

Carleton University
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Fall 2023
ANTH 2610-B
Studies in Indigenous People of North America: Issues in Anthropological Research
Algonquin Ottawa
Tuesdays, 11:35-2:25PM

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Overview

The containment of “the Indigenous People of North America” as a distinct area of anthropological knowledge was central to the founding of anthropology as a discipline, and especially to the subfield of cultural anthropology, as it developed in North America since the turn of the 20th century. The official subtitle of the course, “Issues in Anthropological Research,” reflects the continued intertwinement of disciplinary “issues” and its studies of Indigenous peoples. But no issue has arisen within the discipline that rivals the transformations wrought by Indigenous movements to take back control over their lives, knowledges and territories from settler-colonial states and allied institutions, including universities. This Indigenous resurgence has forced the discipline of anthropology to transform, especially with respect to anthropologists’ research relationships with and, often, as Indigenous people, but it has not yet (as far as we know) led to a substantial reconfiguration of anthropology’s role in the university and the particular circumstances that make anthropological teaching and learning in the university possible.

In our particular circumstances, at Carleton, what fundamentally makes our teaching and learning possible is the Algonquin land our offices, classrooms, and ICT infrastructure uninvitedly occupy. Before we can begin to imagine what this means for everything we do here, we must first understand what it means in itself. What is Algonquin territory? Why is it unceded? And what the heck is “Canada’s Capital University,” not to mention Canada’s capital, doing here? The answers to these questions are simultaneously extremely simple and profoundly complex, depending on how you approach them. Our goal in this course is to learn how to approach them with respect and hope for a future in which this Algonquin territory is again subject to Algonquin law.

Assignments and grading

There are three main assignments for this course. The first one, due the Friday before reading week, is to compose your own land acknowledgement for significant activities taking place in Algonquin territory. You may compose a brief formal acknowledgement with supplementary

background information or a longer reflection, either way totaling approximately 500-600 words. The second assignment, due the last day of class is a group presentation on the sustained Algonquin presence in Ottawa as demonstrated in a particular location, of which you will research the history, present concerns or conflicts, and possible futures. The final assignment builds on the first two as well as the course readings and lectures to articulate, in the format of your choice (text, audio, visual), a decolonized future for the Ottawa area. It is nominally a take-home exam, so references, integrated into the work, or attached as an addendum will be required. More details about each assignment will be posted to the course Brightspace page over the course of the semester. The first assignment will be worth 25% of your grade. The group project and the final will each be worth 30%. The remaining 15% of your grade comes from attendance and participation as described below...

Attendance and participation

Attendance is mandatory, not only because there will be ideas and material presented in class that will not be replicated in the assigned readings nor otherwise available online, but because the point at which Indigenous and anti-oppressive non-Indigenous educational models intersect is in the practice of active listening, and in cultivating the capacity to engage in respectful dialogue on the basis of a shared framework of knowledge that is built, collectively, not given from above. We can only do this when we are together in class. That said, we understand that health, stress, and transit make it so it is not always possible to make it to class. Of the 11 instructional days after the first introductory class, attending 10 constitutes perfect attendance, 9 a 90%, and so on. When adding attendance into the calculation of your final grade I reserve the right to round up a point or two for those students who participate actively, respectfully and thoughtfully in class discussion.

In addition to in-class participation, students are required to post two weekly questions in response to the assigned reading/AV material to Brightspace by midnight the night *before* our class meeting. Questions should reflect knowledge of the content assigned and help advance our understanding of it in the context of Algonquin Ottawa. Questions are to be posted before class every week before Fall break, for a total of 5 questions. Questions *may* be posted the night before our October 31st and November 14th classes to make up for missed posts before the break. Questions will be graded Check/Check-plus/Check-minus or 75%/100%/50% with the possibility of extra credit for more than 5 posts. Note: We will normally use these questions to facilitate class discussion, so please indicate if you do not want your question asked in class for whatever reason.

Required readings and other media

All the required materials for this course will be available on the course Brightspace page at least two weeks before the relevant class meeting. Readings, audio-recordings, videos are all required and *not* to be shared or distributed outside of the class unless otherwise specified. Limited copies of the one required book, Bonita Lawrence's Fractured Homeland, are available for purchase at

Haven Books, on Sunnyside in Old Ottawa South. It can also be accessed as an e-book through the Carleton library website and ARES.