellness](#) as soon as possible.