



International Indigenous Studies Program

Website: <https://arts.ucalgary.ca/international-indigenous-studies>

Winter 2023

INDG 397.14: Contemporary Indigenous Non-Fiction

Pre/Co-Requisites: n/a	
Instructor: Dr. Joshua Whitehead	Lecture Location: EDC 280
Phone: 1 (403) 220-6196	Lecture Days/Time: Tues/Thurs 2:00-3:15 p.m.
Email: joshua.whitehead@ucalgary.ca	
Office: SS1040	Office Hours: Thursday 12:00-1:00 p.m.
Instructor 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.	

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Selected themes in Canadian Indigenous studies.
This course may be repeated for credit.

In their book, *Shapes of Native Nonfiction: Collected Essays by Contemporary Writers*, Elissa Washuta and Theresa Warburton chart dozens of Indigenous writers and attempt to redefine what nonfiction might and ought to look like for Indigenous writings. They conceive of the essay as an “exquisite vessel” noting that it, “evidences the delicate balance of beauty and pain. The ‘exquisite’ character of this vessel invokes simultaneously an exquisite work of art and the exquisite ache” (10). Washuta and Warburton’s arguments are a stylization against anthologized literary productions of Indigenous nonfiction, which is far too often read, in a settler colonial misnomer, as representing a solidified Indigenous past. To relegate Indigenous nonfiction to the past is to create and foreground anthropologic literary expectations of the contours of Indigenous nonfiction storytelling. Indigenous stories, especially our non-fiction oratories, are not simply fodder for Canadian canonization, nor are our stories simply trauma narratives. The writers we will be exploring defy and outlaw against the borders of genre and form, they ache, but they too revel in unprecedented joy—and they resist any desire to be read as testimony. Here, in the era of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), MMIWG2S, and now in the wake of the Kamloops 215 onward, settler readers thirst and quake for Indigenous testimonials and privilege residential school narratives as a readership within the capitalism of Canadian literary productions. We will be reading against this.

In this class we will survey contemporary Indigenous non-fiction and ask ourselves: what stakes are at play within Indigenous memoirs? How does Indigenous non-fiction differentiate itself from Canadian non-fiction? Do we even consider Indigenous non-fiction, non-fiction in the Western sense? What is our, and the text's, relationship to land and body(s), if at all? Is non-fiction strictly confession? Is non-fiction also a kind of voyeurism? What legacies of genocide and state sanctioned imperialism haunt Indigenous narratives today? How does Indigenous non-fiction, and our literatures at large, disrupt genre, border, nation, and province? How do Indigenous conceptualizations of gender, sex, and sexuality play into what we create, but also, how we are read? Throughout a variety of sources, including printed text, essay, film, and television, we will attempt to answer these questions in a holistic and nuanced way that takes to heart decolonial theory, Indigenous feminisms, Indigenous masculinities, genre studies, and Two-Spirit studies. We will survey the peoplehoods of: the Cree (Driftpile), the Métis, the Inuk, the Nlaka'pamux, the Cherokee, the Cowlitz, the non-Indigenous, among others.

COURSE OBJECTIVES & LEARNING OUTCOMES

The International Indigenous Studies Program has a range of capacities and critical thinking skills that our Majors will develop over the course of their degree. This course sets you on the pathway to achieving them.

For the full list of program learning outcomes expected at the end of the degree, please see:
<https://arts.ucalgary.ca/international-indigenous-studies/about/program-statement>

For this Course, the learning objectives are: developing critical writing skills, empowering decolonial ways of thinking, Indigenous gender and sexuality studies, the amplification of Indigenous feminisms and matriarchal models, as well as a better understanding of how cultural and actual genocides against Indigenous peoples affects and effects us today, by both settler and Indigenous peoples alike. Participation will be deemed invaluable in this class as we foster a wholistic and cyclical learning style together. Each of you hold vast amounts of knowledge from your own embodied experiences of being in this world, outside of and beyond the academy.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK(S)

Washuta, Elissa and Theresa Warburton. *Shapes of Native Nonfiction: Collected Essays by Contemporary Writers*. U of Washington P, 2019.

Belcourt, Billy-Ray. *A History of my Brief Body*. Hamish Hamilton, 2020.

Caetano, Cody. *Half-Bads in White Regalia*. Hamish Hamilton, 2022.

Simpson, Leanne Betasamosake and Robyn Maynard. *Rehearsals for Living*. Knopf Canada, 2022.

An assortment of short stories, essay, and other writings all of which are available online (see reading schedule for details and links).

COURSE COMPONENT WEIGHTS AND DUE DATES

COMPONENT	WEIGHTING	DUE DATES
Group Work	20%	Jan 24, Feb 14, March 14, April 6
Reading Responses	15%	Jan 31, Feb 28, March 30
Short Essay	15%	February 28
In-Class Presentation	20%	TBD in class
Creative Project	20%	April 11
Attendance/Participation	10%	TBD
Total	100%	

If a student misses a required course component, please get in touch the instructor as soon as possible (see Late Penalties).

COURSE SCHEDULE & TOPICS

READING SCHEDULE

(Please note that the schedule is tentative and may change as the need arises)

January 10-19: What Is Indigenous Genre(s)?

Jan 10: Introduction

Jan 12: *Talk Easy*: Musician Buffy Sainte-Marie’s Path to Home (Available on D2L): 56 min
 “Contemporary Creative Writing and Ancient Oral Tradition” from *Shapes of Native Non-Fiction*: p. 23-30 (Ernestine Hayes)

Jan 17: “Introduction: Exquisite Vessels” from *Shapes of Native Non-Fiction*: p. 3-19

Jan 19: “How Do We Become Good Ancestors?” from *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter* (Available on D2L) p.113-156 (Daniel Heath Justice).

Last day to drop without financial penalty

Jan 19: **Last day to add or swap a class**

January 24-31: What Informs (or Haunts) Contemporary Indigenous Genres?

Jan 24: “Truth and Reconciliation Commission Survivors Speak: Abuse” p. 153-164 (Available on D2L)
 Chelsea Vowel’s “Monster” from *Indigenous Writes* p. 171-180 (Available on D2L)

Jan 26: TIA House Talks: “Joshua Whitehead Interviews Jordan Abel” (Available on D2L): 51 min

Jan 31: “Felt Theory: An Indigenous Feminist Approach to Affect and History” p.53-76.

February 2-16: Indigiqueer Memoir

Feb 2: Leanne Betasamosake Simpson’s “Indigenous Queer Normativity” pp. 119-144 from *As We Have Always Done*

Feb 7: *A History of my Brief Body*

“What it’s like to navigate the world as a queer, Indigenous man,” *The Social* (Available on D2L): 10 min

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Feb 9: *A History of my Brief Body*

Feb 14: *A History of my Brief Body*

“A History of my Brief Body – Billy-Ray Belcourt” *Ottawa International Writers Festival* (Available on D2L): 37 min

Feb 16: *A History of my Brief Body*

February 21-23: Reading Week

February 22: No class

February 24: No class

Feb 28-Mar 7: How Do We Narrate Pain?

Feb 28: *Reservation Dogs*, “Hunting” (S1, Episode 6): To be screened in class

Devery Jacobs “How *Reservation Dogs* Is Opening Up a Crucial Conversation About Suicide in Indigenous Communities” *Time Magazine* (Available on D2L)

Mar 2: *Reservation Dogs*, “California Dreamin’” (S1, Episode 7): To be screened in class

Allison Crist “How *Reservation Dogs*’ Devery Jacobs is ‘Living Truthfully’ as Queer & Indigenous” *E! Online* (Available on D2L)

Mar 7: *Reservation Dogs*, “Mabel” (S2, Episode 4): to be screen in class

Mar 9-21: Indigenous Men and Masculinities

Mar 9: *Half-Bads in White Regalia*

Mar 14: *Half-Bads in White Regalia*

Brendan Hokowhitu “Taxonomies of Indigeneity: Indigenous Heterosexual Patriarchal Masculinity” pp. 80-98 (Available on D2L)

Mar 16: *Half-Bads in White Regalia*

Mar 21: *Half-Bads in White Regalia*

Mar 23-Apr 4: Relationality at the End of the World

Mar 23: *Rehearsals for Living*

Mar 28: *Rehearsals for Living*

Mar 30: *Rehearsals for Living*

Apr 4: *Rehearsals for Living*

Apr 6-11: Creating, in Spite of, and Beyond

Apr 6: “Buffy Sainte-Marie on the importance of telling our own stories” *CBC Q* (Available on D2L): 25 min

Apr 11: Final day of class

Last day to withdraw from a course

ASSIGNMENT(S)

Short Essay (1000 words, 15%)

For this assignment you will take the introductory essay from *Shapes of Native Non-Fiction* and/or the assigned reading of Daniel Heath Justice and **one** essay from the anthology that piques your interest to discuss any of the following topics: the differentiation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous non-fiction, the role of “wonderworking,” within your chosen essay, the role of the “exquisite vessel” in relation to genre and form, and/or any decolonial analysis you may infer from the essay. You will use the

knowledge gained from the introductory essay and/or Justice's essay to do an analysis of the lack or benefit of that text and how it contributes to the ongoing decolonial work of Indigenous literatures within Canadian Literature. Ideally, your paper will demonstrate an understanding of decolonization, literary analysis, and more importantly, your ability to read the historical legacies coalesced within your chosen narrative.

Reading Responses (3 x 250 words for a total of 15%)

Throughout the term you will be responsible for filling out a short analysis of the texts covered in class. Each response will be approximately 250 words. This assignment will be a practice in brevity, close reading, and literary analysis. Your entries must be written in the first person, focused on thinking both theoretically and literarily, and analyzing a brief passage from the texts we've read up until that point. The topic of discussion is yours to make albeit about: 2SQness, Indigenous livelihoods, decolonization, and/or any topic that may have interested you within that text. There will be three responses scheduled throughout the term and you must pick a text read prior to, but within, its due date timeframe. Each assignment will be marked out of five percent. No primary text may be written about twice. Each response is due at the beginning of the class as a hardcopy submission. If you know you will be away during the due date, exceptions will be made for students to submit electronically with the instructor's permission.

Group Work (Four x 400 words for a total of 20%)

Participation is deemed as engaging in class discussion and active participation in group learning. This course will be highly interactive and will include opportunities for active engagement during each class session, including organized discussions, debates, small group work, etc. Your participation and responses will be graded based on the consistency and thoughtfulness of your contributions and should highlight students understanding and learning of course objectives and materials. Students will be enrolled in a semester-based cohort that will meet, on 4 specific dates, to discuss the questions and issues posted by the instructor. The group will be responsible for writing a 1-page essay using MLA citation style, that addresses the question and is supported by course materials. The work must be submitted as a hard copy to the instructor at the beginning of the next class. If a student member does not contribute within the small group discussion, they will receive a zero.

In-Class Presentation (10-15 mins for a total of 20%)

As noted, participation and engagement are active parts of our learning strategies within this class. During the term, you will pair up with one other student. Both of you will present on a chosen essay from within the anthology or one of our assigned texts. The topic of choice is yours to make. The presentation will be a 10 to 15 minute overview of the essay which can include: its form, structure, synopsis, and, **most importantly, a critical argument that you are making about said essay** (this could include decolonial strategies, Indigenous feminisms, Indigenous queerness, gender, genre, style, and/or any other topic that may pique your interest). Keep your arguments tight and concise—I would highly encourage you to pick but one topic and hone in by pulling arguments and examples from the essay itself. A rubric and more detailed descriptions will be distributed on D2L upon the first class.

Creative Project (1000 words approx., 20%)

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, picture book, song, play, podcast, recipe, dance, 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 fall within a ten-minute reading maximum, which equals to about **750 words** (it is highly recommended that any project not bound to paper will be discussed with the instructor prior to its undertaking). In addition, a short exegesis of approximately **250 words** will be required which will demonstrate your research and application of the skills learned in class. A rubric and more detailed descriptions will be distributed on D2L upon the first class.

All assignments must be handed in as hard copies upon the due date, in class, unless otherwise specified (such as an electronic creative assignment). Please do keep your work backed up and saved in the event of loss or misplacement.

Participation/Attendance (10%)

ESSAYS/RESEARCH PAPER(S)

All essays must follow MLA formatting guidelines including Works Cited (to be discussed in class).

PARTICIPATION

Students are expected to attend class regularly and to be fully present and engaged in class activities and to contribute to discussions—including group work and presentations. These are part of the participation grade, as outlined in the assessment components section above. This will be graded upon not only physical presence within the classroom, but your willingness to partake in prompted discussions that we may have throughout the term with myself and your TAs. In an Indigenous class as such, orality, questioning, critiquing, and storytelling will all be held in high regard as we build a community within our classroom.

MID-TERM EXAMINATION

There is no Registrar-scheduled mid-term examination in this course.

FINAL EXAMINATION

There is no Registrar-scheduled final examination in this course.

WRITING STATEMENT

Written assignments are often required in International Indigenous Studies courses, and the quality of writing skills, including but not limited to such elements as grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, clarity, citation, and organization, will be taken into account in the determination of grades. Students are encouraged to make use of the services offered through Writing Support Services in the Student Success Centre by contacting them at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>.

GRADING SCALE: The following grading scale will be used:

The International Indigenous Studies Program uses the percentage conversion scale below. Your final grade will be converted to the University's official 4-point scale at the end of term. The interpretation of the undergraduate university grading system can be found at

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/f-1.html>.

A+ (96-100)	B+ (80-84.99)	C+ (65-69.99)	D+ (53-54.99)
A (90-95.99)	B (75-79.99)	C (60-64.99)	D (50-52.99)
A- (85-89.99)	B- (70-74.99)	C- (55-59.99)	F (0-49)

These are the grade ranges and specific numeric values I assign to letter grades on D2L. An A+ is solely honorific, meaning that its grade point amount is the same as an A (4.0). I will use this mark to distinguish superlative work that exceeds expectations in style, intellectual depth and breadth, sophistication, creativity and originality.

LATE PENALTIES

Late assignments will be penalized a third of a letter grade per day late up to a maximum of one week without prior consent from the instructor. Should you know you will need an extension or will be submitting late, please inform Dr. Whitehead as early as possible.

INSTRUCTOR GUIDELINES

Students requiring assistance are encouraged to speak to the instructor during class or their office hours. Should you wish to meet outside of office hours, please email to make an appointment. It is to the student's advantage to keep such appointments.

Email is a common form of communication but it is not always the most effective way of answering student questions. If you cannot make office hours, please request a one on one meeting outside of these hours.

Students are welcome to use laptops and other electronic note-taking devices in this course. Please be considerate of others and switch off all cell phones when you enter the classroom. Sending/receiving texts and browsing the Web is disruptive to others and will not be tolerated.

We will be encountering difficult subject material in this course (TW: discussions around suicide, substance abuse, colonization, genocide, heteropatriarchy, resource extraction, anti-Blackness). Please come to class with an open heart and a willingness to sit through these together, as a community in the classroom, and I will do my best to make sure we leave with light hearts at the end of each class.

COURSE-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

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.

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS

International Indigenous Studies covers topics that can have elements that are emotionally difficult to talk about. The INDG website contains supports and resources for students that can be accessed both on and off campus.

Please see:

- ◆ <https://arts.ucalgary.ca/international-indigenous-studies/contact/indigenous-supports-campus>
- ◆ <https://arts.ucalgary.ca/international-indigenous-studies/contact/indigenous-supports-campus-0>

IMPORTANT POLICIES AND INFORMATION

Absence From a Mid-term Examination

Students who are absent from a scheduled term test or quiz for legitimate reasons are responsible for contacting the instructor via email within 48 hours of the missed test to discuss alternative arrangements. A copy of this email may be requested as proof of the attempt to contact the instructor. Any student who fails to do so forfeits the right to a makeup test.

Deferred Term Work Form: Deferral of term work past the end of a term requires a form to be filled out by the student and submitted, along with any supporting documentation, to the instructor. The form is available at: https://live-ucalgary.ucalgary.ca/sites/default/files/teams/14/P22_deferral-of-term-work_lapseGrade.pdf

Once an extension date has been agreed between instructor and student, the instructor will email the form to the Faculty of Arts Program Information Centre (ascarts@ucalgary.ca) for approval by the Associate Dean.

Deferral of a Final Examination

Deferral of a final examination can be granted for reasons of illness, domestic affliction, and unforeseen circumstances, as well as to those with three (3) final exams scheduled within a 24-hour period. Deferred final exams will not be granted to those who sit the exam, who have made travel arrangements that conflict with their exam, or who have misread the examination timetable. The decision to allow a deferred final exam rests not with the instructor but with Enrolment Services. Instructors should, however, be notified if you will be absent during the examination. The Application for Deferred Final Exam, deadlines, requirements and submission instructions can be found on the Enrolment Services website at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/exams/deferred-exams>.

Reappraisal of Grades:

For Reappraisal of Graded Term Work, see Calendar I.2

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i-2.html>

For Reappraisal of Final Grade, see Calendar I.3

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i-3.html>

Academic Misconduct:

Academic Misconduct refers to student behavior that compromises proper assessment of students' academic activities and includes: cheating; fabrication; falsification; plagiarism; unauthorized assistance; failure to comply with an instructor's expectations regarding conduct required of students completing

academic assessments in their courses; and failure to comply with exam regulations applied by the Registrar.

For information on the Student Academic Misconduct Policy, Procedure and Academic Integrity, please visit: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-3.html>

Plagiarism And Other Forms Of Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct in any form (e.g. cheating, plagiarism) is a serious academic offence that can lead to disciplinary probation, suspension or expulsion from the University. Students are expected to be familiar with the standards surrounding academic honesty; these can be found in the University of Calgary calendar at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>. Such offences will be taken seriously and reported immediately, as required by Faculty of Arts policy.

Recording of Lectures:

Recording of lectures is prohibited, except for audio recordings authorized as an accommodation by SAS or an audio recording for individual private study and only with the written permission of the instructor. Any unauthorized electronic or mechanical recording of lectures, their transcription, copying, or distribution, constitutes academic misconduct. See <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-6.html>.

Academic Accommodations:

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services. SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their instructor. The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/student-accommodation-policy>

Research Ethics

Students are advised that any research with human subjects – including any interviewing (even with friends and family), opinion polling, or unobtrusive observation – must have the approval of the Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board. In completing course requirements, students must not undertake any human subject research without discussing their plans with the instructor, to determine if ethics approval is required.

Instructor Intellectual Property

Course materials created by instructors (including presentations and 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 (FOIP) Act:

Personal information is collected in accordance with FOIP. Assignments can only be returned to the student and will be accessible only to authorized faculty and staff. For more information, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/access-information-privacy>

Copyright Legislation:

See the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/acceptable-use-material-protected-copyright-policy> Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.

Course materials created by instructors (including presentations and 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.

Evacuation Assembly Points

In the event of an emergency evacuation from class, students are required to gather in designated assembly points. Please check the list found at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/risk/emergency-management/evac-drills-assembly-points/assembly-points> and note the assembly point nearest to your classroom.

Important Dates:

Please check: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/academic-schedule.html>.

Faculty of Arts Program Advising and Student Information Resources

- Have a question, but not sure where to start? The Arts Students' Centre is your information resource for everything in Arts! Drop in at SS102, call them at 403-220-3580, or email them at artsads@ucalgary.ca. You can also visit the Faculty of Arts website at <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate>, which has detailed information on common academic concerns, including program planning and advice.
- For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact Enrolment Services at 403-210-ROCK [7625] or visit them in the MacKimmie Tower.

Important Contact Information

Campus Security and Safewalk (24 hours a day/7 days a week/365 days a year)
Phone: 403-220-5333

Faculty of Arts Undergraduate Students' Union Representatives
Phone: 403-220-6551
Email: arts1@su.ucalgary.ca, arts2@su.ucalgary.ca, arts3@su.ucalgary.ca,
arts4@su.ucalgary.ca
Students' Union URL: www.su.ucalgary.ca

Graduate Students' Association
Phone: 403-220-5997
Email: askgsa@ucalgary.ca
URL: www.ucalgary.ca/gsa

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Student Ombudsman

Phone: 403-220-6420

Email: ombuds@ucalgary.ca

Campus Mental Health Resources

The University of Calgary recognizes the pivotal role that student mental health plays in physical health, social connectedness and academic success, and aspires to create a caring and supportive campus community where individuals can freely talk about mental health and receive supports when needed. We encourage you to explore the excellent mental health resources available throughout the university community, such as counselling, self-help resources, peer support or skills-building available through the following resources:

SU Wellness Centre: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/>

Student Wellness Services:

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/wellness-services/services/mental-health-services>

Campus Mental Health Strategy website: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/mentalhealth/>.