



FACULTY OF ARTS
Department Of English

COURSE OUTLINE

ENGL 515: Two-Spirit/Indigiqueer Literatures
Fall 2022
Wednesday 1:00-3:45 p.m.

Instructor	Dr. Joshua Whitehead
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Web Page:	D2L (access via MyUofC portal)
Office Hours:	Wednesday, 11:30-12:30 p.m. or by appointment SS1031

Course description:

In our current post-Residential, pro-TRC cultural moment we bear witness and are accountable to a wave of 94 calls to action demanding that reconciliation include the revitalization of FNMI (First Nation, Metis, and Inuit) languages and cultures, access to health care, legal equity, access to education, and the historicization of Indigeneity within Mikinaakominis's museums and archives (Turtle Island). Within the TRC we see no direct call for Two-Spirit and/or queer Indigenous (2SQ) peoples. In fact, within each subheading we see instances of lateral violence that delimit and dispossess 2SQ folks from reconciliation via an intersection of toxic masculinity, ingrained colonization, cultural genocide, and traumatization of sex and sexuality in residential schools. Under the subheading of "Health," for example, there is no reference to sexual/reproductive health (including venereal diseases such as HIV/AIDS); within legal equity we bear no witness to the incarceration and criminalization of 2SQ sex workers, nor do we see an active attempt to label MMIW as it rightfully is within Indigenous grassroots activism, that is, MMIWG2S; and under the heading of education and historicization we once again see no mention of healthy 2SQ narratives that might contribute to the ongoing conversation about the disappearance and deaths of 2SQ youth (e.g. the Attawapiskat, Pine Ridge, and Alaskan suicides). Moreover, within the broader culture's identity categories of LGBTQ+, 2SQ identities are again displaced; their hi/stories are actively dismantled and re-augmented as veneers for white settlers to proclaim their queerness, and their queer utopias are often situated upon unceded/stolen territories (re: Toronto's 2016 Pride Festival and the intersectional work of Black Lives Matter with Indigenous activists, Jason Mraz and Joseph Boyden naming themselves 2S, and the Orlando Pulse Shooting).

Our class will track 2SQ Indigeneity in ways that allow us to write, think, and read against the colonial and lateral violence(s) that displace their bodies, sexualities, histories, and identities through a variety of cultural texts that are heterogeneous and intersectional.

This course will highlight important questions pertaining to Indigenous sexualities, genders, and sexes outside of, beyond, and sometimes aligned with Western conceptions of LGBTQ+. We will begin by unpacking the pan-conceptualization of Two-Spirit and queer

Indigenous identities (2SQ) and instead locate it within the specific regional, cultural, and sovereign nations from which they emerge. We will think heavily on how 2SQness became/becomes traumatized from Christianity, contact, internal colonization, intergenerational trauma, and how it is becoming resurgent through contemporary and hi/storical literature and various cultural texts. We will then ponder where 2SQness sees itself going futuristically. We will ask: in what ways are settler sexualities and queer studies harmful if not outright appropriative of Indigenous forms of sex, sexuality, and gender? Further, we will analyze and critique how Indigenous masculinities and “traditionalism” violently displace 2SQ peoples. Whose lands are LGBTQ flags pocked within? And how do we define and locate the complexity of the 1990’s coined term, Two-Spirit?

This class will deal with difficult topics pertaining to residential schools, resource extraction, genocide (actual and cultural), abuse, addiction, Child and Family Services, the 60s Scoop, suicide, mental health, and death. I offer a full warning not to dissuade you, but to prepare you. It is important that we meet these topics—of which, too, there are plenty oratories of success, triumph, comeuppance, and joy within our texts—head-on so as not to continue the legacy of historical amnesia or “shying away” from the difficult truths of North American colonization. Though, I will stress that we come to class each day prepared for such topics to arise within our texts and to meet them with a clear mind, kind heart, and grace. We will conclude our classes with a debrief around trauma and care as needed.

Students will develop a critical and decolonial understanding of what we now refer to as queer and trans Indigeneity within its current colonized state as well as build a vocabulary of terminologies, both literary and linguistic, to use as lenses of analyses for the texts we will undertake. This class will take upon a breadth of texts that disrupt borders, time periods, and genres from a variety of peoplehoods such as: the Cree, Cherokee, Oji-Cree, Diné, Lakota, Kumeyaay, Chickasaw, Seneca, Mi’kmaq, Mojave, Haudenosaunee, Métis, Anishinaabe, and non-Indigenous.

Course learning outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate nuanced knowledge of a range of literary writings and theories within the fields of Indigenous and Two-Spirit literatures and cultures.
2. Develop a critical and decolonial understanding of what we now refer to as queer and trans Indigeneity within its current colonized state(s).
3. Build a vocabulary of terminologies, both literary and linguistic, to use as lenses of analyses for the texts we will undertake.
4. Understand and interpret Indigenous literary texts in relation to their historical and cultural contexts.
5. Close reading and analytical tools to use in conjunction with Indigenous and BIPOC texts both in class and beyond.
6. An active practice in using academic knowledge to produce community accessible creative projects.
7. Engage in discussions of decolonial praxes across Turtle Island and within the classroom.

Texts and readings:

1. Darrel J., McLeod. *Mamaskatch: A Cree Coming of Age* (Douglas & McIntyre, 2018).
2. Scofield, Gregory. *Thunder Through My Veins: a Memoir* (Anchor Canada, 1999/2019).

3. Diaz, Natalie. *Postcolonial Love Poem*. (Graywolf Press, 2020).
4. Pico, Tommy, *Nature Poem* (Tin House Books, 2017)
5. Belcourt, Billy-Ray, *A Minor Chorus* (Hamish Hamilton, 2022)
6. Beverly Little Thunder. *One Bead at a Time: a Memoir* (Innanna P, 2016).
7. Highway, Tomson. *Permanent Astonishment: a Memoir* (Doubleday, 2021).
8. simpson, jaye. *it was never going to be okay* (Nightwood, 2020).
9. Skeets, Jake. *Eyes Bottle Dark with a Mouthful of Flowers* (Milkweed Editions 2019).
10. Chacaby, Ma-Nee. *A Two-Spirit Journey: The Autobiography of a Lesbian Ojibwa-Cree Elder* (U Manitoba P, 2016).
11. Hannam, Bretten. *Wildhood* (Rebel Road Films 2021).
12. An assortment of essays all of which are available online (see reading schedule for details and links)

Assessments and Evaluation:

Attendance/Participation/Contributions (10%):

As this course is a seminar, your contributions, participation, and attendance are important to the overall ecosystem of our classes. During our time together, everyone is expected to help shape and contour our discussions with their thoughts, inquiries, rebuttals, additions, and/or enhancements. As this is not a lecture, but an oral based class—participation and attendance are as vital as keeping engaged, having the course texts read prior, and partaking in all discussions and activities that may present themselves to us. These may include but are not limited to: quotidian discussions and additions, commenting or critiquing (with consideration and grace) on your peers' presentations or weekly questions, and attempting to answer your own inquiries within your reading logs. Contributions to seminar discussion will be graded upon your willingness to partake, your understanding of the course material, developing analytical tools to enhance your analyses and arguments, and fluently connecting commentary within the larger conversations the class is having. Students are expected to attend class regularly as we meet but once a week. Should you need to miss class, please do contact me as soon as possible (preferably prior to class beginning) to avoid penalty for lack of attendance. All formatting is to be done in MLA.

Weekly Questions (20%):

Each week, **you are required to offer a question** in relation to that week's course materials. These questions will demonstrate engagement with the work and offer questions to further our discussions and thinking and to connect with the larger class thematics and/or political movements or activisms happening outside of academia. Your questions must include a close reading of a passage or larger literary/theoretical question raised in that week's text(s) as well as include a Works Cited for all texts used. While we may not necessarily get to everyone's questions per week, they will be used as milestones within our class time to propel and enhance our larger conversations. Getting an "A" in this category, a student will demonstrate rigorous attention to the text(s), offer nuanced and exciting questions that engage the class as a whole (rather than simply a question that can be answered with a yes or no), allow participation rather than foreclosing conversation with overcomplicating theoretics (remembering that we are

cultivating a class and a modality of learning that requires community accessibility alongside vital thinking) and be engaged with our literal and literary worlds as we delve into decolonial struggles, accomplishments, and ongoing activism. Each question should be upwards to **200-250 words** and are **due at 10 a.m. the day before class** to allow me and your colleagues to read your questions. These will then be posted to D2L. It is strongly encouraged that each student read through the questions prior to class beginning to prepare themselves imaginatively and textually as any of these may be chosen during our seminar.

Reading Log (15%):

Throughout the term you will complete a weekly reading log that details what you learned in that week's class, what you are further questioning, and attempting to answer either one of yours, or your colleague's, questions (either asked in class or on D2L). This is not meant to be a journal where you detail synopsis or plot, although those can be used sparingly in your attempts to answer, but rather stringent attempts to answer your questions. Further, they should be completed thoughts, "mini theses" if you will, that demonstrate your knowledge, insights, and analyses. Your logs should be minimum 300 words, upwards to 750 words, per week and include a Works Cited.

Pecha Kucha Presentation (15%):

Within the course, you will each be required to select a text you would like to respond to in the format of the PK, or PechaKucha, presentation style. This is a storytelling, oral and pictorial, form that contains 20 slides, each of which requires 20 seconds of commentary, for a total of six minutes and forty seconds. This format will keep presentations concise, fast-paced, and of course, require brevity and rehearsal. Students' in-class PKs will offer analytical, theoretical, and engaging inquiries about the chosen text that may include: decolonial praxes, 2SQness, form, genre, peoplehoods, sovereignty, biographical information, political activism, historical efforts, etc. For example: what issues is the author(s) raising for us within this text? Where, or how, do we see this within the larger schemata of our class? And how can you attempt to answer, at least partially, the questions the author/academic has laid out for us? Your PK will require close reading and analyses. Students will be graded on their sophisticated critical response to the work within this format. Only one slide may contain words. You must submit your PowerPoint slides and hardcopy of notes to me the day before your presentation.

Creative Project (40%):

Throughout the term you will be responsible for creating a creative response to a concept, theory, visual, dialogue, or text from the class. This assignment is for you to take the time to introspect, as a creative person (remembering that writing an essay is just as creatively rigorous as writing a poem) and to apply those thoughts in the medium of your choice. You are free to pick any genre you wish to respond within: personal essay, poetry, prose, comic, artwork, photography, children's book, song, play, podcast, recipe, dance, beadwork, etc. Ideally, your assignment will demonstrate an understanding of the texts/theories and an application of those into the medium of your choice. Ideally your assignment will equal to **1250 words** (it is highly recommended that any project not bound to paper will be discussed with the instructor prior to its undertaking to

accommodate length and expectations). In addition, a short exegesis of approximately **500 words** will be required which will demonstrate your research and application of the skills learned in class. All cited material must be in MLA and a full Works Cited is required.

Important Policies to Keep in Mind:

- There is no Registrar-scheduled final examination in this course.
- Students need not complete or pass any particular assignment in order to qualify for a passing grade in this course.
- There are no opportunities for extra credit in this course.

Email Policy:

I am happy to reply to short, specific questions via email and will answer as promptly as possible (dependent upon time, these replies can take up to 2-3 business days to respond to a given email). Anything of greater import, I kindly ask that you visit me during my office hour or book an appointment with me to discuss. Leaving inquiries for the last minute may result in you not getting the answer you need in a timely fashion.

Learning technology requirements:

Students are welcome to bring laptops, recorders, and/or any other accessibility technologies they may require to class. The use of electronics for recreation, texting, gaming, and/or streaming services is prohibited—these distract your peers around you as well as disrupt the flow of the class. Students caught will be asked to leave class if this becomes a pattern. We all need to strive to create a supportive and collective ecosystem of a class for the learning benefit of all. There is a D2L site for this course which contains class resources, information, and materials (see d2l.ucalgary.ca).

Conduct:

Students, employees, and academic staff are also expected to demonstrate behaviour in class that promotes and maintains a positive and productive learning environment. As members of the University community, students, employees, and academic staff are expected to demonstrate conduct that is consistent with the University of Calgary Calendar, the Code of Conduct and Non-Academic Misconduct policy and procedures, which can be found at:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

Policy on use of electronic devices:

The use of laptop and mobile devices in class is acceptable when used in a manner appropriate to the course and classroom activities. Please refrain from accessing websites and resources that may be distracting to you or for other learners during class time. Students are responsible for being aware of the University's [Internet and email use policy](#). Electronic devices are not permitted during the Final Examination.

Grading System:

90 + %	A+	4.0	67 – 69 %	C+	2.3
85 – 89 %	A	4.0	64 – 66 %	C	2.0
80 – 84 %	A–	3.7	60 – 63 %	C–	1.7
77 – 79 %	B+	3.3	55 – 59 %	D+	1.3
74 – 76 %	B	3.0	50 – 54 %	D	1.0
70 – 73 %	B–	2.7	0 – 49 %	F	0

- Although the A+ is solely an honorific that entails no additional points in the four-point system, the course instructor will employ this mark to distinguish superlative work that far exceeds expectations in style, correctness, intellectual depth and breadth, sophistication, and originality.
- There is no D- grade.
- Final grades will not be rounded up or down. A student needs to have surpassed the minimum threshold for a grade category to qualify for a final letter grade.

Academic Integrity:

This course, like all courses at the University of Calgary, holds students to high standards of honest and responsible scholarship. Please consult the [Academic Integrity website](#) for a detailed description of university policies, which will be enforced in this course. Cases of suspected academic misconduct will be referred to the Associate Dean of Arts for a ruling.

Plagiarism is a type of academic misconduct. Plagiarism occurs when a student presents the ideas, expression of ideas, or work of another person as their own. Another equally serious form of plagiarism occurs when a student submits something they have written themselves for credit in two or more courses without first securing written permission from all those course instructors. Consequences for plagiarism include failure on the assignment, failure in the course, and possible suspension or expulsion from the university. Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense.

Deferral of term work:

Should you require an extension for completion of term papers or assignments beyond the deadline of five days after the end of lectures, an [Application of Deferment of Term Work](#) must be completed. It is the student's responsibility to initiate this process with the instructor.

Grade appeals:

To pursue a Reassessment of Graded Term Work or a Reappraisal of an Academic Assessment, Consult the [University Calendar](#) and request advice from the English Department at engl@ucalgary.ca. Please note that mere dissatisfaction with a grade is not sufficient grounds for an appeal.

[English Department Website:](#)

For more information about courses, programs, policies, events and contacts in the Department of English.

Scribe and Muse Club for English Students:

The **Scribe and Muse Reading and Writing Club** fosters and champions reading and writing through community service, leadership, and engagement. Our email address is smecuofc@gmail.com.

Writing support:

[The Student Success Centre](#) offers both online and workshop writing support for U of C students.

[Academic regulations and schedules](#)

Student Academic Accommodations:

The Student Accessibility Services website is available [here](#). University accommodation policies can be found at the following links:

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/b-6-1.html>

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/b-6.html>

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/b-6-2.html>

Program Advising and Student Information Resources is done through the Faculty of Arts Students' Centre. Office location: SS102; phone: 403-220-3580; email: ascarts@ucalgary.ca
Website: <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate>

Instructor's Intellectual Property

Course materials created by instructors, including presentations, posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments, and exams, remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may not be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the course at the same time may be allowed under fair dealing.

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy

Student information will be collected in accordance with usual classroom practice. Students' assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty and teaching assistants. Private information related to the individual student is treated with the utmost regard by the faculty at the University of Calgary.

Sexual violence policy:

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/sites/default/files/teams/1/Policies-Sexual-and-Gender-Based-Violence-Policy.pdf>

Other important information:

- [Wellness and Mental Health Resources](#)
- [Student Success](#)

- [Student Ombuds Office](#)
- [Student Union \(SU\) Information](#)
- [Graduate Students' Association \(GSA\) Information](#)
- [Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points](#)
- [Safewalk](#)

Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI):

Please participate in [**USRI Surveys**](#) toward the end of the course. The feedback they provide helps us evaluate teaching, enhance student learning, and guide students as they select courses.