

JIG 440 | Indigenous Geographies
University of Toronto, Fall 2020
Wednesdays 2–5pm
Virtual Seminar

Instructor: Dr. Michelle Daigle

Office: Sidney Smith 5016B

Online Office Hours on Zoom: Wednesdays from 5-6pm, Thursdays 4-5pm

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**** Please contact Dr. Daigle if you would like a copy of the full 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 space 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; 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 by anti-colonial scholars who collaborate with Indigenous communities, and are in conversation with Indigenous Studies scholars.

Learning Outcomes

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, property-making, 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 Organization

Access to Course Materials & Readings

This course is managed on [Quercus](#). 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.

You are required to purchase one novel by an Indigenous author for this course (for week 9). All other 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.

Submissions

All courses assignments will be submitted online, on the Quercus website, by the indicated due date.

Assignments and Evaluation

Key Dates

1. Weekly Seminar Contribution	20%	Every week
2. Critical Writing Reflections on Readings	15%	Multiple due dates (see below)
3. Critical Writing Reflection on Podcast	10%	Nov. 6 th
4. Short Paper on Creative Fiction Novel	25%	Nov. 25 th
5. Decolonial Mapping Project	30%	Dec. 14 th

20% Weekly Seminar Contribution

Students will be evaluated in terms of the overall quality (not quantity) of their contributions to class discussion. Contribution is obviously contingent upon the amount of preparation students do before class- this includes a meaningful engagement with the readings as well as respectfully listening to and engaging with classmates' ideas and arguments. Weekly contribution will include participation in breakout discussion groups, in-class writing reflections, and upholding community engagement agreements that we will collectively set during weeks 1 & 2. During week 12 (our final class), students will be asked to share about their final decolonial mapping project- participation in this discussion will be part of students' overall weekly seminar contribution grade. Please contact me if you have concerns about your wifi connection and how that might affect your ability to participate in seminar discussions.

15% Critical Writing Reflections

Students are required to develop and submit critical writing reflections based on the assigned readings. This course requirement is designed to enable in-class discussions that center on key concepts, theories, arguments and debates in the texts. Writing reflections should address pertinent issues raised in the week's readings. The purpose of this exercise is to let me know you are engaging the reading materials. In particular, your writing reflections should reflect your ability to synthesize information, to demonstrate your knowledge by detailing key points from readings, and developing critical reflections in response to these materials based on your own experiential knowledge. These weekly writing reflections will be used each week to structure class discussions.

All students are required to submit **a total of 5 writing reflections** throughout the term with the choice of submitting during the following 8 weeks: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11. You can submit your critical writing reflections during any of these weeks, as long as you submit a total of 5 throughout the course of the semester. The writing reflections must be approximately 300-350 words and submitted to the course Quercus website, **no later than 6pm on the following Tuesdays: Sept.**

22nd, Sept. 29th, Oct. 6th, Oct. 13th, Oct. 20th, Oct. 27th, Nov. 24th, Dec. 1st. You should keep a copy of your reflections as Quercus/computer problems may arise. These reflections will be graded on a 100-point scale and will be assessed in conjunction with your weekly participation in class discussions. I will provide feedback and comments on your reflections. If you have any questions about your grades or how to improve your weekly reflections, do not hesitate to come by my office hours.

5% Critical Writing Reflection on Podcast Episode on COVID-19 & Indigenous Peoples

During week 8 of the course, we will not meet for a virtual seminar. Instead, students must watch a panel discussion that was recorded in May 2020 on COVID-19 and Indigenous peoples. Once you have watched the 1hour panel discussion, please write an extended critical writing reflection (approximately 600-700 words) on the topic of COVID-19 and Indigenous communities. Please refer to the key questions for week 8 as you write your reflection. You do not have to answer each question, please refer to them more as a guide to key themes that can be explored in your reflection. Your paper must be in Times New Roman, 12-point font, double-spaced with 1 inch margins. **The critical writing reflection is due on Quercus on Friday, November 6th at 6pm.**

25% Short Paper on Creative Fiction Novel

Students must read 1 creative fiction novel by an Indigenous author and write a 1250-word (5 pages, double-spaced) paper on the novel. You will have the choice of 3 novels, and 1 collection of creative poetry, all written by Indigenous youth. The purpose of this assignment is to examine various forms of Indigenous knowledge production, by considering how theory on colonial violence and on Indigenous resistance and life-making practices is generated through the brilliance of creative Indigenous writers. For the paper, you are required to provide a brief summary of the book (no more than 1 paragraph), and to examine how core course concepts are weaved throughout the novel you have chosen to read. The paper should demonstrate your knowledge and comprehension of core course concepts while also critically reflecting on how the weekly topics, themes and theories materialize and are made evident in the novel. You are encouraged to write in first person; the essay presents your analysis, after all. Your paper must be in Times New Roman, 12-point font, double-spaced with 1 inch margins. **The short paper is due on Quercus on Friday, November 20th at 6pm.**

The short paper will be evaluated as follows:

- 10% for critical engagement with the course readings by conveying an understanding of main concepts, themes and arguments in your own words (concepts and theories are clearly defined, explained and used throughout the paper; the paper has a strong introduction and conclusion showing evaluation and synthesis skills)
- 10% for linking course concepts and themes to the creative novel in a way that is clear to the reader, thoughtful and comprehensive. For this aspect of the paper, I need to see that you are making appropriate and clear links to examples and key themes in the novel, and that you're engaging with various aspects of the novel, even as you might hone in on a couple of key themes. I also need to see that your own voice is being incorporated into the paper.

- 5% for organization, style and clarity (key points are linked in a logical order; excellent transition between paragraphs; correct use of grammar, few spelling & punctuation errors; accurate citation for all sources, including quotes & images).

30% Decolonial Mapping Project- Don't worry, see below!

All students are required to do a final decolonial mapping project. 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, as long as students are re-mapping, or re-conceptualizing understandings of space, places and peoples through Indigenous or decolonial concepts and understandings. Some students might propose to do a final research paper that examines Indigenous reclamations of space and/or bodily sovereignty, or otherwise examine a particular case of solidarity-building that activates Indigenous law. Other students might engage with existing artistic works that engage with core course concepts of space, place, movement, territory, land and water and either create a map (or a set of maps or visual representations) that are evoked by the artistic works, or write a critical reflective essay on such works. Other students might opt to create their own creative work, such as visual art, a comic book strip, a children's book, a cookbook, a community pamphlet or toolkit, a screenplay, a podcast episode, a photo essay, poetry etc. The options are endless and this 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, and I will give students examples of previous projects to incite your imagination. I also encourage you to come to my office hours to discuss your project at some point throughout the term. **The final project is due on Quercus on Monday, December 14th at 6pm.**

The final project will be evaluated as follows:

- 15% Critical Engagement with Course Concepts: Course theories and themes are clearly defined, explained and applied; excellent capacity to analyze, synthesize and critically evaluate course concepts and themes; careful use of examples, illustrations and applications
- 10% Style and Clarity: The final project demonstrates clear connections to and engagement with core course concepts and themes; author's own voice shines through
- 10% Originality: Strong evidence of original thinking; creative analysis & interpretation; ideas reflect deep thought; project shows evaluation & synthesis skills.

Late Penalties

I will accept late assignments IF you have discussed the reason with me **PRIOR** to the due date. If you do not turn in your assignment and you do not have a valid reason, 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.

Required Text

Students must purchase or acquire a library loan of one of the following creative fiction novels:

1. Johnny Appleseed by Joshua Whitehead

2. A Mind Spread Out on the Ground by Alicia Elliott
3. The Break by Katherena Vermette
4. This Wound is a World by Billy-Ray Belcourt

Course Policies & Expectations

Course Approach

This course will be held as a virtual seminar for the fall of 2020. All students are expected to virtually attend the seminar via Blackboard Collaborate each week and must be prepared to discuss the weekly readings in depth. Students are expected to have a copy of their readings and any additional notes and questions that will contribute to the seminar 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 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.

Communication

I will reply to e-mail messages within 24 hours, excluding weekends and holidays. Messages sent after 5pm will likely receive a reply the following day. Email correspondence should be used for straightforward questions. Students are advised to visit me during office hours for anything that requires extensive explanations and discussions. Please feel free to come to office hours with another person in the class if you have similar questions and concerns~ group discussions are welcome!

Accessibility Services

The University provides accessibility services for students in accordance with the terms of the Ontario Human Rights Code. This occurs through a collaborative process that acknowledges a collective obligation to develop an accessible learning environment that both meets the needs of students and preserves the essential academic requirements of the University's courses and programs. Students requiring academic accommodations must register with [Accessibility Services](#). For more information on services and resources available to instructors and students, please contact Tanya Lewis, Director, Director of Academic Success and Accessibility Services, at (416) 978-6268; tanya.lewis@utoronto.ca.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship in a university, and to ensuring that a degree from the University of Toronto is a strong signal of each student's individual academic achievement. As a result, the University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. The University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm) outlines the behaviours that

constitute academic dishonesty and the processes for addressing academic offences. Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

In papers and assignments:

- Using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement.
- Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor.
- Making up sources or facts.
- Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment.

In academic work:

- Falsifying institutional documents or grades.
- Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University.

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from your instructor or from other institutional resources (see <http://academicintegrity.utoronto.ca/>)

Writing Support

For more material on academic writing, consult <http://advice.writing.utoronto.ca>. Go to <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/arts-and-science> to book an appointment at one of the writing centres on campus. Material on the English Language Learning program (ELL) is at <http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/advising/ell>.

Library Support

University of Toronto Libraries provides access to a vast collection of online and print resources to faculty, staff, and students. Research help is available by phone, e-mail, chat, and in-person. (See **Library website** for more details.)

For more information on services and resources available, visit the Library website for your campus.

University of Toronto Libraries (St. George) <https://onesearch.library.utoronto.ca/>

University of Toronto Mississauga Library library.utm.utoronto.ca/

University of Toronto Scarborough Library library.utoronto.ca/utsc/