Course Description
Understanding the complexity of the political and legal issues First Nations face can be daunting, but most of these issues can be drawn back to an important dynamic between indigenous assertions of autonomy, sovereignty, and self-determination, and the Canadian nation-state’s constrictions, appropriation, prevention, criminalization, and outright refusal to recognize these assertions. This course will thus explore the political and legal issues First Nations face through the matrix of issues, debates, discourses, histories, theories, practices, policies, institutions, and strategies generated by the relationship between Indigenous self-determination and the Canadian settler-state. How is self-determination conceptualized, both by indigenous peoples and the wider settler population? How is the state understood and experienced by both of these populations? Why is the assertion of self-determination so important for many First Nations and received so negatively by the colonial status quo? What are the key political and legal issues, cases, and events related to these assertions? How has patriarchy shaped both colonialism and the assertions of self-determination? What are the outcomes and everyday experiences of state-sponsored self-government agreements? And last but not least, how is all of this related to the work of decolonization?

Prerequisite(s): First Nations Studies 2218F/G or 2901E or Anthropology 2218F/G or History 2209E or 2201E or 2205E or the former 2207F/G or Political Science 2103A/B or 2230E or 2234E or the former Political Science 214F/G, or Law 2101 or Women's Studies 2260.

Learning Outcomes
Through this course students will have the opportunity to achieve:

- A greater understanding of key concepts, theories, and institutions that constitute the political and legal issues facing First Nations today.
- An appreciation of how these often abstract concepts and institutions (like self-determination and the state) are constructed, contested, experienced, understood, and put into practice at the local level.
- Refinement of basic skills necessary for developing and conducting research, as well as learning important group work and collective participation skills.
- Further honing of critical thinking, writing, and presentation skills.
Required Text(s)

Method of Evaluation
Discussion Preparation 15%
Participation 25%
Discussion Questions 10%
Research Project 20%
Decolonization Reflections 10%
Final Exam (Take-Home) 20%

Evaluation Breakdown

Discussion Preparation
Every class will have a portion of time devoted to discussing the week’s readings. In order to make sure that everyone is prepared for this discussion, every week we will flip a coin at the beginning of class to determine whether or not we have a very short quiz on the week’s readings. There must be at least 5 and no more than 8 quizzes throughout the semester, with each worth an equal portion of the 15% allocated for them (so, for example, if there are 5 throughout the semester, each one will be worth 3% of your final mark). If you are going to be away for a class you need to let me know before class starts to avoid getting zero on the quiz (assuming one is held).

Participation
Participation will be broken into two parts. The first is general participation. Students are expected to be active participants throughout this course, fostering open dialogue and encouraging fellow students to feel comfortable contributing as well. (20%)

The second part is simply attendance. Show up and you get the marks. If for some reason you cannot make it to class you need to let me know before class starts (5%)

Discussion Questions
As mentioned, every class will have a portion of time devoted to discussing the week’s readings. The class will be broken into 5-6 groups. Each group will spend 10-15 minutes trying to come up with two thought-provoking questions based on the reading that will then be posed back to the class. Your group will be graded on how thoughtful the questions are, how well they relate to class material, and how well they elicit a response from the class. The grade will be broken into 2 parts: my evaluation (5%) and a group/self evaluation (5%).

Research Project
This will be your chance to tackle what interests you about the political and legal issues facing First Nations peoples today. While what you choose is up to you, I do want you to come and see me about the topic you are choosing before October 13th, to make sure your choice isn’t too narrow or too broad. More details will be provided in class.
Decolonization Reflections

When we come to a new fork in an old road we continue to follow the route with which we are familiar, even though wholly different, even better avenues might open up before us. The failure to heed (the) plea for a new approach to Indian-European relations is a failure of imagination. The greatest barrier to recognition of aboriginal rights does not lie with the courts, the law, or even the present administration. Such recognition necessitates the re-evaluation of assumptions, both about Canada and its history and about Indian people and our culture ... Real recognition of our presence and humanity would require a genuine reconsideration of so many people's role in North American society that it would amount to a genuine leap of imagination.

– George Manuel

We are what we imagine. Our very existence consists in our imagination of ourselves.

– N. Scott Momaday

This assignment will be an attempt to help you make the leap of imagination that Manuel is talking about. While this assignment will evolve, you will begin by asking yourself two very simple questions:

1. How can we decolonize Canada?
2. How can I personally contribute to this goal?

Further details and instructions will be released as the course proceeds.

Final Exam

The final exam will be a take-home exam that will be due midnight of December 15th. More details to follow.

How To Contact Me

Email: tbaker9@uwo.ca

Important Policies

Policies for Assignment Deadlines:

Students handing in late assignments without proper medical documentation will lose 5% per day (including weekends).

A Note on Plagiarism:

Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major scholastic offence (the Scholastic Offence Policy can be viewed in the Western Academic Calendar).

Plagiarism Checking:

Students may be required to submit their assignments to turnitin.com on the class WebCT website after they are completed. These papers will be subject to submission for textual originality.
**Policy on Laptops and other Electronics/Phones in Class: (“clickers”, if used)**

Laptops are permitted in class but if it is observed that students are on social networking sites such as Facebook or Twitter, they will be told to close the lid and they will not be permitted to use it for the remainder of the class. Be sure that all cell phones are turned off at the beginning of class.

**Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness**

Western’s policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness can be found at [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf). Students must see the Academic Counsellor and submit all required documentation in order to be approved for certain accommodation: [http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/medical_accommodation.html](http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/medical_accommodation.html)

**Accessibility Options:**

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation. Information regarding accommodation of exams is available on the Registrar’s website: [http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/examinations/accommodated_exams.html](http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/examinations/accommodated_exams.html)

**Scholastic Offences**

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 website: [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

**Mental Health**

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western ([http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/](http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/)) for a complete list of options how to obtain help.

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**Course Schedule and Readings:**

**September 15 – Introduction**

No Reading.

**September 22 – Serving the State**


*Unsettling Canada*: 1-27
**September 29 – Treaty Making I: Old-School Multiculturalism**


*Unsettling Canada:* 29-50

**October 6 – Treaty Making II: “Who would give away so much?”**


*Unsettling Canada:* 51-76

**October 13 – White Paper Liberalism**

**Movie:** *Dancing Around the Table* * *(make sure to watch both parts before class)*  
([https://www.nfb.ca/film/dancing_around_the_table_1](https://www.nfb.ca/film/dancing_around_the_table_1))


*Unsettling Canada:* 77-106

**October 20 – Aboriginal Rights or Human Rights?**


*Unsettling Canada:* 107-136

**October 27 – Patriarchy and Self-Determination**

**Movie:** *Finding Dawn* * *(make sure to watch this before class)*  
([https://www.nfb.ca/film/finding_dawn](https://www.nfb.ca/film/finding_dawn))


*Unsettling Canada:* 137-154
November 3 – Social Suffering and Self-Determination

Movie: Muffins For Granny


Unsettling Canada: 155-178

November 10 – Rebellion of the Truth

Movie: Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance *(make sure to watch this before class) *(https://www.nfb.ca/film/kanehsatake_270_years_of_resistance)*


Unsettling Canada: 179-194

November 17 – Indigenous Resistance and Resurgence I


November 24 – Indigenous Resistance and Resurgence II

Movie: Six Miles Deep


Unsettling Canada: 223-234

December 1 – International Struggle

Reading: Unsettling Canada: 195-234

December 8 – Course Conclusion: Co-Existence Through Co-Resistance

No Reading