

GWST 341-: INDIGENOUS & DECOLONIAL FEMINISMS FALL 2022

TUESDAY + THURSDAY
TIME + CLASSROOM
DR. MARIA CELLERI (she/her/hers)
FINE ARTS 415



Melanie Cervantes

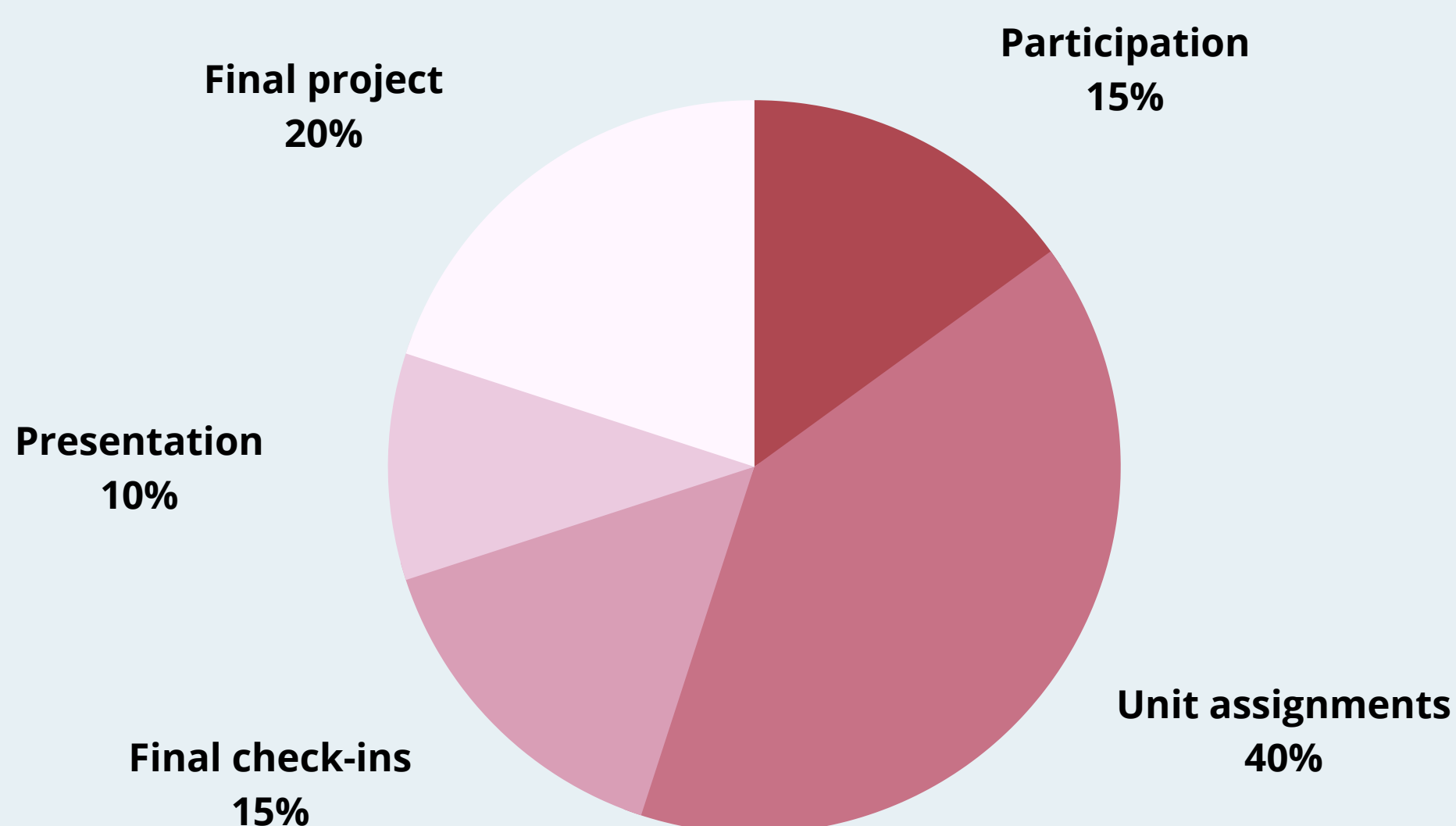
Mohawk phrase: "To come to understand"

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This interdisciplinary course explores historical and contemporary Indigenous struggles for justice, rights, and repatriation and explores how these are intimately tied to the political project of feminism. In fact, this course explores how race, gender, and sexual hierarchies and binaries were imperative to the colonial project, and therefore, feminism must not only engage, but must center Indigenous fights for justice. Course content will explore Indigenous feminist issues—such as reproductive justice, racial justice, sexual diversity, climate justice, among other social issues—from a decolonial framework. This course centers decolonization as a praxis—an act of dismantling ongoing colonial ideologies and institutions that have served to produce and legitimize Indigenous genocide and displacement; racial, gender, and sexual difference; capitalist labor exploitation; environmental devastation, etc. In other words, “decolonial” signifies both a theoretical framework and praxis that understands intersectional oppression as tied to ongoing colonization and struggles for Indigenous autonomy.

COURSE GOALS

- Define key concepts and understand scholarly debates and genealogies around concepts: decoloniality; settler colonialism; decolonial and Indigenous feminisms; critical Indigenous theory.
- Understand and analyze historical and contemporary Indigenous struggles from an intersectional and feminist lens.
- Understand and apply decolonial research practices.
- Develop writing and research skills such as crafting an argument, theoretically framing claims, and using scholarly works to provide evidence.



**All education
happens on
indigenous land**

UMBC was established upon the land of the Piscataway Conoy and Susquehannock peoples. Over time, citizens of many more Indigenous nations have come to reside in this region. We humbly offer our respects to all past, present, and future Indigenous people connected to this place.

Participation:

This course is discussion heavy, and your active participation is required and worth **15 pts.** of your final grade. All readings and assignments should be completed **BEFORE** class. To come prepared to class you must have done **ALL** the readings, highlighted key passages, and have questions for discussion. Here are some ways you can participate: ask/answer questions, participate in in-class activities, and write down your thoughts and hand it in after section. Full credit will require active participation throughout the entire course.

Guiding Questions:

Use the following questions as a guide to critically reflect on the materials and concepts raised in this course. You can use these questions to prepare for class.

- o What is the author's main argument?
- o What sources of evidence does the author use to build their argument?
- o What key question is the author trying to raise or address? What other questions does the text generate for you?
- o How do the various readings relate to each other or to prior readings for this course?
- o How do the readings relate to the lecture or to films and other class media?
- o What new terms/concepts/or ideas did you learn? How do these things help you understand a phenomenon differently?

Unit assignments:

You will have a total of **4 unit assignments** due throughout the semester, **each worth 10 pts. of your final grade.** Each unit assignment is meant to help you critically engage that unit's lessons as well as make connections between readings. Each assignment will have a written component, and some will also incorporate other tasks, such as research activities. *Each unit assignment is due at the end of the unit on the date specified on the syllabus.* The assignment must be completed **BEFORE** class time, and you will be asked to share your assignment **DURING** class time on the day that it is due.

Final project, check-ins, and presentation:

For your final project, you will develop a research project in which you explore the settler colonial history and decolonial struggles for justice from your hometown (wherever you call home). You will have **three check-ins** throughout the semester to help you begin to develop your final topic. These are worth **15 pts. of your grade.** At the end of the semester, you will also do a **10-minute presentation** on your final project worth **10 pts. of your final grade.** *The final project will have a research component, a writing component, a creative component, and a presentation portion.* Collectively, the exercises for your final project will be worth 45% of your grade and will take most of the semester to complete. Specific instructions for each component will be provided to you throughout and at least two week before the assignment is due.

Gender Pronouns:

All gender pronouns will be respected in the classroom both by myself and other classmates. If you are unsure of someone's pronouns or forgot the pronoun(s) they use, politely ask, practice, and use appropriately. Pronouns are not up for debate, are not a preference, and they are to be used accordingly. **My pronouns are she/her/hers.**

Electronic Devices:

You may use your laptop or tablet to take notes or for readings if it better suits your learning needs. If anyone in the class interrupts others because they are using their device for anything other than taking notes or scanning the readings, everyone will lose the right to these electronic devices. Silence cellphones before entering the classroom.

Academic Integrity:

By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UMBC's scholarly community in which everyone's academic work and behavior are held to the highest standards of honesty. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and helping others to commit these acts are all forms of academic dishonesty, and they are wrong. Acts of academic dishonesty in this course will be taken very seriously and may result in failure of the assignment, failure of the course, and referral to the Academic Conduct Committee for further disciplinary action that may include, but is not limited to, suspension or dismissal. For further clarification of the University policies regarding academic integrity and plagiarism:
http://www.umbc.edu/undergrad_ed/honesty/

Accommodations:

If you have a disability or condition that compromises your ability to complete the requirements of this course, you should inform me as soon as possible of your needs. I will make all reasonable efforts to accommodate you. I also expect that students who require specific or additional support will inform me of their needs within two weeks of the start of the course so accommodations can be made. As per ADA regulations, I do not require specific medical information, and I'm happy to work with SDS to make your success in the course accessible and achievable. <http://sds.umbc.edu/>

Other Campus Resources:

The Writing Center: <http://lrc.umbc.edu/tutoring/writing-center/>

Counseling Services: <http://counseling.umbc.edu/>

The Women's Center: <https://womenscenter.umbc.edu/>

Title IX Coordinator: <https://humanrelations.umbc.edu/sexual-misconduct/>

UNIT ONE: SETTING THE TERMS

The first unit will set the foundation for the course by teaching students the major debates in decolonial studies, such as defining decolonization and decolonial feminism in the context of settler colonialism in the United States. A main focus will be understanding the difference between anti-racism and decolonization; repatriation as a major tenet of decolonization; and establish a working definition of decolonial feminism.

Course introduction

Tue. Course introduction and syllabus overview

Thur. Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, “Decolonization is not a Metaphor” 1-17

What is decolonization and decolonial feminism?

Tue. Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, “Decolonization is not a Metaphor” 17-40

Thur. Maria Lugones, “Toward a Decolonial Feminism”

Tue. Chandra Talpade Mohanty, “Part 1: Decolonizing Feminism”

Thur. Unit 1 assignment DUE

Unit 1 assignment-create an infographic about “decolonial feminism” for an audience that would not be familiar with the term. In your infographic, define decolonization and decolonial feminism in your own words and for a general audience. In your definitions, include major tenets and debates using lecture material and course readings. You must cite at least 1 reading from the unit. Infographics (see examples) use both concise language and images to capture the reader. Be creative.

UNIT TWO: DECOLONIZING GENDER + SEXUALITY

Decolonial feminist scholars have demonstrated the ways that colonization required the adoption of dichotomous and hierarchical gender categories (feminine/masculine), as well as the normalization of heterosexuality. In the second unit, students will learn the ways in which these established sociopolitical identities that continue to undergird our society were necessary for colonization both in the United States and other parts of the world. Furthermore, they will learn how contemporary queer and trans Indigenous scholars and activists challenge traditional gender norms and heteronormativity as part of a decolonial feminist project.

Tue. Scott Lauria Morgensen, “Settler Homonationalism: Theorizing Settler Colonialism within Queer Modernities”

Thur. PJ DiPietro, “Decolonizing Travesti Space in Buenos Aires: Race, Sexuality and Sidewars Relationality”

UNIT THREE: DECOLONIZING THE NUCLEAR FAMILY

In line with the normalization of traditional gender norms and heteronormativity, unit 3 focuses on the nuclear family as the colonial familial unit par excellence. As Yarbrough demonstrates, colonial laws governed Indigenous women’s marriage and reproduction in order to administer racial purity and private property. This unit also looks at the tie between the family and education in the process of assimilation, which as student’s learn in unit 1, is one of the foundations of settler colonialism in the US. By focusing on the family unit, students will critically explore a new perspective to the public/private feminist debate and consider the role that colonization played in establishing separate spheres for the sexes.

Legislating Indigenous women's bodies

Tue. Fay Yarbrough, “Legislating Women's Sexuality: Cherokee Marriage Laws in the Nineteenth Century”

UNIT THREE: DECOLONIZING THE NUCLEAR FAMILY

Thur. J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, “Native Hawaiian Decolonization and the Politics of Gender”

Decolonizing the nuclear family

Tue. Tanya Pace-Crosschild, “Decolonising childrearing and challenging the patriarchal nuclear family through Indigenous knowledges: An Opokaa’sin project”

Thur. Richard Phillips, “Settler colonialism and the nuclear family”

Tue. **Unit 2/3 assignment DUE**

Unit 2/3 assignment- write a 3-pg double spaced paper in which you explain and historicize HOW the modern Western nuclear family unit was used as a tool for Indigenous assimilation? And, HOW where Indigenous women's bodies legislated and regulated to maintain the status quo and guarantee racial purity? You may not do any outside research for this paper. You must cite at least two readings from Units 2 and 3, class lectures, and discussions. Provide a citations page. Citations page does not count in page-count.

Thur. **Final project check-in #1**

Check-in #1 assignment- Choose a location you want to research. Your hometown can be where you were born, raised, or where your family is from, or where you currently reside. Once you have verified what Native nations are original inhabitants of the land, do some initial research on the history of the area. For reputable sources, begin with the AOK library sources at library.umbc.edu. For your check-in, submit your research notes. These may be informal, bullet points of your initial findings. Should be at least 1-pg single spaced and include bibliographical citations.

UNIT FOUR: DECOLONIZING ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

As students learn in unit 1, decolonization is about people, labor, and land and the ways that the privatization of land and resources, which continues to undergird capitalist and neoliberal economic models has exacerbated climate change. Indigenous activists have been at the forefront of climate change solutions and as this unit will demonstrate, should be the leaders of climate justice struggles. This unit will look at two examples, in the United States and internationally, of how various Indigenous communities and their land are negatively affected by resource mining. It will also consider what climate change solutions from a decolonial feminist framework would necessitate.

Tue. Traci Voyles, “Empty Except for Indians: Early Impressions of Navajo Rangeland”
Thur. CIEJ, “No comemos baterias: Solidarity Science Against False Climate Change Solutions”

Guest speaker, a member of CIEJ (Center for Interdisciplinary Environmental Justice)

Tue. Robin Kimmerer, “Weaving Traditional Ecological Knowledge into Biological Education: A Call to Action”

Thur. **Unit 4 assignment DUE**

Unit 4 assignment- Create a social media post informing followers of 1) what is happening to Conoy people and land in Chile fighting against lithium extraction & 2) what is decolonial climate justice? The post can be an image followed by text, a series of tweets, or a tik tok video and must be posted to any of your social media accounts.

UNIT FIVE: DECOLONIZING EDUCATION + FEMINIST RESEARCH

As students prepare for their final research project, unit 5 focuses on decolonizing higher education, and in specific, feminist research. Like the family, educational institutions were fundamental for colonization. Indeed, many of the higher education models established in the 18th and 19th centuries have not changed and have not adequately addressed decolonization of education and curriculum, which goes far beyond higher enrollment of Indigenous students and the addition of Indigenous topics into curriculum. As the unit moves towards research, students learn what it means to engage in feminist research that deals with Indigenous communities and topics in an ethical and decolonial manner. Furthermore, they learn how Indigenous communities have historically been harmed by traditional academic research. The goal is that students will leave with practical research tools that will help them carry out their final research project.

Decolonizing higher education

Tue. Shauneen Pete, “Meschachakanis, a Coyote Narrative: Decolonising Higher Education”

Thur. Tanya Talaga and Victoria McMurchy, “Bringing Indigenous viewpoints to higher education”

Decolonizing feminist research

Tue. Linda Tuhiwai Smith, “Research through Imperial Eyes”

Thur. Eve Tuck, “Suspending Damage: A Letter to Communities”

Tue. Kimberle Christen and Jane Anderson, “Toward slow archives”

Thur. **Unit 5 assignment DUE**

Unit 5 assignment- Write your own feminist research manifesto, based on your commitments to ethical, feminist, and decolonial research practices in the future. While it can be in any format, it must include 7-9 points, explained, in your own words. Use "I" statements. Read sample manifestos as templates. Be creative.

UNIT SIX: FINAL PROJECTS + PRESENTATIONS

Tue. Final project check-in #2

Write 2-pages of your final paper as an initial draft. Remember it is just a draft and it is an opportunity to receive feedback. Must include an introduction and a thesis statement. Include at least one reliable research source for your draft. Remember that draft is due BEFORE class time. During class, you will have the opportunity to have your paper peer reviewed and you will review another peer's paper.

Thur. Final project check-in #3

Begin work on your presentation. For your final, aside from the paper, you will have a creative component that exemplifies your research in a visual, synthesized, and creative manner (powerpoint, prezi, zine, or an infographic). You must have an initial draft of your creative component, which will be used for your presentation. Remember that draft is due BEFORE class time.

Tue. Final project presentations

Thur. Final project presentations

Tue. Final project presentations