

Aboriginal Knowledge: Implications for Education

AEC1184 H: Winter 2012

Department of Adult Education and Counselling Psychology, OISE/UT

Instructor: Jean-Paul Restoule
Meeting Time: Tuesdays 1:30pm-4:30pm
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Course Description

Aboriginal education is built upon the knowledge developed by indigenous peoples necessitating an understanding of how that knowledge is produced. But what is indigenous knowledge? This course seeks to explore the characteristics, sources and applications of indigenous knowledge and how this knowledge might inform the work of teaching, learning and research. Course content may include indigenous research protocols, ethics and politics of researching and teaching in aboriginal communities, intellectual property rights, curriculum development and innovations in Aboriginal education and traditional teachings from respected Elders.

For students with a research focus, this course enables inquiry into the production of knowledge, from both western and indigenous perspectives which should improve their research work regardless of who they intend to do research with, but with specific relevance in working with Aboriginal populations. For students interested in education implications, the course provides a footing in the workings and characteristics of indigenous knowing which will aid their pedagogical practices in Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal contexts.

Required Texts

Battiste, Marie (Ed.). (2000). *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.

Battiste, Marie & Henderson, James (Sa'ke'j) Youngblood. (2000) *Protecting Indigenous Knowledge and Heritage: A Global Challenge*. Saskatoon: Purich.

Simpson, Leanne. (2011) *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back*. Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring Publishing.

Required texts will be available for purchase from www.goodminds.com, a Native-owned and operated business located on the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory.

Assignments & Evaluation

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| 1. Response papers | 30% |
| 2. Event discussion circle | 15% |
| 3. Participation | 15% |
| 4. Final assignment | 40% |

1. Response Papers (30%)

You will prepare 3 short Response Papers to course texts. Each response paper should be 2-3 pages in length and reflect critically on the readings.

Your response papers should pay special attention to how the readings embodied or referred to principles, characteristics, or issues relating to Aboriginal Knowledge. Reflections on how you might apply learnings to

your personal education or research work are also appreciated. What did you learn that surprised you, enlightened you, angered you, inspired you? What learning will you carry with you?

Response papers are personal and are difficult to evaluate objectively. I will assign to each paper a mark that is 50% based on the depth of the reflection (how much are you revealing of yourself, challenging yourself, demonstrating critical thought, etc), 25% based on the 'fact base' or how well you use the readings as the base for your reflections (that is, you don't stray too far from the readings in your reflections), and 25% based on overall 'style' which includes grammar, spelling, clarity of communication, and flow.

- Response Paper on *Protecting Indigenous Knowledge and Heritage* due **February 7**
- Response Paper on *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision* due **March 6**
- Response Paper on *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back* due **March 27**

2. Event Discussion Circle (15%)

Between January 10 and March 26 you are to attend an Aboriginal event, Elder's public teaching, or public talk by an Aboriginal person and participate in a discussion circle to be held in class. You should come prepared to discuss your personal reflections on your experience. Pay special attention to how the event embodied or referred to principles, characteristics, or issues relating to Aboriginal Knowledge. Reflections on how you might apply learning from the event to your personal education work are also appreciated. The goal is not to simply describe the event as it took place but to enter into what you learned from the event about Aboriginal Knowledge.

- Event discussion circles will be held in class on **February 21 and March 27**

Here are some suggestions for selecting a relevant event for this assignment:

- U of T's Aboriginal Awareness Week held each year in February. Many events on offer.
- Check out *Dodem Kanonhsa* for public sessions with visiting Elders. See www.dodemkanonhsa.com or phone (416)-952-9272 for more info.
- Visiting Elders at First Nations House, 563 Spadina Ave., 416-978-8227, www.fnh.utoronto.ca.
- Join the Indigenous Education Network (IEN) and First Nations House (FNH) listservs to receive updates of events and also to receive community, academic and other important information.
- Scan postings at IEN, First Nations House, Native Canadian Centre of Toronto, Anishnawbe Health Toronto, Native Earth Performing Arts, Native Women in the Arts, or others.
- Announcements will also be made in class of upcoming events.

3. Participation (15%)

It is essential that members of the course attend class regularly and come prepared to participate fully in discussions of the assigned readings. Active listening is also considered participation.

4. Final Assignment (40%)

Students will write a final paper (about 10 pages in length) on a topic of their choice. The paper is expected to combine aspects of Aboriginal knowledge with some of the literature or themes discussed in the course. The paper should address a clear question (or questions) related to the place of indigenous knowledge in education research or practice. If in doubt, please feel free to discuss possible topics with me in advance.

Alternatively, students may choose to present their findings in a non-written format (ie. arts-based medium, video, indigenous artistic tradition etc.) If this is of interest, please discuss your plans with me before beginning.

- Deadline for submission of the final assignment is **April 3**

Evaluation

For all assignments, evaluation will be broken down by 50% to depth, 25% to 'fact base' and 25% to style.

Depth: if you're writing a conventional academic paper, how strong are your arguments? Do you anticipate objections and respond accordingly? How well do you incorporate key sources in the literature and do you engage with this literature with a confident voice?

If you're writing a more 'applied' piece, how much are you challenging yourself? What have you embodied from Aboriginal knowing and how well are you communicating this? What innovations from Aboriginal knowing or educational practices have you attempted to apply in your teaching or research practice and how well did you convey this, reflect on this and demonstrate learning from this in your work?

Fact Base: How well do you use examples to communicate your ideas? What sources do you choose and how well do you engage with them in your argumentation or reflection? How seamlessly do you weave your sources into your work? For non-written assignments, the fact base portion of the mark is applied to how well you convey your understandings of indigenous knowing in the piece or in an explanation of how the work embodies or communicates your understandings of indigenous knowing.

Style: In written assignments, in addition to grammar, spelling, flow, and clarity, style will include your adherence to and proper usage of APA style. On style guidelines, see www.utoronto.ca/writing/document.html. Non-written assignments will be assessed for style with attention to aesthetics appropriate to the work submitted.

Breaking down each assignment into the categories, Depth, Fact Base and Style, is intended to demystify my expectations for the assignments and help pinpoint areas of strength as well as opportunities for improvement.

Grading

The School of Graduate Studies

(http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/grgrade.htm#_Toc187348397) provides the following framework for grading.

Letter Grade	Grade Meaning
A+	
A	Excellent
A-	
B+	
B	Good
B-	
FZ	Inadequate

Because OISE only admits students with high academic credentials, the department's grade range tends to fall between A+ and A-. In order to prevent grade inflation, however, AECD has agreed that we will not normally assign an A+ to more than 20% of the students in any one course, and that A+ should be awarded only for exceptional work.

Format

Written assignments should be typed, double-spaced with one-inch margins. Please note the length requirements of each assignment and make sure to use a standard 12-point font, like Times New Roman or Garamond. All references and citations should adhere to APA style. To save paper, the submission of

electronic versions of assignments is strongly encouraged. Please email assignments on or before their due date to jeanpaul.restoule@utoronto.ca with **“AEC 1184 assignment”** as your subject line. Papers submitted electronically will be returned by email as an attachment using “track changes” to record my comments.

Extensions

If you cannot submit assignments by their due date, it is critical that you discuss this with me beforehand. Failure to do so will result in late penalties of 5% per day.

Environmental Policy

Students are encouraged to submit assignments electronically to save paper. If you must hand in a hard copy, please choose recycled paper and print double-sided whenever possible.

Plagiarism

Accusations of plagiarism can be avoided through the practice of good citation. For information on how to avoid plagiarism, see: <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>

Reading Schedule

- January 10** **Opening**
- January 17** **What is Indigenous Knowledge?**
Read: *Protecting Indigenous Knowledge and Heritage*. pp. 1-56
- January 24** **Indigenous Rights & Cognitive Imperialism**
Read: *Protecting Indigenous Knowledge and Heritage*. pp. 57-116
- January 31** **Legal Regimes and Indigenous Knowledge**
Read: *Protecting Indigenous Knowledge and Heritage*. pp. 132-168 & 201-237
- February 7** **Protecting Indigenous Knowledge**
Read: *Protecting Indigenous Knowledge and Heritage*. pp. 251-292
➤ **Response Paper Due on** *Protecting Indigenous Knowledge and Heritage*
- February 14** **Mapping Colonialism**
Read: *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision*. pp. ix-56
- February 21** **Diagnosing Colonialism**
Read: *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision*. pp. 57-111
➤ **Event Discussion Circle**
- February 28** **Healing Colonized Indigenous Peoples**
Read: *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision*. pp. 115-141 & 150-160 & 179-191
- March 6** **Visioning the Indigenous Renaissance**
Read: *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision*. pp. 192-274
➤ **Response Paper Due on** *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision*
- March 13** **No class (midwinter break)**
- March 20** **Theorizing Resurgence from within Nishnaabeg Thought**
Read: *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back* pp. 1-81
- March 27** **Shki-kiin: New Worlds**
Read: *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back* pp. 85-149
➤ **Event Discussion Circle**
➤ **Response Paper Due on Read:** *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back*
- April 3** **Closing**
➤ **Final Assignment Due**