

Grande Prairie Regional College
Project Teacher Education North
Course: Native Issues and Insights
Winter, 2000

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Office hours: Fridays, 10-12 a.m.

Outline: This course is an introduction to various Canadian First Peoples, the issues which they are contending with today and their strategies and visions for gaining self-determination. From a variety of written sources, other media, and personal experiences, students will gain a knowledge and, to certain extent, experiential base for education involving First Nations peoples of Canada. Students also will be developing powers of insight, organization and expression throughout the course, by the composition of reflection papers, an evaluation of First Nations sites on the World-Wide-Web, and submission of a short teaching unit which could become part of their professional portfolio.

Texts:

David Long and Olive P. Dickason, *Visions of the Heart: Canadian Aboriginal Issues*, Harcourt-Brace, 1996.

Meili, Diane. *Those Who Know: Profiles of Alberta's Native Elders*. NeWest, 1991.

Rupert Ross. *Dancing With A Ghost: Exploring Indian Reality*. Octopus, 1992.

Richard Wagamese. *Keeper'n Me*. Doubleday, 1995.

Celia Haig-Brown, Kathy L. Hodgson-Smith, Robert Regnier, Jo-ann Archibald, *Making the Spirit Dance Within: Joe Duquette High School and an Aboriginal Community*. Lorimer, 1997.

Course Outline:

January 11, 2000: Getting Started

January 13, 2000: The long view

READ *Visions*, Chapter 1, and Trigger, pp. 19-44 in *Out of the Background* (orange cover)
RESERVE.

January 18: READ *Visions*, Chapter 5

January 20:

January 25: READ *Visions*, Chapter 6

January 27: READ *Visions*, Chapter 12

February 1: READ *Visions*, Chapter 7

February 3: READ *Visions*, Chapter 14

February 8: NB: Reflections on Wagamese and Ross due in class!

February 10: READ *Visions*, Chapter 2

February 15: READ *Visions*, Chapter 9

February 17: READ *Circle Unfolds*, Chapter 2 RESERVE

February 21-25: Break Week

February 29:

READ: NB: Reflection on Meili due in class

March 2: **Visions**, chapter 3

March 7: READ **Circle Unfolds**, Chapter 5 RESERVE

March 9: TEACHER'S CONVENTION

March 14: READ **Visions**, Chapter 4.

March 16: Study Day: no class - get reading!

March 21:

NB: Reflection on **Making the Spirit Dance Within** due in class!

March 23: READ **Visions**, Chapter 10, and **Circle Unfolds**, Chapter 15 RESERVE.

March 28: READ **Visions**, Chapter 13

March 30 READ **Circle Unfolds**, Chapter 11 RESERVES

April 4: READ **Visions**, Chapter 11

April 6: READ **Circle Unfolds**, Chapter 1 RESERVES

April 10: Article Review DUE!

April 14: Retrospect and Assessment

Course Requirements:

Reflection papers (3x)	30	(due according to course outline <i>above</i>)
WWWsite evaluation	10	(due after Reading Week)
Participation and Attendance	15	
Article Review from Circle Unfolds	15	
Final Examination	30	
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	100 %	

Course Objectives:

Canadian society has been challenged by two generations of First Nations activism, yet today many Canadians of non-aboriginal descent still do not understand the background of their discontent, or their continuing drive for autonomy and self-determination.

This course will introduce students to the historical background behind the headlines, and some of the contemporary nature of First Nations Canadians' reemergence into the centre of our national life. The course surveys a broad spectrum of peoples, across tribal, gender and generational lines, and tries to present a part of their reality to students preparing for a career that will bring them in contact with First Nations peoples. Topics include: the use of art and spirituality in recovery from over a century of discrimination and abuse, the role of elders, male and female leadership, as well as the challenge of law reform and education for Native Canadians today.

Students will acquire a basic familiarity with the terms and conditions of historical and legal documents such as the Royal Proclamation of 1763, the Indian Act, the Constitutional Act and Charter of Rights and Freedoms, as well as selected treaty agreements made with governments over the past century.

Films made by First Nations producers, writers, and directors will help students appreciate the ingenuity, passion and persistence of Native leaders initiating and struggling to keep control of their destiny in Canada today.

Visits with representatives from the First Nations in the GPRC region will be arranged, either in-class or through field visits, where discussion of the vision and the realities of education in aboriginal communities can be shared with students.

Evaluation:

Reflection Papers: Students will read and prepare an eight-to-nine-page paper on the readings, or pairs of reading, as assigned in the course schedule *above*. The papers will be presented as informal essays, however, where necessary, correct citation of sources and attributions of quotations should be made.

Web-site Evaluation: Students will locate and explore at least three (3) different Canadian First Nations sites on the World-Wide-Web, and evaluate their usefulness to education students trying to learn about aboriginal issues today. The paper will be no more than ten pages, must include complete URLs and may include background or support materials, links, etc. as the student deems appropriate.

Curriculum project: The topic and format of this project must be approved by the instructor in conference with the student *before* Reading Week. Length: no more than fifteen pages of text, plus illustrative materials.

N.B.: all page limits are given assuming double-spaced, normal pitch font. Title pages, bibliographies or source citations must be given where necessary or helpful.

I am using the same nine-point scale for grading as everyone else teaching in TEN, please refer to their outlines or others if you are still unclear about how this works, or see me.

Late policy: All assignments are expected to be submitted on time. When legitimate circumstances make this impossible, the student should make alternate arrangements with the instructor **prior** to due date. Late assignments will be penalized one grade-point per week.

Equity Policy: The Faculty of Education is committed to providing an environment of equality and respect for all people within the university/college community, and to educating faculty, staff, and students in developing teaching and learning environments that are welcome to all. For further information, please refer to the college and university calendars.

Code of Behaviour : Please refer to the relevant calendars for the expectations the College/University have of students, which outline definitions of and policies for plagiarism, cheating, and aiding and abetting, and consequences for such behaviour.

Reflection Papers: Guidelines

Reflection Papers:

A reflection paper is not, primarily, a research or critical analysis assignment -- it is not a book review, and does not require outside reading. A reflection paper is meant to be an organized diary of your responses to the book you are reading and how the book changes or strengthens your ideas and theories about the course, the subject and teaching. You do not have to be a great philosopher to write this paper. You do have to be as honest and balanced as possible. In each case, the assigned books should give you some ideas about both the perspective of Native peoples today and how these problems came to be. What were the historic causes? Are the issues in this book the same for other Native Canadians elsewhere? What new information and perspectives am I gaining from this book? These are a few of the kinds of questions you might keep in mind as you read.

While you are reading, keep a diary or log of your thoughts and the conclusions you arrive at. Remember that each book has a general thesis or point the author wants to make, and each chapter, too, has a point that makes a link in a chain of reasoning backing up the general theory. I usually read just a chapter at a time, then take some time to make an outline of what the chapter said, and what it taught me (not always the same thing). Then I try to write down if and how it leads to new ideas. If I don't have any insights immediately at hand, sometimes I read the chapter again rapidly, to see if I missed anything. Finally, I write down my feelings after each chapter -- angry or sad, hopeful or cheerful -- as well as any moral convictions about right and wrong (if these have been challenged or confirmed). What has this book made me DECIDE?

It is from these notes (often just an outline) that I compose a few paragraphs for a reflection piece. But I do not write them down in the order they may naturally come to me. I try to group my ideas together into topics, and make each topic a separate paragraph. Then I put each paragraph into some kind of overall pattern with the others. There are two ways I do this. One method (which I don't use very often) is to put my most important topic paragraphs FIRST, then add my last little thoughts at the end, just before the conclusion. Sometimes this works (especially if I only have one or two main ideas), but more often I put my strongest ideas LAST, to drive my point home.

Then, I write my conclusion, trying to sum up my ideas and coming up with an effective last line. ONLY THEN do I write my introduction, when I am sure of what I am going to say. This keeps the essay focused from the beginning to the end. I review my reflections, looking for any missing links in my argument. Any paragraph which has only one sentence, I believe, is too short, and should either be married to the nearest related paragraph, or expanded by two or three more sentences, so that my idea is clearly expressed. By the way, you do not need to use footnotes or long quotations -- just put the page number of the book where you found the information in brackets at the end of the sentence in your paper.

Final Note:

Perhaps the best way to make sure that your ideas are clearly expressed is to ask someone you trust, to read your paper before you hand in the final copy. If they are having trouble understanding you, then I probably will, too. You might be surprised to know that every academic usually has what they have written read over by a friend or colleague (or two, or three!) BEFORE they submit for publication. They also keep a dictionary beside them when they write, and they make horrendous writing errors when they are composing their first drafts. They depend on each other, and learn from each other as they write. So I hope we can do the same in this course.

Happy Reading, Reflecting and Writing!