

Indigenous Knowledge & Methods
Indigenous Ways of Knowing - Health, Wellness & Environment
McMaster University
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Office Hours : TBD

Indigenization is defined as collaborative process of naturalizing Indigenous intent, interactions, and processes and making them evident to transform spaces, places, and hearts. In the context of post-secondary education, this involves including Indigenous perspectives and approaches. Indigenization benefits not only Indigenous researchers, students, teachers, staff members, and community members involved or impacted by knowledge production and dissemination. The goal is not to replace Western knowledge with Indigenous knowledge or to merge the two distinct systems into one. Rather, ‘Indigenization can be understood as weaving or braiding together two distinct knowledge systems.’ (Antonie et al, 2019). In research contexts, Indigenization is critical because scientific research privileges the dominant Euro-centric perspective, thereby excluding indigenous sciences, knowledges, experiences and worldviews. Indigenous peoples were excluded from research, representation and production; colonial discourse misrepresented, appropriated, exploited and diminished Indigenous knowledge “sciences.” Indigenous Knowledge (IK) is invested in reclaiming, restoring and rebuilding not Indigenizing the academy – both will be explored in class readings.

Decolonization refers to the processes of “process of deconstructing colonial ideologies of the superiority and privilege of Western thought and approaches. On the one hand, decolonization involves dismantling structures that perpetuate the status quo, problematizing dominant discourses, and addressing unbalanced power dynamics. On the other hand, decolonization involves valuing and revitalizing Indigenous knowledge and approaches and weeding out settler biases or assumptions that have impacted Indigenous ways of being. (Antonie et al, 2019. For a general discussion, see Smith, 2018, 2008).”

We will explore research issues such as: increasingly numbers of scholars are implementing Indigenous research knowledge and methodology into their research proposals; will the mainstreaming of IK simply become co-opted and assimilated into mainstream or remain distinct and effective in decolonizing? Indigenous research methodology is usually defined as “relational accountability” As a researcher you are answering to all your relations when you are doing research” (Wilson, 2001). What of “insider outsider” research? How can IK methodologies be used by all researchers or only in some cases or are all only relevant to Indigenous researchers? What can be uniquely conducted by Indigenous scholars if anything? ((Weber-Pillwax, 1999). For general surveys of Indigenous research methodology, see Kovach (2009) Dawson et al. (2017) Easby, (2016). For applications, see Alfred (2005 and 2009), Martin-Hill (2008), McCarthy (2016)

The objective of the course is to provide students with an overview of the current literature and issues related to Indigenous people’s ways of knowing. Developing an Indigenous discourse and framework includes understanding the core values, Indigenous people hold common and

the distinct diversity of their belief systems. “*Decolonizing Education*”, is a reminder of the way Indigenous peoples everywhere experienced what Kincheloe and Steinberg (1999, p. 82) refer to as subjugated knowledges. These are the excluded, silenced, or marginalized histories, memories and experiences of sub-ordinated populations. Deconstructing the colonial discourse Indigenous peoples were subjugated by will be explored through Indigenous knowledges’ critical pedagogy. A pedagogy for learners that requires active participants in the reconstruction of Indigenous knowledge. Indigenous people’s knowledge construction emerges from origin stories, cosmology and relationships to natural environment. The methodologies IK employs facilitate self-determination, equity, anti-racism and community control from inception to dissemination.

The class will facilitate experiential learning practices to explore contemporary Indigenous issues that are embedded in Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing. Exploring resistance to environmental racism, cultural genocide, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW) and health and healing through developing simulated projects with Six Nations’ existing research. With consideration to Indigenous ethical principles; do no harm, reciprocity and ‘nothing about us without us.’ A primary question in all IK research is, “who benefits?” Language arts and the spoken word are effective tools for Indigenizing any research project, including creativity are essential elements for Indigenous pedagogies.

In addition, there will be the development of a research project examining the stated topics exploring the contemporary realities of Indigenous people’s grassroots movements to reclaim ancient wisdoms informing contemporary positions on a myriad of issues. Your project will include creation of a digital story drawn from Indigenous stories in public domain of YouTube, Indigenous media outlets and social media supported by academic literature.

Classes consist of self-directed learning and consist of seminars, Indigenous film, social media, digital stories, guest lectures, oral tradition guest researchers from community. Primary information, experiential virtual activities, open class discussions will be encouraged as a means of sharing an understanding the Indigenous lens human experiences and ways of knowing. The goal of the course is to learn outside of the classroom through engaging in participatory research; learning with artist, elders and youth other ways of knowing and creating new knowledge.

Required Reading:

Ahenakew, C. (2016). Grafting Indigenous Ways of Knowing onto Non-Indigenous Ways of Being: The (Underestimated) Challenges of a Decolonial Imagination. *International Review of Qualitative Research*, 9(3), 323–340.

Allen & Smylie, First People’s Second Class Treatment; The role of racism in the health and well-being of Indigenous peoples in Canada

[Alexander, Provencher, Henri, Taylor, Lloren, Nanayakkara, Johnson & Cooke](#), Bridging Indigenous and science-based knowledge in coastal and marine research, monitoring, and management in Canada, 2019

<https://environmentalevidencejournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s13750-019-0181-3>

Akena, F. A. (2012). Critical Analysis of the Production of Western Knowledge and Its Implications for Indigenous Knowledge and Decolonization. *Journal of Black Studies*, 43(6), 599–619. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021934712440448>

Hamilton, Scott [Where are the Children Buried? \(PDF\)](https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/AAA-Hamilton-cemetery-FInal.pdf) Dept. of Anthropology, Lakehead University, <https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/AAA-Hamilton-cemetery-FInal.pdf> TRC website

Martin-Hill, Dawn. 2009. "Traditional Medicine and Restoration of Wellness Strategies." *International Journal of Indigenous Health* 5 (1): 26-42

McIvor, O., Napoleon, A., & Dickie, K. (2009). Language and Culture as Protective Factors for At-Risk Communities. *Journal of Aboriginal Health*, November, 6-25.

Racism, Epistemological Violence, and Knowledge Translation Required Readings: Allan, Billie, and Janet Smylie. 2015. "First Peoples, Second Class Treatment: The role of racism in the health and well-being of Indigenous peoples in Canada." Toronto, ON: Wellesley Institute

Annita Hetoevêhotohke'e Lucchesi, Spirit-Based Research: A Tactic for Surviving Trauma in Decolonizing Research, MMIW Special Issue, *Journal of Indigenous research* <https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/kicjir/vol7/iss1/4/>

Whyte, Kyle. "Indigenous Climate Change Studies : Indigenizing Futures, Decolonizing the Anthropocene." *English Language Notes*, vol. 55 no. 1, 2017, p. 153-162. *Project MUSE* muse.jhu.edu/article/711473.

Sefa Dei, George J. Indigenous Knowledge Studies and the Next Generation: Pedagogical Possibilities for Anti-colonial Education [online]. *Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*, The, Vol. 37, Supplementary, 2008: 5-13. Available at : <<https://search.informit.com.au/documentSummary;dn=656204016604184;res=IELIND>> ISSN: 1326-0111. [cited 14 Jul 20].

Smith, Micheal. Counting the Dead: Estimating the Loss of Life in the Indigenous Holocaust, 1492-Present

Snelgrove, Corey, Rita Kaur Dhamoon, and Jeff Cortassel. "Unsettling settler colonialism: The discourse and politics of settlers, and solidarity with Indigenous nations." *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education and Society* 3/2 (2014): 1-32.

The Value of Traditional Ecological Knowledge for the Environmental Health Sciences and Biomedical Research Symma Finn, Mose Herne, and Dorothy Castille (4/2017)

Wolfe, Patrick. "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native." *Journal of Genocide Research* 8/4 (2006).

Required Text:

Evaluation:

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|------------------|-----|
| Research Project | 40% |
| Book Review | 10% |
| Presentation | 15% |
| Digital story | 35% |

Week 1: Defining Indigenous Knowledge and applying ways of knowing to study

Developing an Indigenous discourse and framework includes understanding the core values Indigenous people hold common and the distinct diversity of their belief systems. *“Decolonizing Education”, is a reminder of the way Indigenous peoples everywhere experienced what Kincheloe and Steinberg (1999, p. 82) refer to as subjugated knowledges. These are the excluded, silenced, or marginalized histories, memories and experiences of sub-ordinated populations.* Indigenous knowledge will be explored thoroughly in the pedagogical practices.

Theory and practice are often two entirely different systems at play, how will the idea of IK be realized in western research structure?

Ransom, J. W., & Ettenger, K. T. (2001). ‘Polishing the Kaswentha’: a Haudenosaunee view of environmental cooperation. *Environmental Science & Policy*, 4(4–5), 219–228.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S1462-9011\(01\)00027-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1462-9011(01)00027-2)

Ermine, W., Sinclair, R. & Jeffery, B. (2004). *The Ethics of Research involving Indigenous Peoples*. Saskatoon, SK: Indigenous Peoples’ Health Research Centre, available at http://iphrc.ca/pub/documents/ethics_review_iphrc.pdf

Hameed, Shahul; El-Kafafi, Siham and Waretini-Karena, Rawiri (2019) Handbook of Research on Indigenous Knowledge and Bi-Culturalism in a Global Context, Hershey, PA: USA.

Week 2: Doctrine of discovery – religious politics. What is colonialism anyway?

UNDRIP 26

Article 26 1. Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired.

2. Indigenous peoples have the right to own, use, develop and control the lands, territories and resources that they possess by reason of traditional ownership or other traditional occupation or use, as well as those which they have otherwise acquired.

3. States shall give legal recognition and protection to these lands, territories and resources. Such recognition shall be conducted with due respect to the customs, traditions and land tenure systems of the indigenous peoples concerned.

How does UNDRIP and DoD remain compatible in practice and theory?

The Doctrine of Discovery Reconsidered: Reflecting on Discovering Indigenous Lands: The Doctrine of Discovery in the English Colonies, by Robert J Miller, Jacinta Ruru,

Larissa Behrendt, and Tracey Lindberg,1 and Reconciling Sovereignties: Aboriginal Nations and Canada, by Felix Hoehn

<https://digitalcommons.osgoode.yorku.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3000&context=ohlj>

Miller, Robert The Doctrine of Discovery: The International Law of Colonialism
Permalink <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3cj6w4mj> The Indigenous Peoples' Journal of Law, Culture & Resistance

Doctrine of Discovery: A Mohawk Feminist Response to Colonial Domination and Violations to Indigenous Lands and Women, Rowman and Littlefield Handbook, Women Studies 2021

***Students Personnel Indigenous Reading / review selection – due*

Week 3: Redefining origins, dismantling the myth reconciling what?

What role did/does academia play in colonialism?

Concerns regarding state violence against Indigenous people were flagged in a 2016 report by the World Resources Institute that had identified securing the land rights of Indigenous people and other local communities in the Amazon region as a low-cost way to counter global deforestation and climate change. According to [Global Witness](#), documented in [Defending Tomorrow](#), points out, 'the climate crisis is arguably the greatest global and existential threat we face. As it escalates, it serves to exacerbate many of the other serious problems in our world today – from economic inequality to racial injustice and the spread of zoonotic diseases (Global Witness. 2021). Through monitoring human rights they found 212 land and environmental defenders were murdered in 2019 - the highest number of killings ever recorded and an average of four people a week. Since the Paris Agreement was signed the numbers have been rising with 185 people across 16 countries killed defending their land, forests and rivers against destructive industries in 2015 alone, many of them from indigenous communities" (UNEP:2017). Countless others are incarcerated, fined and threatened by state sponsored militia and police forces. In Canada and the U.S. Indigenous people are also brutalized, criminalized and incarcerated for protecting what little territory they have left. It is almost always the women who mobilize and are on the front lines.

What role do western legal, economic and academic institutions play in sustaining oppression or fostering liberation? The TRC is federal policy yet, Indigenous people protecting land/water are criminalized and what is reconciliation?

Coulthard, Glen Sean. Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014.

Kuokkanen, Rauna. Reshaping the University: Responsibility, Indigenous Epistemes, and the Responsibility of the Gift. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007.

Annita Hetoevéhotokhe'e Lucchesi, Spirit-Based Research: A Tactic for Surviving Trauma in Decolonizing Research, MMIW Special Issue, Journal of Indigenous research
<https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/kicjir/vol7/iss1/4/>

Wolfe, Patrick. "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native." Journal of Genocide Research 8/4 (2006).

Week 4: Racism, Epistemological Violence, and Gender & Healing

The 2015 report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples focused on violence against Indigenous women. The Special Rapporteur noted the following:

The endemic violations of collective, civil and political, and economic, social and cultural rights can be seen as constituting a form of structural violence against indigenous women and girls. Structural violence results in women being victimized by the realities of the circumstances of their everyday life and routinely excluded from the rights and resources otherwise guaranteed to citizens. Structural violence is interlinked and mutually reinforcing with other forms of violence,¹ [including sexual violence, gender-based killings, violence in the context of conflict, violence in the name of tradition, domestic violence, and trafficking (MMIWG Call for Justice, 2019).

Seminar Discussion – why did the multitude of ethnographic literature on Indigenous people in North/South America never capture stories of residential school or experiences surviving genocide? Can you study/research health of Indigenous people without examining of either?

David Michael Smith Counting the Dead: Estimating the Loss of Life in the Indigenous Holocaust, 1492-Present

Dr. Scott Hamilton, [Where are the Children Buried? \(PDF\)](#) Dept. of Anthropology, Lakehead University,

<https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/AAA-Hamilton-cemetery-FInal.pdf>

Allan, Billie, and Janet Smylie. 2015. "First Peoples, Second Class Treatment: The role of racism in the health and well-being of Indigenous peoples in Canada." Toronto, ON: Wellesley Institute

Stote Karen, An Act of genocide sterilization of Indigenous Women in Canada

Week 5: Educating or propaganda, climate change and clean water

TEK is an interdisciplinary process and holistic ecological assessment that is best understood as: Interactions that occur between cultural elements and other demographic and economic variables. They define cultural elements as the dynamic processes, interactions, and aspects of a communal society that shares common values, beliefs, and spiritual constructs and practices toward their relationships with the land, traditional cultural activities and way of life, interpersonal and intergenerational relationships, communication (including language), arts, crafts,

ceremonies, governance, law, and other social aspects such as “material, intellectual and emotional features” (Montag et al. 2014).

The Value of Traditional Ecological Knowledge for the Environmental Health Sciences and Biomedical Research Symma Finn, Mose Herne, and Dorothy Castille (4/2017)

Alexander, S.M., Provencher, J.F., Henri, D.A. *et al.* Bridging Indigenous and science-based knowledge in coastal and marine research, monitoring, and management in Canada. *Environ Evid* 8, 36 (2019). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13750-019-0181-3>

Whyte, Kyle. "Indigenous Climate Change Studies : Indigenizing Futures, Decolonizing the Anthropocene." *English Language Notes*, vol. 55 no. 1, 2017, p. 153-162. *Project MUSE* muse.jhu.edu/article/711473.

Week 6 Decolonizing or recolonizing, justifying, and sustaining status quo

New languages (biodiversity, the "rights of nature," the livelihood of local populations, Indigenous territorial rights, the sacredness of water bodies) are sacrificed for a small percent of the people gaining more incredible wealth. Canada's boil water advisories stand as testimony to unequal access to clean water; they can build pipelines through reserves from east to west but fail to provide needed water lines to pump clean water into the homes on urban reserves such as Six Nations. How do we build in mitigation of climate change? Paradigm shift begins with community and youth but must also reach the ivory towers scientist who insulates themselves, and nurture a new generation of scientists who can work with Indigenous ways of knowing and being, without co-opting, consuming, representing, appropriating, or attempting to voice over Indigenous people. Do scientists have a moral responsibility to work with, learn from, and engage with the peoples whose lands they occupy?

Datta, Ranjan (2017) “Decolonizing both researcher and research and its effectiveness in Indigenous research” *Research Ethics*, 14(2): pp. 1-24.

Kaplan-Myrth, Nili and Smyle, Janet (2006) Sharing What We Know About Living a Good Life, Summit Report, Indigenous Knowledge Translation Summy, First Nations

Freeman, B., & Van Katwyk, T. (2020). Navigating the Waters: Understanding Allied Relationships through a Tekéni Teyohà:ke Kahswénhtake Two Row Research Paradigm. *Journal of Indigenous Social Development*, 9(1), 60–76.

Confirm digital story draft with 2 page resource guide

WEEK 7- Indigenous authors representating, is there any changes after all?

Student seminar, presenting book reviews

8-10: Presentation of chosen Project

11-12 Digital stories presented for discusion and review before final

Your book review, presentation Decolonizing Indigenous research Pick a book to present in class discusión/review

Alfred, Taiaiake (2005) *Wasáse: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Brown, Leslie and Strega, Susan, eds. (2015) *Research as Resistance: Revisiting Critical, Indigenous and Anti-Oppressive Approaches*, 2nd Edition, Toronto: Canadian Scholar's Press.

- Cochran, P. A. L., Marshall, C. A., Garcia-Downing, C., Kendall, E., Cook, D., McCubbin, L., & Gover, R. M. S. (2008). "Indigenous ways of knowing: Implications for participatory research and community." *American Journal of Public Health*, 98(1), 22-27. Available at <http://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2006.093641>
- McCarthy, Theresa (2016) *In Divided Unity: Haudenosaunee Reclamation at Grand River*, Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Simpson, Audra (2014) *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States*, Durham: Duke University Press.

Smith, Linda Tuhiwai (2012) *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, 2nd Edition, London: Zed Books.

Wilson, Shawn (2008) *Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*, Black Point, NS: Fernwood Publishing.

Kovach, Margaret Elizabeth (2009) *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations and Contexts*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

- Hill, Sue (2007) *The Clay We Are Made of Haudenosaunee Land Tenure on the Grand River*, Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press.
- Kuokkanen, Rauna. (2019) *Restructuring Relations: Indigenous Self-Determination, Governance, and Gender*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.