

ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCE STUDIES 475/675

Winter 2015

Introduction to Indigenous Knowledge for Environmental Studies Students

Instructors: Peter Schuler, Elder
Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation

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Office hours: Thursdays 10:00am-12:00pm

Meeting Time/Location: Tuesdays 2:30-5:20pm

Overview:

This unique course, co-taught with Traditional Knowledge Holder/Elder Peter Schuler from the Mississauga's of the New Credit First Nation, will provide students in the Faculty of Environment an introduction to First Nations issues in Canada and to Traditional Knowledge and Practice. The course introduces students to academic literature that documents historic and current Indigenous issues in Canada as well as decolonizing and critical Indigenous methodologies but more importantly, the course gives students the opportunity to learn directly from a Traditional Knowledge Holder in both classroom and experiential contexts. Small group discussions will address themes such as Traditional Medicine, understanding our relations, invasive species, different conceptions of time as well as the nature of knowledge.

Course fees approx. \$250 per student

Course Objectives:

- 1) Through Traditional Teachings and discussions with Peter Schuler:
 - (i) Introduce students to First Nations issues in Canada;
 - (ii) Introduce students to an understanding of the world through a Traditional Knowledge lens, and;
 - (ii) Be able to learn directly from and discuss these issues with a Traditional Knowledge Holder.
- 2) Through weekly readings and discussions:
 - (i) Introduce students to some relevant academic literature on First Nations issues in Canada and appropriate/respectful research approaches such as critical Indigenous methodologies and decolonizing methodologies, and;
 - (ii) Discuss these in a small group setting with insights from Peter and Dan

Course Structure:

Lecture/seminar discussions: Each class will be losing broken down into two components:

1. Traditional teaching and discussion led by Peter Schuler
2. Discussion of readings and cross cutting themes led by Dan McCarthy

Resources:

Course Texts:

Kimmerer, Robin. 2013. *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants*. Milkweed Editions.

DESIRE 2 LEARN:

All course communications and course materials (lecture notes, weekly readings) will be provided through LEARN. Please sign in to LEARN as soon as possible and ensure you are on the course roster and that your e-mail address is correct.

Course schedule and **weekly readings** will be provided through **LEARN** under “Lessons”.

Supplemental course readings are posted under “Readings”, under weekly “Lessons”, as links or specific references are provided and students are expected to find these using the University of Waterloo’s E-Journals Collection available at:

(<http://sfx.scholarsportal.info/waterloo/az>).

Please allow at least **24 hours** for responses to e-mail inquires from the teaching team and do not expect e-mail responses from the teaching team over the weekend.

Course Requirements:

Assignment #1: Weekly Reflections - 20%

- Each week students will be required to do a critical reflection on their learning throughout the course. A synthesis of this personal critical reflection (no more than 1-page) will be submitted to the instructors.
- **Due Date: Every Friday before the class on Tuesday**

Assignment #2: Learning Artifact - 10%

- Students will create an “artifact” that represents their learning throughout the course. Peter will explain the significance of this artifact during class and it will provide part of the basis for the student presentation and final reflective paper.
- **Due Date: Ready for student presentations**

Assignment #3: Presentations - 20%

- Students will provide a 20-minute presentation and foster 10-15 minutes of discussion in the last two weeks of class. The presentations will synthesize their learning throughout the course based on Peter’s teachings, the course readings and will integrate a discussion of their learning artifact.
- **Due Date: Week #10, March 17th and Week #11 March 24th**

Assignment #4: Final Reflective Paper - 50%

- This final reflective paper will be an opportunity for students to synthesize their

learning throughout the term based on an integration of Peter's teachings, weekly readings and discussions, weekly critical reflections and on their learning artifact. An abstract of the final paper (for discussion purposes only) should be submitted to the instructors via email before the reading break (Friday February 13th before midnight).

- **Due Date: March 31st by midnight.**

Course Schedule and Readings:

NOTE: Please refer to **LEARN site** regularly for changes to this tentative **Schedule** and for **Weekly Readings**

Week #1 – January 6th – Introduction to the course

Week #2 – January 13th – What is Medicine?

Readings: Braiding Sweetgrass, Planting Sweetgrass

Godlewska, A., Moore, J., & Bednasek, C. D. (2010). Cultivating ignorance of Aboriginal realities. *The Canadian Geographer/Le Géographe Canadien*, 54(4): 417-440.

Porter, L. (2004). Unlearning one's privilege: Reflections on cross-cultural research with Indigenous Peoples in south-east Australia. *Planning Theory & Practice*, 5(1): 104-109.

Week #3 – January 20th – What is the Sweat Lodge?

Readings:

Braiding Sweetgrass, Tending Sweetgrass

Regan, P. (2005). A transformative framework for decolonizing Canada: A non-Indigenous approach. Paper presented at the University of Victoria, *IGOV Doctoral Student Symposium*. Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.

Week #4 – January 27th – What are our relatives doing? Understanding your relatives.

Readings:

Braiding Sweetgrass, Picking Sweetgrass

Cronon, W. (1995). The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature. Pages 69-90 in Cronon, W. (editor) (1995). *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*. W. W. Norton & Co.: New York, New York, USA.

Week #5 – February 3rd – Invasive Species

Readings:

Braiding Sweetgrass, Braiding Sweetgrass 1

Johnson, J. T., & Murton, B. (2007). Re/placing native science: Indigenous voices in contemporary constructions of nature. *Geographical Research*, 45(2), 121-129.

Week #6 – February 10th – Different Notions of Time – “Indian Time”

Readings:

Braiding Sweetgrass, Braiding Sweetgrass 2

READING WEEK February 17th

Week #7 – February 24th – Women’s Teachings

Readings:

TBD

Week #8 – March 3rd – On the Nature of Knowledge – Traditional Knowledge

Readings:

Braiding Sweetgrass, Burning Sweetgrass 1

Little Bear, L. (2000). Jagged worldviews colliding. Pages 77-85 in M. Battiste (Ed.), *Reclaiming indigenous voice and vision*. UBC Press: Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Week #9 – March 10th – 8th Fire Prophecy

Readings:

Braiding Sweetgrass, Burning Sweetgrass 2 + Epilogue

Corntassel, J. (2012). Re-envisioning resurgence: Indigenous pathways to decolonization and sustainable self-determination. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society, 1*(1): 86-101.

Week #10 – March 17th – Student Presentations

Readings:

Student-recommended readings

Week #11 – March 24th – Student Presentations

Readings:

Student-recommended readings

Week #12 – March 31st – Final Discussion

Readings:

Steinhauer, E. (2002). Thoughts on an indigenous research methodology. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 26*(2), 69-81.

Wilson, S. (2007). Guest editorial: What is an indigenist research paradigm? *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 30*(2), 193-195.

Academic Integrity:

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/. Students who are unsure what constitutes an academic offence are requested to visit the on-line tutorial at: <http://www.lib.uwaterloo.ca/ait/>

Research Ethics: Please also note that the University of Waterloo requires all research conducted by its students, staff, and faculty which involves humans as participants to undergo prior ethics review and clearance through the Director, Office of Human Research and Animal Care (Office). The ethics review and clearance processes are intended to ensure that projects comply with the Office's Guidelines for Research with Human Participants (Guidelines) as well as those of provincial and federal agencies, and that the safety, rights and welfare of participants are adequately protected. The Guidelines inform researchers about ethical issues and procedures which are of concern when conducting research with humans (e.g. confidentiality, risks and benefits, informed consent process, etc.).

If the development of your research proposal consists of research that involves humans as participants, please contact the course instructor for guidance and see:

www.research.uwaterloo.ca/ethics/human/

Note for students with disabilities: The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term.

Religious Observances: Please inform the instructor at the beginning of term if special accommodation needs to be made for religious observances that are not otherwise accounted for in the scheduling of classes and assignments.

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm. When in doubt, please contact your Undergraduate Advisor for details.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offence, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offense, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offenses (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71, Student Discipline, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm. For typical penalties, check Guidelines for Assessment of Penalties, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71 - (Student Discipline) may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to Policy 72 (Student Appeals). See: www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm

Consequences of Academic Offences:

ENV students are strongly encouraged to review the material provided by the university's Academic Integrity office (see: <http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/Students/index.html>).

Turnitin:

Plagiarism detection software (Turnitin) will be used to screen assignments on this course. This is being done to verify use of all material and sources in assignments is documented. In the first lecture of the Term, details will be provided about the arrangements for the use of Turnitin.

NOTE: Students may request an alternative to Turnitin, which is to prepare an annotated bibliography for each assignment. For advice on how to prepare an annotated bibliography, see: <http://www.lib.sfu.ca/help/writing/annotated-bibliography>