

GEOG 9123A

Decolonizing Land-Based Relations

Fall 2024

1. Course Information



	Delivery Mode	Day/Time	Location
Lecture	In-person	Wed 1:30-3:30pm	Wampum Learning Lodge
Lab	In-person	Wed 3:30-4:30pm	Wampum Learning Lodge

Classes Start	Fall Reading Week	Classes End	Study day(s)	Exam Period
Sept 5	Oct 12 – Oct 20	Dec 6	Dec 7-8	Dec 9-22



Course Instructor	Email	Office Hours
Dr. Cortney K. Golkar-Dakin (S. Awasis)	cdakin2@uwo.ca	Wed/Thurs 12:30-1:30pm or by appointment



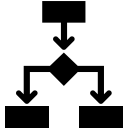
- Office hours will be held in person in SSC 2425 (Thurs), at the Wampum Learning Lodge (Wed), or remotely via Zoom (on request)
- Students can make an appointment to meet by emailing cdakin2@uwo.ca
- Students will be able to attend office hours as a group
- A summary of the discussion that takes place in group office hours will be posted on OWL for everyone to view

Calendar Description

This course explores decolonial theory and praxis as a conceptual foundation to building relationship with the land and confronting entrenched colonial power relations. We will grapple with historical context, key political-economic and political-ecological processes, institutions, and conflicting theories that comprise critiques of colonial modes of development. This course aims to be sensitive to regional differences based on historical experiences and geographical particularities, but gives attention to Black, Indigenous, and queer land-based practices and movements that focus on a transformational re-centering of noncolonial ways of knowing, being, and doing.

[2 lecture hours, 1 outdoor tutorial hour, 0.5 course]

2. Extended Description



Colonialism has impacted nearly every part of the globe and every aspect of our lives, it continues to shape how we understand our selves, social movements, research methodologies, inequality, and the world around us. Colonial relations, comprised of hierarchical social structures, are characterized by interrelated racial, class, gender, and state powers. Decolonization involves a transformational re-centering of noncolonial ways of knowing, being, and doing. Black and Indigenous peoples around the world have shaped the rich intellectual traditions of decolonial theory through liberatory struggles that make explicit distinctions and connections between their experiences. Throughout the term we will revisit key authors (Fanon, Coulthard, Simpson) on the dismantling of colonial power relations and the radical resurgence of Indigenous land-based relations. The course will focus on two key themes in contemporary decolonial theory: “embodiment” and “grounded normativity”. Students will examine colonial power, explore decolonial action, and assess how more equitable and sustainable relationships with the land may be generated. Particular attention will be given to Black, local Indigenous, and queer brilliance as a way of challenging entrenched colonial power.

3. Readings

All resources, including additional assigned materials and supplementary materials, will be made available on the GEOG 9123 OWL site.

Bowmani, Z. (2021). Now Is the Time for Black Queer Feminist Ecology. *Law & Sexuality, 30*, 123+.

Ciccariello-Maher, G. (2017). *Decolonizing dialectics*. Duke University Press.

Coulthard, G. S. (2014). *Red skin, white masks: rejecting the colonial politics of recognition*. University of Minnesota Press.

Daigle, M., & Ramírez, M. M. (2019). Decolonial Geographies. In *Keywords in Radical Geography: Antipode at 50*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 78–84.

Fanon, F. (2008). *Black skin, white masks*. Grove Press.

Haymes, S. (2018). An Africana Studies Critique of Environmental Ethics. In Nishime, L., & Hester Williams, K. D. (Eds.). *Racial ecologies*. University of Washington Press. 51-66.

Hazard, C. W. (2022). *Underflows: Queer Trans Ecologies and River Justice*. University of Washington Press.

Kimmerer, R. W. (2013). *Braiding sweetgrass: Indigenous wisdom, scientific knowledge and the teachings of plants* (1st ed.). Milkweed Editions.

Moulton, A. & Salo, I. (2022). Black Geographies and Black Ecologies as Insurgent Ecocriticism. *Environment and Society, 13*. 156-174.

Patterson, R., & Lambert, N. (2011). Greening Africana Studies: Redemption, Redevelopment, and Remuneration in the Black Community. *Journal of Black Studies*, 42(3), 291-313.

Pharr, T. (2023). Nancy Basket: Walhalla's Kudzu Master on the Intergenerational Power of Basket Making. *Vacation With An Artist*.

Reese, A. & Johnson, S. (2022). Urban Black Ecologies of Care and Mutual Aid. *Environment and Society*, 13, 27-42.



Simpson, L. B. (2017). *As we have always done: Indigenous freedom through radical resistance*. University of Minnesota Press.

Springgay, S. & Truman, S. (2018). Introduction: Walking methodologies in a more-than-human world. In *Walking methodologies in a more-than-human world: Walkinglab*. Taylor and Francis. 1-15.

Tuck, E. & Yang, W. K. (2012). Decolonization is not a metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 1(1), 1-40.

Wahl, E. M. (2021). Black Women in Fanon's Black Skin, White Masks: The Intersection of Race, Gender, and Oppression. *Stance*, 14(1), 41-51.

Wane, N. (2010). Reading Fanon Differently: Black Canadian Feminist Perspectives. In *Fanon and the Counterinsurgency of Education*. Sense Publishers. 83-105.

4. Format

- This course is based around outdoor field work. Please make sure to **dress appropriately for the weather**.
- Lectures are participatory and students are expected to come to class having prepared and/or reviewed the assigned materials, and ready to take an active role.
- This course is cross-listed with a fourth year undergraduate course in Indigenous Studies. Graduate students will be encouraged to take a leadership role in lab tutorials.
- With the exception of illness, bereavement, and religious observances, attendance and participation are required in this small, interactive, field-based course.
- Students are responsible for material covered in lecture as well as assigned materials.

5. Learning Outcomes

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

- Identify and analyze the political and cultural implications of colonial power structures
- Discuss contemporary discourses in decolonial theory and key concepts
- Apply decolonial theories to a variety of cases
- Center and reflect upon a decolonizing standpoint in research
- Actualize strategies for decolonization in praxis
- Express compelling and well-supported arguments, orally and in writing



6. Course Schedule

Week	Dates	Topic	Materials	Due Dates
1	Sept 11	Course overview	Chitty & Bressette 2021 Phar 2023 Tuck & Yang 2012	
2	Sept 18	Izhichigewin: "Doing" Decolonial geographies and field praxis	Daigle & Ramirez 2019 Hazard 2022	Field activity #1 due
3	Sept 25	Gkendaasowin: "Knowing" Indigenous geographies and more-than-human worlds	Kimmerer 2013 Springgay & Truman 2018	Field activity #2 due
4	Oct 2	Biidaaban: "Being" Political/ecological embeddedness and embodiment	Simpson 2017	Field activity #3 due
5	Oct 9	Black geographies and ecologies	Moultan & Salo 2022 Reese & Johnson 2022 Bowmani 2021	Field activity #4 due
6	Oct 16	READING WEEK		
7	Oct 23	Grounded normativity	Fanon 2008 Coulthard 2014 Ciccariello-Maher 2017	Circle seminars
8	Oct 30	Bimaadiziwin: "Living" Freedom and anti- capitalism	Simpson 2017	
9	Nov 6	Queer normativity	Simpson 2017	
10	Nov 13)	Black feminism	Wahl 2021 Wane 2010	
11	Nov 20	Africana studies critiques of environmentalism	Haymes 2018 Patterson & Lambert 2011	
12	Nov 27	Prefiguration	Hazard 2022 Coulthard 2014 Simpson 2017	Paper proposals due
13	Dec 4	Course synthesis	Belcher 2019	Writing workshop
	Dec 18			Final papers due



7. Communication



- Updates will be provided using OWL announcements. Please opt in to receiving OWL announcements by email.
- Students are responsible for checking their **UWO email account** in a timely manner. You can read about the privacy and security of the UWO email accounts [here](#).
- The instructor's email will be checked daily and students can expect to receive a response in 24 – 48 hours.
- This course will use the OWL forums for discussion and students are encouraged to post course-related questions and content to the discussion forum so that it accessible for everyone to view.

8. Evaluation

Grades will be allocated based on the assignments below. More detailed instructions for assignments will be provided separately. All assignments will be evaluated based on the quality of reasoning, writing, and structure. The student's own analysis and synthesis of materials should be emphasized and supported with detailed evidence and specific examples.

Assessment	Weighting	Due Date(s)
Field activities	(4x10%) 40%	Sept 18 Sept 25 Oct 2 Oct 9
Circle seminar	20%	Various
Paper Proposal	5%	Nov 27
Final paper	30%	Dec 18
Participation	5%	Ongoing



Students should:

- (1) demonstrate deep engagement with course materials,
- (2) communicate their ideas in a clear, concise, and organized way,
- (3) draw upon and cite academic sources, including assigned and supplementary readings, cases discussed in class, and lived experience and independent research as appropriate, and
- (4) express compelling and well-supported arguments, orally and in writing

Field activities (4x10%=40%)

Field activities explore specific topics in more depth through short written assignments that relate to the outdoor tutorials that take place during class. The assignments involve deep introspection, embodiment, and engagement with decolonial theory/praxis in some way. You will share your assignments with the class through the forums on OWL as well as in tutorial discussions. Evaluation will be based on the written submission. More detailed instructions, examples, and guiding questions will be provided separately.

Circle Seminar (20%)

During the first lecture, graduate students will select a topic and week to lead their circle seminar. The week before their seminar, students will be responsible for assigning additional

materials and instructions for their peers to prepare for the circle seminar. The day of the seminar the student leading it will submit a 1-page reflection on the readings for the week via OWL that outlines the key concepts, main arguments, discussion questions, connections between topics, as well as any critiques and responses. In class you will briefly summarize the readings and lead a short activity and/or discussion circle.

Paper proposal (10%)

Provide an outline of your final paper via OWL. Guiding questions include: What is decoloniality? What are the theoretical foundations and key concepts? How do the key concepts relate to your research and/or a specific case? What case-specific insights can decolonial theory provide? Explain your reasoning, major themes, and main arguments. Draw upon at least 5 references and indicate a plan for further research. Students will pitch and workshop their proposals together in tutorial.

Final paper (30%)

In 10-12 pages, describe key concepts for decoloniality, the theoretical foundations, and your reasoning for key concepts. Apply your ideas to a specific case and describe two insights that arise. Draw on evidence to explain how colonial power relations are challenged and/or reinforced. Your paper can be in the form of an essay, report, guide, toolkit etc. More detailed instructions will be provided separately.

Participation (5%)

Participation is based on active engagement in tutorials, student-led circle seminars, more-than-human kin studies, and online discussion forums on OWL, including but not limited to responses to peers’ kin study and circle seminar summaries.

Submission and late policy

- The field assignments, circle seminar, and paper proposal are due before lecture at 12:30pm EST, while the final paper is due by the end of the day.
- Assignments should be submitted through OWL, on or before the due date.
- Written assignments will be submitted to Turnitin via OWL (statement in policies below).
- Students will have unlimited submissions to Turnitin up to the due date.
- There is a 48-hour submission window. Late assignments without academic consideration or accommodation (see Section 9 below) will be subject to a late penalty of 5%/day.
- After an assessment is returned, students should wait at least 24 hours to process feedback before contacting the instructor; to ensure a timely response, reach out within 7 days of receiving feedback.

Grading

Click [here](#) for a detailed and comprehensive set of policies and regulations concerning grading. The table below outlines the University-wide grade descriptors.

A+	90-100	One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level
A	80-89	Superior work which is clearly above average
B	70-79	Good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory

C	60-69	Competent work, meeting requirements
D	50-59	Fair work, minimally acceptable
F	below 50	Fail

Grades will not be adjusted on the basis of want or need.

9. Academic Policies

When a student receives academic considerations or academic accommodations which overlap with the 48-hour flexibility period, the longest period of accommodation will determine the deadline. The built-in flexibility of the assessment should not be taken to extend any considerations or accommodations.

Academic Accommodations

The Department of Geography and Environment strives at all times to provide accessibility to all faculty, staff, students and visitors in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. More information about accessibility at Western is available [here](#).

Students with disabilities may wish to register with Accessible Education Western (AEW), which provides recommendations for accommodation. AEW is a confidential service designed to support students through their academic program and ensure that academic accommodations are arranged with the appropriate documentation. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

Students missing course work for medical, compassionate or extenuating circumstances can request academic consideration by completing a request at the central academic consideration portal. Students are permitted one academic consideration request per course per term without supporting documentation. Please note that any academic considerations granted in this course will be determined by the instructor of this course, in consultation with the academic advisors in your Faculty of Registration, in accordance with information presented in this course outline.

Please note that because the submission deadline for assessments already includes flexibility in the form of a 48-hour submission window, the instructor reserves the right to deny academic consideration for assignments which are submitted following the end of the period of flexibility.

Supporting documentation for academic considerations for absences due to illness should use the [Student Medical Certificate](#) or, where that is not possible, equivalent documentation by a health care practitioner. Please note that any academic considerations granted in this course will be determined by the instructor, in consultation with the academic advisors in your Faculty of Registration, and in accordance with information presented in this course outline.

If you miss a class due to a minor illness or other problems, review the assigned materials and arrange to borrow a classmate's notes. If you expect to be absent for an extended amount of time, please make arrangements with the instructor.

[School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies information on Leave of Absence](#)

Western's policy on graduate registration, including medical and compassionate leave of absence

Course Assessments that Require Supporting Documentation

Instructors are permitted to designate one assessment per course per term that requires formal supporting documentation to receive academic consideration.

For this course the following assessment has been designated as requiring supporting documentation: FINAL PAPER DUE DEC 18

Religious Accommodation

Students should review the policy for Accommodation for Religious Holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the Western Multicultural Calendar. Indigenous students with ceremonial commitments should also contact the instructor.

10. Use of Electronic Devices

The instructor encourages a laptop-free classroom environment during lectures and student-led presentations.

11. Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence.



All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University. 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.

12. Mental Health

If you or someone you know is experiencing distress, there are several resources here at Western to assist you. Please visit Western's Health and Wellness website for more information on mental health resources.

13. Support Services

Western's Support Services
Student Development Centre

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts here.

To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, contact support@uwo.ca.