

**Fall 2018, Department of Community Sustainability**

**Indigenous Peoples, Sustainability & Environmental Justice**

**CSUS 891** (*section 001*)

**3 credits**

**Wednesdays, 5pm to 7:50pm, Natural Resources 019 (basement)**

**Instructor: Kyle Whyte (kwhyte@msu.edu)**

**Description:**

Indigenous peoples are among the major architects of environmental movements focusing on sustainability and environmental justice. But whereas many environmentalists focus on restoring or conserving historic ecosystems, Indigenous peoples inhabit landscapes largely altered by different forms of colonialism and the capitalist exploitation of natural resources. For Indigenous peoples, environmental justice, climate change adaptation, food sovereignty, and ecological restoration take on different meanings than traditionally have been priorities in other environmental movements. This course seeks to understand, from Indigenous perspectives, how many Indigenous movements and the projects of Indigenous organizations and governments seek to achieve environmental justice and sustainability, including the challenges they face and the lessons they have learned. The course covers topics within domains of Indigenous sciences and traditional ecological knowledge, Indigenous environmental activism and decolonial philosophies, Indigenous research, Indigenous ecologies, and Indigenous legal orders and issues in law and policy.

**Course Objectives**

The course seeks to introduce the diverse world of Indigenous sustainability and environmental activism to students. The course provides a chance for in depth study for students seeking to work directly in Indigenous sustainability and environmental work and an introductory path for students in other fields who are likely to engage Indigenous issues in some respect. The course introduces students to both Indigenous concepts of sustainability and environmental justice but also engages students in reflections on the research methodologies and specific approaches to research that Indigenous peoples have articulated as morally and empirically important. The course also aspires to create a balanced approach to interpreting and weighing different viewpoints within controversies involving Indigenous peoples, whether environmental justice cases or cases of scholarly criticism of Indigenous models of sustainability.

**Course Learning Outcomes**

Students will come away from the course with an interpretative framework for understanding Indigenous approaches to sustainability and environmental justice. By interpretative framework, I mean students will have a greater understanding of the philosophies, histories, contexts and current practices and issues that surround Indigenous concepts of and claims about sustainability and environmental justice. Students will develop a working understanding of how Indigenous sustainability and environmental justice are related to global and North American environmental justice, with a sub-focus of the course being on Indigenous peoples of the Great Lakes region. Students will be able to identify overlapping agreements but also regional differences in how

Indigenous peoples conceptualize sustainability and environmental justice, especially in areas where Indigenous scholars, environmental professionals and knowledge-keepers have produced large literatures (e.g. the Great Lakes region or Aotearoa/New Zealand). Students will have more detailed understanding and appreciation of Indigenous intellectual traditions and Indigenous contexts as constituting a comprehensive area of academic study and scientific research, instead of seeing Indigenous intellectual traditions and contexts *only* through the lens of a scientific field, such as sustainability science or environmental policy. Students will be exposed to a limited, but sufficient, literature on Indigenous research methodologies and methods to be useful potentially for comprehensive exam reading lists.

## **Grading**

The work load for this course centers heavily on student preparation for each class. That is, students should see the majority of their work as focused on doing the readings for each course meeting and being prepared to contribute to discussions during the meetings. The assignments will be geared toward students thinking creatively about how Indigenous methodologies and Indigenous literatures can contribute to their own academic and activist interests. Each student will work out a research plan with the instructor for how they can best use the course to fulfill aspects of their future work. The instructor will offer several suggestions in the course, such as working on bibliographies or statements of research ethics, among others, that students can consider for their research plan. The agreed upon deliverable will be due at the end of the semester. Each enrolled student will make an agreement with Whyte by the end of September about what their interests are for a deliverable project. By the end of October each student will have submitted an update to the instructor on the project. The instructor will review at the end of November each student project, issuing any needed feedback at the time for a final submission of December 15, 2018. Given the weight placed on preparation for the class, the deliverable will not be as work intensive as writing a term paper or 2-3 essays (during the semester)—and may not be a piece of writing necessarily. The instructor, on the first day of the course, will discuss a range of options and will keep the discussion going in future classes and over email. The first day of the course will also involve a discussion about what the expectations will be for student preparation for each session.

## **Schedule of Readings**

*Note that some weeks involve “review” readings, which just refer to readings I would like each student to briefly scan as a point of comparison with the main readings for the week. I will discuss why I wanted to bring those readings to students’ attention – most often for the sake of global comparisons. I will discuss, in each session, some of the key aspects of the review readings. All readings will be provided in a Dropbox folder which will be distributed by no later than the first week of class.*

### Week 1: September 5

- Lee Maracle, “Salmon is the Hub of Salish Memory”
- Clara Sue Kidwell, “Native American Systems of Knowledge”
- Charles Menzies, “Revisiting ‘Dm Sibilhaa’nm da Laxyubm Gitxaala (Picking Abalone in Gitxaala Territory)’: Vindication, Appropriation, and Archaeology”
- Winona LaDuke, “Indigenous Environmental Perspectives: A North American Primer”

#### Week 2: September 12

- Shawn Wilson, “What is an Indigenous Research Methodology?”
- Linda Smith, “On Tricky Ground: Researching the Native in the Age of Uncertainty”
- Megan Bang et al., “Muskrat theories, tobacco in the streets, and living Chicago as Indigenous land”
- Mishuana Goeman, “Notes toward a Native Feminism's Spatial Practice”
- Anna Harding et al., “Conducting Research with Tribal Communities: Sovereignty, Ethics, and Data-Sharing Issues”

#### Week 3: September 19

- Ronald Trosper, “Resilience in Pre-contact Pacific Northwest Social Ecological Systems”
- Jeanette Armstrong, “Native Perspectives on Sustainability”
- Marlene Atleo, “The Ancient Nuu-chah-nulth Strategy of Hahuulhi: Education for Indigenous Cultural Survivance”
- Richard Atleo, “Discourses in and about Clayoquot Sound”
- Debra Krol, “Fighting Fire with Fire”

#### Week 4: September 26

- Brenda Child, “Women of the Great Lakes and Mississippi: Everything Was Very Systematic”
- Niigaan Sinclair, “Returning to Ourselves: Two Spirit Futures and the Now”
- Michael Witgen, “Place and Belonging in Native North America”
- Deborah McGregor, “Honouring Our Relations: An Anishinaabe Perspective on Environmental Justice”
- Leanne Simpson, “Protecting Gdoo-naaganinaa”

#### Week 5: October 3

- Jean O’Brien, from *Dispossession by Degrees*
- Judith Royster, “The Legacy of Allotment”
- Rose Stremlau, “‘To Domesticate and Civilize Wild Indians’: Allotment and the Campaign to Reform Indian Families, 1875-1887”
- Kenneth Bobroff, “Retelling Allotment: Indian Property Rights and the Myth of Common Ownership”

#### *Review comparison readings:*

- Keith Hooper et al., “The Walrus, Carpenter and Oysters: Liberal Reform, Hypocrisy and Expertocracy in Māori Land Loss in New Zealand 1885-1911”
- Eileen Moreton-Robinson, “Why I Still Call Australia Home”

#### Week 6: October 10

- Mere Roberts et al., “Kaitiakitanga: Māori Perspectives on Conservation”
- Margaret Mutu, “Ngāti Kahu kaitiakitanga”
- Jacinta Ruru, “Indigenous Peoples’ Ownership and Management of Mountains”
- Jacinta Ruru, “Listening to Papatūānuku: a call to Reform Water Law”

#### Week 7: October 17

- Jane Mt. Pleasant and Robert Burt, “Estimating Productivity of Traditional Iroquoian Cropping Systems from Field Experiments and Historical Literature”
- Haudenosaunee Environmental Task Force, samples from *Words that Come Before All Else: Environmental Philosophies of the Haudenosaunee*
- Alice Tarbell et al., “Akwesasne: A Native American Community’s Resistance to Cultural and Environmental Damage”
- Henry Lickers, “Can’t See the Forest for the Trees: A Native American’s Perspective”

#### *Review:*

- Mary Arquette et al., “Holistic Risk-Based Environmental Decision-Making: A Native Perspective”

#### Week 8: October 24

- Aimee Craft, “Living Treaties, Breathing Research
- Val Napoleon, “Thinking About Indigenous Legal Orders”
- Aaron Mills, “Nokomis and the Law in the Gift”
- James Ransom et al., “Polishing the Kaswentha’: A Haudenosaunee View of Environmental Cooperation”

#### *Review comparison readings:*

- Megan Davis, “Australia’s Reconciliation Process...”
- Uluru Statement + media about its rejection by the Australian government

#### Week 9: October 31

- *Standing Rock, #NoDAPL, and Mni Wiconi* from *Culanth*
- James Grijalva, “Resistance, Resilience and Reconciliation: Indigenous Human Rights to Environmental Protection in a Fossil Fuel Frenzy”
- Sarah Deer et al., “The Rapidly Increasing Extraction of Oil, and Native Women, in North Dakota”

#### *Review comparison readings:*

- Aroha Harris, “Bastion Point is Māori Land”
- Heidi Norman, “Coal Mining and Coal Seam Gas on Gomeroi country: Sacred lands, economic futures and shifting alliances”

#### Week 10: November 7

- Rebecca Tsosie, “Conflict between the Public Trust and the Indian Trust Doctrines: Federal Public Land Policy”
- Linda Moon Stumpff, “In Wilderness There is Life: An American Indian Perspective on Theory and Action for Wildlands”
- Eric Johnson, “How John Muir’s Brand of Conservation Led to the Decline of Yosemite”
- Jacinta Ruru, “A Māori Right to Own and Manage National Parks”

*Review comparison readings:*

- Paige West et al., “Parks and Peoples: The Social Impact of Protected Areas”

Week 11: November 14

- Devon Mihesuah et al., from *Introduction to new Indigenous Foods* book
- Genner Ortiz, “Seeds of Maya Development: The ‘Fiestas y Ferias de Semillas’ Movement in Yucatan”
- Mariaelena Huambachano, “The Ayni Principle”
- Elizabeth Hoover, from a *forthcoming* book.
- Kari Norgaard et al., “A Continuing Legacy: Institutional Racism, Hunger, and Nutritional Justice on the Klamath”

Week 12: *To Be Rescheduled for a topic selected by the students collectively, examples including “Allyship,” “Indigenous Forestry,” “Hydropower, Green Economies and Justice,” among many others that can be considered.*

Week 13: November 28

- Sheila Watt-Cloutier, from interview on climate justice
- Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, from interview on climate change and Indigenous rights
- Melanie Yazzie, “Decolonizing Development in Diné Bikeyah: Resource Extraction, Anti-capitalism, and Relational Futures”
- Candis Callison, “Climate Change Communication and Indigenous Publics”
- Terry Williams et al, “Culture, Law, Risk and Governance: Contexts of Traditional Knowledge in Climate Change Adaptation”

Week 14: December 5

- Kyle Whyte, “Indigenous Science (Fiction) for the Anthropocene: Ancestral Dystopias and Fantasies of Climate Crises”
- Grace Dillon, “Indigenous Futurisms, *Bimaashi Biidaas Mose, Flying and Walking towards You*”
- Heather Davis et al., “On the Importance of a Date, or Decolonizing the Anthropocene”
- Hirini Matunga, “Theorizing Indigenous Planning”
- Watch *Wakening* (by Danis Goulet), *6<sup>th</sup> World* (by Nanobah Becker) and *Kiruna: Space Road* (by Liselotte Wajstedt).

*Review companion literary analysis:*

- Cheryl Fish, “Liselotte Wajstedt’s *Kiruna: Space Road*: Experimental ecocinema as elegiac memoir in ‘extractivist’ Sápmi”
- Danika Medak-Saltzman, “Coming to You from the Indigenous Future: Native Women, Speculative Film Shorts, and the Art of the Possible”
- Salma Monani, “Feeling and Healing Eco-social Catastrophe: The “Horrific” Slipstream of Danis Goulet’s *Wakening*”

### **Academic Honesty**

Article 2.III.B.2 of the [Student Rights and Responsibilities \(SRR\)](#) states that "The student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards." In addition, the (insert name of unit offering course) adheres to the policies on academic honesty as specified in General Student Regulations 1.0, Protection of Scholarship and Grades; the all-University Policy on Integrity of Scholarship and Grades; and Ordinance 17.00, Examinations. (See [Spartan Life: Student Handbook and Resource Guide](#) and/or the MSU Web site: [www.msu.edu](http://www.msu.edu).) Therefore, unless authorized by your instructor, you are expected to complete all course assignments, including homework, lab work, quizzes, tests and exams, without assistance from any source. You are expected to develop original work for this course; therefore, you may not submit course work you completed for another course to satisfy the requirements for this course. Also, you are not authorized to use the [www.allmsu.com](http://www.allmsu.com) Web site to complete any course work in this course. Students who violate MSU academic integrity rules may receive a penalty grade, including a failing grade on the assignment or in the course. Contact your instructor if you are unsure about the appropriateness of your course work. (See also the [Academic Integrity](#) webpage.)

### **Limits to confidentiality**

Essays, journals, and other materials submitted for this class are generally considered confidential pursuant to the University's student record policies. However, students should be aware that University employees, including instructors, may not be able to maintain confidentiality when it conflicts with their responsibility to report certain issues to protect the health and safety of MSU community members and others. All instructors of this course, as faculty and graduate teaching assistants, must report the following information to other University offices (including the Department of Police and Public Safety) if you share it with professors:

- Suspected child abuse/neglect, even if this maltreatment happened when you were a child,
- Allegations of sexual assault or sexual harassment when they involve MSU students, faculty, or staff, and
- Credible threats of harm to oneself or to others.

These reports may trigger contact from a campus official who will want to talk with you about the incident that you have shared. In almost all cases, it will be your decision whether you wish to speak with that individual. If you would like to talk about these events in a more confidential setting you are encouraged to make an appointment with the MSU Counseling Center.

### **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

#### **From the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (RCPD)**

Michigan State University is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Requests for accommodations by persons with disabilities may be made by contacting the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities at 517-884-RCPD or on the web at [rcpd.msu.edu](http://rcpd.msu.edu). Once your eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, you

will be issued a Verified Individual Services Accommodation ("VISA") form. Please present this form to me at the start of the term and/or two weeks prior to the accommodation date (test, project, etc.). Requests received after this date may not be honored.

### **Drops and Adds**

The last day to add this course is the end of the first week of classes. Key dates in terms of when you can drop with or without financial costs can be found here, <https://reg.msu.edu/roinfo/calendar/WWWDates.asp?Semester=SS16>. You should immediately make a copy of your amended schedule to verify you have added or dropped this course.

### **Disruptive Behavior**

Article 2.III.B.4 of the [Student Rights and Responsibilities \(SRR\)](#) for students at Michigan State University states: "The student's behavior in the classroom shall be conducive to the teaching and learning process for all concerned." Article 2.III.B.10 of the [SRR](#) states that "The student and the faculty share the responsibility for maintaining professional relationships based on mutual trust and civility." [General Student Regulation 5.02](#) states: "No student shall . . . interfere with the functions and services of the University such that the function or service is obstructed or disrupted. Students whose conduct adversely affects the learning environment in this classroom may be subject to disciplinary action through the Student Judicial Affairs office.

### **Student Resources**

The Learning Resource Center, located in 202 Bessey Hall, offers academic support seminars and workshops, consults with students about study and learning styles and time management, and provides one-on-one tutoring in such areas as critical reading. For a more detailed description of LRC services and hour (see <http://www.msu.edu/user/lrc/>).

The Writing Center offers students the opportunity to meet one-on-one with a consultant while they are engaged in the process of writing course papers and other documents. It also offers consulting on digital writing projects and a Grammar Hotline. The Writing Center is located in 300 Bessey Hall. For information about appointments and satellite locations, see <http://writing.msu.edu/>

The ESL Writing Lab will assist students with all aspects of their work in CSUS 891, including understanding of course readings to be used in writing papers, planning and revising papers, and proofreading. See <http://polyglot.cal.msu.edu/elc/student1.html> for more information and instructions on making appointments.

### **Online SIRS Evaluation Policy**

Michigan State University takes seriously the opinion of students in the evaluation of the effectiveness of instruction and has implemented the Student Instructional Rating System (SIRS) to gather student feedback (<https://sirsonline.msu.edu>). This course utilizes the online SIRS system, and you will receive an e-mail during the last two weeks of class asking you to fill out the SIRS web form at your convenience. In addition, participation in the online SIRS system involves grade sequestration, which means that the final grade for this course will not be accessible on STUINFO during the week following the submission of grades for this course unless the SIRS online form has been completed. Alternatively, you have the option on the SIRS

website to decline to participate in the evaluation of the course. We hope, however, that you will be willing to give us your frank and constructive feedback so that we may instruct students even better in the future. If you access the online SIRS website and complete the online SIRS form or decline to participate, you will receive the final grade in this course as usual once final grades are submitted.