

The University of Western Ontario
Summer Intersession 2014
Introduction to Indigenous Spirituality
REL 2236A/FNS 2236A (530)

Instructors: Mary Lou and Dan Smoke

Office: SSC 3255 or in BR301

Office hours: Tuesdays 3:00 - 4:00 p.m. in SSC 3255 or by appointment

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Time & Place: Monday and Wednesday Evenings @ 6:30 - 9:30 p.m. in BR #201 (This is in the St. James Building)

No class on May 19, 2014

Course Description: This course responds to a growing interest by students in North American Indigenous spirituality. This course offers an introduction to the diversity, complexity and vitality of Indigenous spiritual traditions in North America. Students will cultivate an understanding of Indigenous worldviews and cosmologies with a focus on: traditional ceremonies and their incorporation into urban environments, creation stories and other narrative forms, cultural values and healing practices. Special attention is given to Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee nations.

Course Summary:

Subject areas to be covered include: the Medicine Wheel; clan system; Spiritual Names and Colours; human development; environmental stewardship; the Longhouse and Midewin Lodge: roles for men, women and children; individual, familial and community relations; Elders and cultural transmission; herbal medicines; sharing circles; drumming, singing and dance; the vision quest; fasting; the pipe; and the sweat lodge.

This course will be taught by persons who represent the two major groups in this territory: the Anishinabe and the Haudenosaunee. The instructors will follow appropriate Indigenous protocols with respect to the delivery of the course. There are four major areas we will be: exploring Anishinabe and Haudenosaunee foundational Spiritual knowledge; examining the impacts of colonization on Anishinabe and Haudenosaunee spiritual traditions; envisioning cross-cultural futures that are based upon respectful co-existence and peace; and experientially engaging with the objective of peace/respectful co-existence.

The course is intended to employ Androgogic educational methods that respect students as adult learners. Androgogic methods are different from Pedagogic (child centered learning) and are premised on the idea that only after convincing oneself on the rationale of learning, adults decide to learn. Students must assume responsibility for their own learning. To that end, students will be given a draft copy of the course outline on the first class for purposes of discussion. Students will be given an opportunity to provide input into the delivery of the course during the first class. Every effort will be made by the instructors to consider the students' feedback, while adhering to scholarly university expectations. This is intended to be an

experiential class where students will be given opportunities to participate in Indigenous ceremonies or other traditional Indigenous activities. While participation in these ceremonies or traditional Indigenous activities is not mandatory, students are encouraged to participate as it will broaden opportunities for learning and will promote cross-cultural awareness.

Prerequisite: Completion of any Arts & Humanities or Social Science 1.0 course.
Antirequisite(s): Religious Studies 2236A/B Introduction to North American Indigenous Spirituality
3 hours, 0.5 course (Brescia).

Course Objectives:

- * To examine some foundational (pre-contact) spiritual traditions of Anishinabe and Haudenosaunee Peoples.
- * To explore the impacts that colonialism has had on Anishinabe and Haudenosaunee spiritual expressions.
- * To explore the resilience of Anishinabe and Haudenosaunee Peoples despite the impacts of colonization.
- * To examine the spiritual foundation of the Treaties made between Anishinabe, Haudenosaunee and settlers that were based upon the principle of respectful co-existence.
- * To envision a futuristic world where North American Indigenous and Settler Peoples live in harmony and peace.
- * To examine the role that spirituality can play in the creation of peace and respectful co-existence.

Course Materials:

Textbooks (required)

- 1) Benton-Banai, Edward. 1988. *The Mishomis Book: The Voice of the Ojibway*. Saint Paul, Minnesota: The Red School House.
- 2) Porter, Tom (Sakokwenionkwas). 2008 *And Grandma Said...Iroquois Teachings, as passed down through the oral tradition*. Fonda, N.Y.: Xlibris.

The textbooks are available at the Western University Bookstore and copies are in the Brescia Library.

Overview

Different Indigenous speakers will deliver class lectures throughout the six weeks. The course is designed to introduce you to a variety of Indigenous people and educate you about issues of spiritual tradition. The course is grounded in the lived experience and theoretical perspectives of Indigenous people and draws on the written and videotaped material of Indigenous people whenever possible. Indigenous communities in Canada are diverse and varied and no one voice can reflect the complexity and range of spiritual expression.

Guest Speakers and Videos

Speakers or videos will begin around 7:30 p.m. and finish at 9:00 p.m. each class. You should not expect Speakers - presentations and videos to relate directly to the weekly readings. The assigned readings are essential to give you the background to begin to put the lectures into context and to understand the spiritual concepts that the speakers and videos will use.

Class Commentary/Reflection

After each lecture and prior to the following lecture, you will be required to hand in a written commentary. The commentaries will draw upon the readings, or speakers, or ceremonial experience and expression.

There will be a requirement for a total of ten written commentaries. Each commentary will be 1 page, a minimum of 300 words, double-spaced and typed with a #12 pt Times New Roman font. Each commentary will be graded out of 100%. We will accept up to nine, with the top eight to be counted towards the final mark. If you do not hand a commentary assignment in, you will receive a 0 mark for that class. The breakdown will be as follows: 8 commentaries at 10% each, with 9 commentaries assigned for the term. For every day a commentary is late, you will be deducted 2% points per day (excluding weekends). We will not accept any commentaries more than two weeks late. A zero will result.

Students must use the assigned readings (texts), including handouts and e-mailed stories. Topics by speakers and video will also be the basis of the commentary. You will answer the following questions:

1. What was the talk/video/story about?
2. What were the most important points made?
3. Where am I left after this talk/video/story?
4. How has the talk/video/story influenced my thinking?

Use these commentaries as an opportunity to share what you think and feel with us and to ask us questions that we may answer in the following class or, personally, if you prefer. You are required to write a comment on the above, not a book or story review. We want you to be a reader who can analyze and synthesize what the speaker/video/reading is doing, or what the speaker/video/reading is saying and how each is doing or saying this.

Individual Essays

In addition to showing evidence of having completed and contemplated weekly readings, guest speakers and videos, you will be required to write an essay on a particular spiritual ceremony, practice, protocol, teaching, or song and drum construction and your personal experience in relationship to it. You will be encouraged to seek out additional research resources. The essay should reflect thorough research from 3 books and articles. The word count for the essay will be 1750 - 2000 words.

Each essay will be double-spaced and typed with a #12 pt Times New Roman font.

The essay will provide the main points from the readings/speaker/videos and critically assess the spiritual significance of the subject.

The due date for the essay will be June 9, 2014 at the beginning of the class.

Make-up tests will be granted only in case of documented illness, injury, or death, in the immediate family. Written assignments are subject to a late penalty of 2% (excluding weekends) which will be waived only in the cases just mentioned.

At the first class you will be given your research paper instructions for the essay.

Class Discussions/Talking Circles

For each class, you will be expected to have closely read and have taken notes of the general points of each of the assigned readings. The classes will consist of discussion of the readings, feedback on guest speakers and videos. You are expected to actively participate without prodding. You should strive to demonstrate both your careful attention to these readings, as well as your enormous capacity for listening by offering your views and comments in the class discussions. The readings and articles to be discussed will follow the schedule below, however we, the instructors, reserve the right to assign additional or to eliminate readings, and, or films. We also reserve the right to provide and to accommodate additional guest speakers or readings when new circumstances present themselves.

Class Ceremonial Observance

Each class will open with a purification, smudging ceremony, outside of the Student Lounge on the first floor. There is a patio area where we will gather to do a smudge, a drum song, and an Invocation. We will conduct this Opening ceremony every class. On some occasions we may segue into a talking circle to encourage each student to express their feelings about the course. There will be two Sacred Fire ceremonies that will take place out by the Brescia Women's Circle Annex. The first Sacred Fire ceremony will be on Wednesday, May 14th. The women will gather cedar medicine with Mary Lou. The men will gather wood and light the sacred fire. They will continue to tend the fire until the ceremony is concluded;. This is also the Grandmother Full Moon time, so we will be experiencing the Full Moon Ceremony. It is a women's ceremony, so the women will be wearing a skirt, as per ceremonial protocol. There will be a

Special Full Moon Ceremony on June 11th, 2014. We will be activating and “birthing” our hand drums.

Class Attendance

You will be expected to attend all classes. You are expected to let us know as soon as possible if you are unable to attend a class because of illness (documentation required), family consideration or for religious/cultural reasons.

Hand Drum Construction

Each student will receive cedar wood squares for making a drum frame. They will be responsible for gluing the squares together. They will form a circular drum shell/frame and the student will sand it down with sand paper. Once the frame is sanded, the rawhide will be dressed and applied to the frame. The rawhide will be tied down with sinew and secured to tighten the rawhide covering. The hide will be allowed to dry for four days, upon which we will “activate” and “birth” the drum to life. This ceremony is very important, so we encourage each student to bring their family, their partner, significant other, to observe the ceremonial birth. There will be a feast afterwards, so we encourage each student to bring food for a potluck meal after the ceremony.

Plagiarism

(In accordance with policy at UWO and taken from a document provided by Alan C. Weedon, the former Dean of Graduate Studies):

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or passage of text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar)

Policy on Work Deadlines and Extensions

Exams will be written and assignments are due on the dates specified. Extensions for late assignments of time and writing of make-up exams are normally not allowed. If exceptional circumstances require you to request an extension, you must request this before the assignment is due. Extensions or make-ups will be granted for the following reasons only: (1) illness; (2) compassionate reasons; (3) schedule conflicts with official university events. All requests must be made in writing. Late assignments will be deducted two percent for each day late. The instructors will do their best to return marked commentary assignments one to two weeks after receiving them whenever possible.

Evaluation/Grading

20% - class participation in discussions - reflects your record of attendance and the overall quality of your contribution to discussions.

20% - individual written presentation - you will write an essay on a particular spiritual ceremony, practice, protocol, teaching, or song, or drum construction and your personal experience in relationship to it. You will be encouraged to seek out additional research resources. The essay should reflect thorough research from 3 books and articles. The word count for the essay will be 1750 - 2000 words.

The essay will provide the main points from the readings/speaker/videos and critically assess the spiritual significance of the subject. The essay's due date is June 9, 2014, at the beginning of the class. You will be given a research paper instruction guideline at the first class.

20% - In Class Exam - the in class exam will be comprised of several 8 short answer questions and 3 essay questions. The exam will not be rescheduled should a student miss class, except under the special circumstances cited above. The examination will be written on June 4, 2014. We will try to conduct a review session before the examination.

40% - weekly commentaries - this will enhance your ability to express yourself in relation to guest speakers' topics; the assigned readings and articles; and video/films. You will hand in one commentary for every class, beginning May 12th, 2014. So, the first two commentaries will be handed in on May 12th, every Monday and Wednesday before class in the format cited. The last commentary will be handed in on June 11, 2014.

The grading scale in effect for this course is as follows:

A+ = 90-100%

A = 80-90%

B+ = 75-79%

B = 70-74%

C+ = 65-69%

C = 60-64%

D = 50-59%

F = 0 -49%

Grades are subject to Departmental Review.

BRESCIA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE ACADEMIC POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

1. POLICY REGARDING MAKEUP EXAMS AND EXTENSIONS OF DEADLINES

When a student requests academic accommodation (e.g., extension of a deadline, a makeup exam) for work representing 10% or more of the student's overall grade in the course, it is the responsibility of the student to provide acceptable documentation to support a medical or compassionate claim. All such requests for academic accommodation **must** be made through an Academic Advisor and include supporting documentation. Academic accommodation on medical grounds will be granted only if the documentation indicates that the onset, duration and severity of the illness are such that the student could not reasonably be expected to complete her academic responsibilities. Appropriate academic accommodation will be determined by the Dean's Office in consultation with the student's instructor(s). Please note that personal commitments (e.g., vacation flight bookings, work schedule) which conflict with a scheduled test, exam or course requirement are not grounds for academic accommodation.

A UWO Student Medical Certificate (SMC) is **required** if a student is seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds. This documentation should be obtained at the time of the initial consultation with the physician/nurse practitioner or walk-in clinic. A SMC can be downloaded under the Medical Documentation heading of the following website: <https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm> . If it is not possible to have an SMC completed by the attending physician/nurse practitioner, the student must request documentation sufficient to demonstrate that her ability to meet academic responsibilities was seriously affected. Please note that under University Senate regulations documentation stating simply that the student "was seen for a medical reason" or "was ill" is **not** adequate to support a request for academic accommodation. All documentation is to be submitted to an Academic Advisor.

Whenever possible, requests for academic accommodation should be initiated in advance of due dates, examination dates, etc. Students must follow up with their professors and Academic Advisor in a timely manner.

The full statement of University policy regarding extensions of deadlines or makeup exams can be found at <http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2013/pg117.html>

2. ACADEMIC CONCERNS

If you feel that you have a medical or personal problem that is interfering with your work, contact your instructor and Academic Advisor as soon as possible. Problems may then be documented and possible arrangements to assist you can be discussed at the time of occurrence rather than on a retroactive basis. Retroactive requests for academic accommodation on medical or compassionate grounds may not be considered.

If you think that you are too far behind to catch up or that your work load is not manageable, you should consult an Academic Advisor. If you consider reducing your workload by dropping one or more courses, this must be done by the appropriate deadlines (refer to the Registrar's website, www.registrar.uwo.ca, for official dates). You should consult with the course instructor and the Academic Advisor who can help you consider alternatives to dropping one or more courses. *Note that dropping a course may affect OSAP eligibility and/or Entrance Scholarship eligibility.*

The Dean may refuse permission to write the final examination in a course if the student has failed to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year or for too frequent absence from the class or laboratory.

3. ABSENCES

Short Absences: If you miss a class due to a minor illness or other problems, check your course outline for information regarding attendance requirements and make sure you are not missing a test or assignment. Cover any readings and arrange to borrow notes from a classmate. Contact the course instructor if you have any questions.

Extended Absences: If you have an extended absence, you should contact the course instructor and an Academic Advisor. Your course instructor and Academic Advisor can discuss ways for you to catch up on missed work and arrange academic accommodations, if appropriate.

4. POLICY ON CHEATING & ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Students are responsible for understanding the nature of and avoiding the occurrence of plagiarism and other academic offences. Students are urged to read the section on Scholastic Offences in the Academic Calendar. Note that such offences include plagiarism, cheating on an examination, submitting false or fraudulent assignments or credentials, impersonating a candidate, or submitting for credit in any course without the knowledge and approval of the instructor to whom it is submitted, any academic work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought in another course in the University or elsewhere. Students are advised to consult the section on Academic Misconduct in the Western Academic Calendar.

If you are in doubt about whether what you are doing is inappropriate or not, consult your instructor, the Student Services Centre, or the Registrar. A claim that "you didn't know it was wrong" is not accepted as an excuse.

The penalties for a student guilty of a scholastic offence (including plagiarism) include refusal of a passing grade in the assignment, refusal of a passing grade in the course, suspension from the University, and expulsion from the University.

Plagiarism:

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com.

Computer-marked Tests/exams:

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating. Software currently in use to score computer-marked multiple-choice tests and exams performs a similarity review as part of standard exam analysis.

5. PROCEDURES FOR APPEALING ACADEMIC EVALUATIONS

All appeals of a grade must be directed first to the course instructor. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the course instructor, a written appeal signed by the student must be sent to the Department Chair. If the response of the department is considered unsatisfactory to the student, she may then submit a signed, written appeal to the Office of the Dean. Only after receiving a final decision from the Dean may a student appeal to the Senate Review Board Academic. A Guide to Appeals is available from the Ombudsperson's Office, or you can consult an Academic Advisor. Students are advised to consult the section on Academic Rights and Responsibilities in the Western Academic Calendar.

6. PREREQUISITES AND ANTIREQUISITES

Unless you have either the prerequisites for a course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you will be removed from the course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Similarly, you will also be deleted from a class list if you have previously taken an antirequisite course unless this has the approval of the Dean. These decisions may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course because you have taken an antirequisite course.

7. SUPPORT SERVICES

The Brescia University College Registrar's website, with a link to Academic Advisors, is at http://www.brescia.uwo.ca/academics/registrar_services/index.html . The Western Registrar's website is at <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/index.cfm> . The website for the Student Development Centre at Western is at <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/> . Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health @ Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Portions of this document were taken from the Academic Calendar, the Handbook of Academic and Scholarship Policy and the Academic Handbook of Senate Regulations. This document is a summary of relevant regulations and does not supersede the academic policies and regulations of the Senate of the University of Western Ontario.