

## Course Syllabus

### TS 733

## Indigenous Theologies and Methods

MAY 2-11, 2022

CLASS TIME: 8:30 AM TO 1:00 PM

Instructor: Terry LeBlanc PhD

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### I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will delve into unique Indigenous theological contributions to the meaning of Christian faith and life. Utilizing a thematic approach, the intersection of one's experience with the Creator, the nature of the spiritual, the Gospel story, redemption and redeemer will be explored in contrasting views with Western theological methods.

This course will further introduce diverse hermeneutical principles from within an Indigenous theological perspective, rooted in cross-disciplinary contextual studies. We will explore methodologies that encourage post-colonial and post-modern approaches to engaging with scripture, and apply insights gained from contemporary critical studies as well as introduce competencies for teaching scripture from an Indigenous hermeneutic. We will further explore a distinct Indigenous hermeneutical disposition, based on language, voice, history, interpretation, and values.

### II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion of this course, the student will...

- Have *read* all the material, attended all the classes, and *participated* in class discussions.
- *Be able to articulate an understanding of* the basic similarities and differences between concepts forming theological doctrines within a Westernized Christian tradition and the formalized spiritual teachings of a variety of Indigenous wisdom traditions
- *Be able to describe* how Indigenous traditions can inform and nurture Indigenous Christian faith expressions
- Have *developed and be able to employ interpretative skills* for relating Biblical narratives to Indigenous cultural contexts thereby creating a framework for understanding their theological contribution for Indigenous Christians.
- *Be able to dialogue* about key issues in the intersection of Christian doctrines (systematics) to articulations of a more theological anthropological nature in Indigenous contexts.

### III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

#### A. REQUIRED TEXTS

**NOTE 1:** The following two books are to be read prior to the beginning of the course. In addition, The student is expected to read Genesis 1,2,3 in the NRSV, and at least two Indigenous Creation narratives that will be made available on the course site at <https://academics.naiits.com/> by May 1. Once the student is registered in the course, a login ID and password will be generated and sent to the student via the NAIITS Moodle site.

Twiss, R. (2015). *Rescuing the Gospel from the Cowboys: a Native American Expression of the Jesus Way*. Downers Grove, Illinois, InterVarsity Press.

Woodley, R. (2012). *Shalom and the Community of Creation: an Indigenous Vision*. Grand Rapids, Mich., W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.

**NOTE 2:** The following required reading is expected to be included in discussions as part of the student's submitted work though some of it will also be reviewed and discussed in class. Please note that only one chapter of Sedmak is required, and that chapter will be supplied in class.

Anderson, William H. U., Charles Muskego, and Concordia University of Edmonton. Canadian Centre for Scholarship and the Christian Faith. *Indigenous People and the Christian Faith: A New Way Forward*. Series in Philosophy of Religion. 2019.

Kidwell, Clara Sue, Homer Noley, and George E. Tinker. *A Native American Theology*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2001.

Sedmak, Clemens. *Doing Local Theology: A Guide for Artisans of a New Humanity*. Faith and Cultures Series. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2002.

#### B. SUPPLEMENTARY / RECOMMENDED READING:

Additional readings selected by the instructor will be used throughout the course and will be provided in class during the week. Students will be expected to read the article(s) in preparation for discussion in the following class period. Please consult the referenced bibliography for other recommended reading not specifically required for class days, but which may be of help during your assignment prep.

#### C. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

**NOTE 1:** All papers should use Chicago 17 Style and follow all other relevant guidelines for written work outlined in the Conrad Grebel academic policies. All assignments are to be emailed to the instructor in MS Word as an attached file (not Google Docs and not PDF).

**NOTE 2:** Assignments are to be emailed to the instructor at the email address indicated on this syllabus, prior to midnight on the date due. Assignments automatically receive a 5% penalty when they are late. Assignments late more than the period between due dates for subsequent assignments receive 0%. All assignments must be submitted by midnight in the student's time zone on the day they are due. Please consult the Conrad Grebel Calendar for the grading system. Take note that simply fulfilling the basic course requirements rates a grade of C to C+.

**1. Class Participation** (video conference and online)      **Discussion**      **20%**

Given the nature of the course and its delivery it is imperative to attend *on time*, and to be actively engaged in the discussion of topics. As noted above, all assignments are to be emailed on time to the instructor at terry@naiits.com as per instructions below.

**2. Readings and Presentations**      **Due: May 3,4,5,6 &10**      **20%**

A 4Mat reading interaction form (total of 5) is to be completed and e-mailed to the instructor on the assigned reading(s). Readings will be handed out at the end of class on May 2, 3,4,5, and 9. Reading presentations are to follow the 4Mat outline method and sample attached and will be used to focus a portion of the class discussions each day throughout the course. Be prepared to be asked to lead in all or a portion of the discussion when called upon.

Each student will be expected to lead the discussion of the readings and topic for class once or twice during the course (depending on enrolment) and will be selected to do so at the end of the day prior. Participation will be graded as per the attached rubric.

**3. Book Reflection**      **Due: June 14**      **20%**

Each student will select one of the required readings listed in the syllabus to engage with in a critical book review (Twiss, Woodley, Anderson, or Kidwell). If Anderson is selected, the student is expected to engage the whole book, not simply one essay). Each paper should be 2000-2500 words (7-9 double-spaced pages). The paper should:

1. Briefly summarize the main argument of the book words (2 pages).
2. Identify areas of concern or questions you have about any theological dilemmas the authors have identified for the work of doing Indigenous theology; suggest ways in which these might be resolved. (2 pages)
3. Explain any new insights you have gained from reading this book (2 pages).
4. Apply some of these insights to your personal context (1-2 pages).

**4. Research Paper**      **Due: July 5**      **40%**

Each student will undertake a research paper of 3500-4000 words (12-15 double-spaced pages) on a topic to be submitted to and approved by the instructor by the end of week one of the course. Topics are expected to research and write on current issues in Indigenous theology from a personal journey perspective — whether in the North American or other Indigenous global context. This means that you are expected to interact with the content based on your own understandings, concerns, and disposition toward the theological frameworks under discussion. Further instructions for the assignment will be provided in class.

***SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING***

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

Class Participation	20 %
4 Mats and Readings Presentations (5 @4%)	20%
Book Reflection	20 %

Research Paper	40 %
Total Grade	100 %

## D. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

Students should consult the [Theological Studies Program Handbook](#) for Grebel guidelines on written work, grading, citation style. University of Waterloo policies govern matters of Academic Integrity:

*Academic Integrity:* To maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. See the UWaterloo Academic Integrity webpage and the Arts Academic Integrity webpage for more information.

*Discipline:* A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, Grebel Dean, or the Graduate Associate Dean of Arts. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline. For typical penalties check Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties.

*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. When in doubt, please be certain to contact the department’s administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

*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.

### Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

The AccessAbility Services office, located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension (1401), 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 AS office at the beginning of each academic term. [AccessAbility webpage](#).

When in doubt, students should consult the current *Academic Calendar* for academic policies on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System.

Due to the nature of Spring & Summer school, **all assignments will be emailed directly to the instructor in MS Word format to avoid delay in time or even loss of paper in transition. The file should be labelled as follows:**

[Student last name] [Assignment name] [Semester] Eg. LeBlanc 4Mat 1 SUM 2020

The student will be expected to produce a time-stamped electronic confirmation that the paper was sent and received if requested.

#### IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS

**NOTE: In the event the class is required to meet online, in whole or in part, the course will be rescheduled using two online technologies: Moodle and Zoom. Meeting details will be provided to the class at that time if necessary.**

If you are unfamiliar with Moodle, here is a link for you to learn the basics of using Moodle:

[https://docs.moodle.org/38/en/Student\\_FAQ/](https://docs.moodle.org/38/en/Student_FAQ/)

If you are unfamiliar with Zoom, here is a link for you to learn the basics of Zoom:

<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206618765-Zoom-Video-Tutorials/>

Should you have any questions prior to the start of class please email me, the instructor, and I will do my best to accommodate you.

DAY	TOPIC(S)	READINGS
1	Thinking Theologically	Genesis 1,2; Indigenous Creation Narratives
2	Creating Understanding A common Framework	Clemens – “ <i>Doing Local Theology.</i> ” <i>Selected chapter(s)</i>
3	Creating Understanding – Indigenous Framework	Kidwell et al – “ <i>A Native American Theology.</i> ” - <i>Selected chapter(s)</i>
3	Creating Understanding – method - 2	LeBlanc – “ <i>New Old Perspectives.</i> ”
4	Indigenous Theological Reflection - 1	Paulson – “ <i>Toward an Aboriginal Theology.</i> ”
4	Indigenous Theological Reflection - 2	Aldred – “ <i>The Resurrection of Story.</i> ”
5	Indigenous Theological Reflection - 3	Anderson and Muskego - <i>Indigenous People and the Christian Faith: A New Way Forward.</i> - <i>Selected Chapters</i>
5	Indigenous Theological Reflection - 4	Oduyoye – “ <i>The African Experience of God...</i> ”
6	Hermeneutics and Theology	Cotecson – “ <i>Toward an Intercultural Hermeneutic</i> ”
7	Postcolonial perspectives	Brett, Mark – “ <i>Canto Ergo Sum: Indigenous Peoples and Post-Colonial Theologies</i> ”
8	De-colonial readings	Costello – “ <i>Black Elk Speaks.</i> ”
8	Course Review	Student Questions

## V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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## GRADING RUBRICS - NAIITS

### Student Participation

Focal Criteria	Excellent	Competent	Improvement	Unacceptable	Grade
<b>Online</b>					
Timelines and Frequency	At least one posting for every assignment posted when the thread is still alive. Multiple Postings.	Most contributions are made when the thread is still alive and flowing so the majority of students can profit from the information.	Typically one of the last to respond to an active thread. Generally only one posting per assignment.	Posting is done after most students have finished participating in the thread. One or fewer postings per assignment.	/20pts
Collaborative	Positive responses to the work of others with pertinent and original insights. No effort to dominate.	Responds to the work of others. Comments are usually informative and/or original.	Appears unaware of or disinterested in responding to others without being prompted. May dominate conversation.	Offers inadequate responses to the comments of others; short or without new ideas.	/20pts
Significant	Multiple postings contribute to the flow of conversation and also to class learning.	Multiple postings that contribute to the flow of the conversation.	May denigrate others' point of view.	Posting does not advance the substance of the conversation.	/20pts
Scholarly and Experiential	Includes analysis and/or synthesis of course readings, personal experience and postings from others with a high academic and	Often includes analysis and/or synthesis of course readings, personal experience and postings from others representing original thought.	Significant elements of postings are from course readings or outside sources without adequate synthesis and little original thought.	No appreciable evidence of processing of the course readings or analysis of personal experience with them. Postings not relevant to the discussion/topic	/20pts

	experiential quality. Pertinent to the discussions.				
Clarity, Grammar, Spelling	No errors. Postings are always comprehensible	A few errors on occasion but does not impeded understanding.	Errors more frequent with some that impede understanding	Multiple errors that impede understanding.	/20pts
				<b>Total Grade</b>	<b>/100pts</b>

Student Written Work

Focal Criteria	Excellent	Competent	Improvement	Unacceptable	Grade
<b>Content</b>					
Synthesis	Excellent synthesis of research.	Adequate synthesis of research.	Superficial synthesis of research.	Little synthesis of research.	/10pts
Engagement with subject matter	Interacts with topic of study in insightful manner.	Demonstrates substantial interaction with topic of study.	Superficial interaction with topic of study.	Fails to engage topic of study.	/10pts
<b>Investigation</b>					
Argumentation	Truthfully interprets evidence and offers sensible conclusions.	Reasonably interprets evidence and offers sensible conclusions.	Misinterprets evidence and/or offers unwarranted or fallacious conclusions.	Abuses evidence, arguing using irrelevant reasoning and does not justify claims.	/10pts
Internal Coherence	Sustains a well-focused thesis throughout the essay in a well-organized and logical manner.	Sustains an acceptable thesis throughout the essay.	Thesis is unfocused and/or inconsistently threaded into essay.	Thesis is convoluted and/or essay is incoherent and rambling.	/10pts
Consideration of alternative ideas	Identifies and insightfully engages major alternative points of view.	Identifies and adequately engages alternative points of view.	Identifies, but superficially engages alternative points of view.	Fails to identify or hastily dismisses alternative points of view.	/10pts
Selection of sources	Uses a variety of scholarly books, peer-reviewed articles	Adequate use of scholarly resources.	Utilizes a limited selection of scholarly resources.	Fails to utilize scholarly resources.	/10pts
<b>Application *</b>					
Applicability to Context	Insightfully applies conclusions to a specific context in a nuanced and detailed manner.	Adequately applies conclusions to a particular context.	Applies conclusions without sophistication or nuance.	Applies conclusions in a generalizing, trite, or unrealistic manner.	/10pts
<b>Grammar/Style</b>					
Footnotes & Bibliography	Less than one citation error according to Turabian.	2-3 citation errors according to Turabian.	4-7 citation errors according to Turabian.	More than 8 citation errors according to Turabian.	/10pts
Spelling & Grammar	Vocabulary and sentence structure adequate for the topic, discipline, and intended audience. Fewer than 3 spelling, grammatical, and punctuation errors.	Vocabulary and sentence structure adequate for the topic, discipline, and intended audience. Includes 4-6 spelling, grammatical, and punctuation errors.	Vocabulary and sentence structure less than adequate for the topic, discipline, and intended audience. Includes 7-9 spelling, grammatical, and punctuation errors.	Simplistic word choice limits description and/or expression. Greater than 10 spelling, grammatical, and punctuation errors.	/10pts
Tone	The writing is consistently academic in its tone.	The writing is generally academic in its tone.	The writing is sometimes academic in its tone.	The writing is largely sermonic and non-academic in its tone.	/5 pts
Length	Meets requirements.	Within 250 words of length requirements.	Within 500 words of length requirements.	Deviate more than 500 words from requirements.	/5 pts
				<b>Total Essay Grade</b>	<b>/100pts</b>

## 4Mat Method

### **1st Page:**

Abstract Summary

### **2nd Page:**

- Concrete Stories/ Memories Evoked by reading
- Reflection Expressed in Questions
- Action: What I Must Do with what I learned

Here are some guidelines adapted from Dr. Donald Joy, to help you get a better grasp of the four elements in the 4-MAT system.

(a) **ABSTRACT: Reader's Digest Summary.** Simply summarize the content of the assigned reading in your own words. Avoid just indicating the topics. There should be NO personal commentary or attempt to evaluate the content of the materials. Just summarize what the author or authors say. Include as many of the key concepts and ideas as you can. Strive to be both comprehensive and intensive. Your summary should be stylistically correct, coherent and clear. The abstract should be one single-spaced page in length. Sorry, no type fonts below number 12 please! Some assignments include more than one chapter and some more than one author. Summarize the whole reading assignment. The readings are all related, so you can integrate the readings into one summary on page one. By this I mean that some readings may illustrate the material in other readings or modify it in some way.

Remember that meaning making requires first that you transform the reading materials into your OWN words. Effective "note taking" is more than capturing another person's words; it requires transforming a communication into your own language and symbols. Use explicit and visible QUOTE marks to identify the author's words. All other written material not clearly cited should be your own constructions and abstracted summaries of what you read.

### (b) **CONCRETE STORIES and MEMORIES EVOKED BY READING: Get Vulnerable!**

Describe one or two personal experiences which reading this material reminded you of. Here is your chance to be a storyteller. Tell it here in "first person," describing action, quoting exact words you remember hearing or saying. Be as specific and concrete as you can, including who, what, when, where details. Make sure, however, that your personal anecdotes are clearly grounded in the concepts of the reading assignment. The "Concrete" section should not exceed half a page.

If you can connect what you are reading and hearing with what you have previously lived or observed, you will be profoundly changed by the class. If you cannot connect the semester with past and present personal realities, you will never be able to teach or use what you are learning with any conviction and effectiveness.

(c) **REFLECTION EXPRESSED IN QUESTIONS: What questions popped up** as you read this material? Keep a rough note sheet at hand as you read so you can write them down. Then simply list three or four of them. Your questions may be critical or grounded in spontaneous curiosity or naive yearning for solutions. Make sure, however, they relate directly to the MATERIAL CONTENT of the reading materials NOT to the experience(s) you have just described in b. This section should take up about one fourth to a third of a page.

(d) **ACTION: WHAT I MUST DO WITH WHAT I LEARNED. So What Are You Going to Do about it?** All ministry related learning **MUST** lead to acts of ministry—whether through transformation of your inner person or your acquiring of useful knowledge or skills. Here describe what you simply must **DO** if you keep faith with what you have now discovered as a result of reading this material. Ideally, your actions will comply with the acronym **MAST**. They will be **Measurable, Attainable, Specific and achievable within a given Time frame**. For example, “For the next month during my quiet time, I will meditate on a symbol called forth by my Bible reading.” Do not report reflective responses like “I need to learn or read more about Christian symbols.” This section should comprise one fourth to one third of a page.

### **Application reflections.**

Although some of the readings originate from social science and religious studies, each reading assignment has been selected with the conviction that the material relates to Christian ministry in any cultural context. Part of your task is to apply the reading material to the life of the church and the practice of Christian ministry in your anticipated or actual setting. For this reason, it is important that the reflections on the second page of your 4-MAT **INTEGRATE** with what you have already experienced in ministry. For example, you may have given leadership in youth retreats without realizing they have the essential structure of a rite of passage or pilgrimage. Taking this important integrative function of your reflections seriously will prevent you from simply making "off the cuff" responses. I have specified the length of these application reflections partly to nudge you in the direction of selecting the most essential dimensions of the reading material. You may not include any commentary or evaluation on page one of your 4-MAT Reflection because one of the most basic tasks of ministry involves accurate discernment of what others are saying. Always understand the Other before reflecting and responding. Page one will therefore contain only a summary in your own words of what the authors of the reading material have written.

McCarthy, Bernice

1987 *The 4MAT System: Teaching to Learning Styles with Right/Left Mode Techniques*. Rev. ed. Barrington, IL: Excel, Inc.