Identity Politics
The University of Western Ontario
POL9533B
Winter 2018

Professor: Caroline Dick
Time: Tuesday 9:30 a.m.-11:20 a.m.
Classroom: SSC 4103

Office: SSC 4088
Email: cdick4@uwo.ca
Office Hours: Tues. 11:30-12:30; Wed. 10:30-11:30 a.m.

Course Description:

This course focusses on identity politics in the Canadian context with a view to examining the rise of group activism around identity markers and the importance of identity politics in Canadian political, social and economic life. It will do so by examining the kinds of claims that identity groups advance and responses to those claims both in Canadian scholarship and in the legal and political realms.

To this end, the course is divided into five sections. The course begins by introducing students to the rise of ‘new social movements’ and the politics of identity, as well as some of the concerns that come with organizing around shared group identities. In the second part of the course, attention shifts to theories that employ substantive notions of identity to ground group claims and resolve disputes both between identity groups and the dominant society and between identity groups and their members. By examining the works of Charles Taylor, Will Kymlicka and Avigail Eisenberg, the second part of the course seeks to examine the challenges and pitfalls of using ‘identity’ as an organizing principle for political theory and the resolution of rights conflicts. The third part of the course focuses on specific identity groups. The goal here is not only to examine the kinds of claims that groups advance, but to assess the adequacy of institutional responses to said claims and the work that remains to be done.

While the first three parts of the course proceed from the position that identity can act as a catalyst for positive change, the fourth part leaves the notion of identity as a liberating construct behind to investigate the ways in which group identities can be deployed against identity groups by dominant others, including the state, to justify discrimination and exclusion. The course then concludes with an examination of the Indigenous Resurgence movement, which offers the possibility of reclaiming Indigenous identity and nationhood without engaging Canadian state structures that have historically asserted their power to name the content of Indigenous identity in destructive ways.

Course Materials
Many of the readings are available electronically. Those that are not available electronically are marked with a ✿.
Email
The Professor will respond to email and will do her best to reply within 48 hours. Emails sent on the weekend will be answered on Monday. Please do not send email messages via OWL. Do note that university policy precludes Professors from responding to email messages that were not sent from a Western email account. Note, also, that grades may not be discussed via email.

Web Site
There is a web site set up for this course at https://owl.uwo.ca/portal. The course syllabus, links to certain readings and legal cases, and links to turnitin.com will be posted on the web site, as will important class announcements. Accordingly, students should check the web site regularly.

Turnitin
Written assignments are 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 Western University and Turnitin.com (http://www.turnitin.com).

Assignments can be submitted to turnitin.com through OWL. Note that assignments have not been submitted “on time” unless they have been submitted to turnitin.com prior to being submitted in hard copy form at seminar. A copy of your turnitin receipt must be attached to your work.

Academic Offences (Graduate Students)
Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following web site: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf

Extensions
Extensions are not given. However, when there are genuine and unavoidable family or medical circumstances, students may seek academic accommodation. If you fail to hand in an assignment but are pursuing academic accommodation, please advise your Professor of this fact.

Computer Problems
Students are expected to back up their written work and lecture/tutorial notes. Furthermore, students will be responsible for finding replacement lecture/tutorial notes where they fail to back-up their files. Extensions are not granted for computer-related problems.

Learning Objectives
By the end of the course, students should be able to identify the key themes and debates surrounding the advent of identity politics and its relevance to Canadian politics. They should also be familiar with theories that employ substantive notions of identity to ground claims for group rights and critiques of said theories. Students should also be able to demonstrate an awareness of the way in which identity can be deployed by those with power against members of
minority social groups.

**Evaluation**
Participation 25%
Seminar Assignment 20%
Research Essay 55% (Due April 17)

**Seminar Assignment**
Commencing in week 3 of the course, students will be assigned seminar duties. A sign-up sheet is posted on my office door. No more than two students may sign up for any given week. There are two components to this assignment. First, each student will make a brief presentation to the class to present his or her own views and observations about the week’s readings. Presentations may run for no more than **7 minutes**, and will be timed, as is the case with conference presentations.

Second, students will craft two discussion questions to present to the class, which they will provide in written form to the instructor. The idea here is to pose questions that draw out themes and debates in the required readings with a view to *engaging the class around the issues identified*. Where more than one student is scheduled to present to the class in the same week, they should communicate with one another about the focus of their discussion questions in order to avoid undue repetition.

**Participation**
Course participation constitutes a weekly assignment. Participation grades will be assigned for each week’s class and will be based on the quality of the contribution made to the seminar discussion in accordance with the guidelines below. More specifically, the grades assigned will reflect *whether a student’s contribution to class discussions demonstrates a familiarity with, and understanding of, the week’s readings*. Students who attend seminar but do not contribute to the seminar discussion will be assigned a grade of zero for the week. **Students who do not attend at least 9 seminars between weeks 2-13 will not pass the course or receive a course credit.** Students who find participating in class discussions challenging are encouraged to come to class with prepared discussion questions to pose to the class.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Discussion</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>85-100</td>
<td>Always</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Excellent: leads debate; offers analysis and comments; always has ideas on theme of reading; takes care not to dominate; asks questions</td>
<td>Clearly has done and prepared questions on virtually all readings; intelligently uses this understanding and these questions in discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Score Range</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>75-84</td>
<td>Almost always</td>
<td>Very Good: thoughtful comments and questions for the most part; willing, able and frequent contributor</td>
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<tr>
<td>65-74</td>
<td>Frequent</td>
<td>Good: has basic grasp of key concepts and occasional ideas on the main theme of the reading; arguments are sporadic and at times incomplete or poorly supported; unwilling to ask questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>50-64</td>
<td>Occasional</td>
<td>Somewhat Poor: remarks in class marred by misunderstandings of key concepts; seldom contributes effectively to discussion of the main theme; often digresses in unhelpful ways; sporadic</td>
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<tr>
<td>0-49</td>
<td>Rare</td>
<td>Poor: rarely speaks; parrots text or comments of others</td>
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**Research Essay**
Students will write a 4000-4500 word paper with the same due date. The expectation is that students will carry on with one of the week’s themes, students may formulate a different topic that they see as relevant to the course in consultation with the Professor.

Essays must include footnotes, endnotes, or parenthetical citation and a bibliography organized according to the Chicago style. As a general guide, graduate students’ papers should include a bibliography with no fewer than 10 academic sources. While it is acceptable to incorporate some class readings into the essay, as this is a research paper, class readings should not constitute a large percentage of the student bibliography.

Essays must be double spaced, submitted in hard copy form with a turnitin receipt attached. Email submissions will not be accepted. Extensions only will be granted where recommended by Academic Counselling. A 2% penalty per day will be assessed to late assignments without extensions.
Class Schedule

Week 1: January 8:
Introduction to the Course

Week 2: January 16
New Social Movements: the Rise of Identity Politics and Its Significance


Week 3: January 23
Critics and Responses


Part II: Identity Politics: Canadian Contributions

Week 4: January 30
Charles Taylor and (some of) his Critics


Week 5: February 6
Will Kymlicka

  - Ch. 8 - “The Value of Cultural Membership.” (162-181).
  - Ch. 9 - “Equality for Minority Cultures.” (182-205).

  - Ch. 8 - “Toleration and its Limits.” *(164-170 only)*.

Week 6: February 13
Avigail Eisenberg


READING WEEK: no class on February 20

Part III: Canadian Identity Politics

Week 7: February 27
Ethnicity/Multiculturalism

  - “Introduction.” *(3-18 only)*.
  - Ch. 1 -“Classics of Multicultiphobia.” (29-42).


Banting, Keith, and Will Kymlicka. “Canadian Multiculturalism: Global Anxieties and Local
Week 8: March 6
Race


Week 9: March 13
Trans Politics


Week 10: March 20
Disability in the Context of Sexual Assault


**Part IV: Deploying Identity Against the ‘Other’**

**Week 11: March 27**

**Gay Men (Gay Panic and MSM)**


**Week 12: April 3**

**The Constitutional Rights of Aboriginal Peoples**


**Part V: Reclaiming Identity**

**Week 13: April 10**

**Indigenous Resurgence: Rejecting the Liberal Rights Paradigm**

✶ Coulthard, Glen Sean. *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014. (Chapter 1 and Conclusion)
