

Indigenous Archives and Food Sovereignty

Professors Andrea Knutson and Megan Peiser

ENG 4900

Winter 2021

CRN 15001/15003

4 credits

T/Th 1:00-2:47 Synchronous online

Student Hours via private Zoom link, email, or Google Chat:

Dr. Andrea Knutson: Thursday 11:30am-12:30pm

Dr. Megan Peiser: Tuesday 11:30am-12:30pm

WordPress Blog: <https://indigenousarchives566259510.wordpress.com/>

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course students will examine the enduring materialities and texts of Indigenous sovereignty in the region of North America that becomes the United States. Students will read both literary and scholarly works by Indigenous writers in order to think through problems with archival methods and the recovery of Indigenous voices. Throughout the semester we'll be questioning and uncovering colonialist structures that govern archive-building as a practice and seeking to disrupt those structures that silence the Indigenous voice. Finally students will consider alternative forms of historical recovery by exploring material culture and methods of Indigenous archive-building and rematriation. Through the discourse of material culture students will be able to evaluate items on which Indigenous tribes ascribe cultural value, but that sit outside of Western definitions of texts, including seeds, wild rice, corn, beads, and more. (List here the kinds of assignments to expect.)

REQUIRED TEXTS

- Robin Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass* (Campus Barnes and Noble)
- Layli Long Soldier, *Whereas* (Campus Barnes and Noble)
- Simon Ortiz, *from Sand Creek* (Campus Barnes and Noble)
- Diane Wilson, *The Seed Keeper* (being released March 9, 2021 -- Barnes and Noble will order when it's available)
- Selections from Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* ([Kresge e-reserve](#))
- Selections from Devon Mihesuah and Elizabeth Hoover, *Indigenous Food Sovereignty in the United States: Restoring Cultural Knowledge, Protecting Environments, and Regaining Health* (Kresge e-reserve)
- Selections from the [Standing Rock Syllabus](#) (provided in links)

COURSE FORMAT

Fully online, synchronous. (note: this course is listed as “hybrid” in mySAIL. This provides us the opportunity to visit a community garden if/when that is safe to do so. We will not otherwise meet in person, and no student will ever be penalized for not attending any possible in-person meetings). All work will be submitted electronically via Moodle or the course WordPress blog.

Course Requirements via Oakland University Catalog

This class satisfies the general education requirements for the capstone experience. Students will demonstrate:

- **appropriate uses of a variety of methods of inquiry and a recognition of ethical considerations that arise.** We will do this by reading primary texts, contemporary secondary criticism, and exploring historical and cultural contexts. In our discussions, we will practice old and new historicism, the methods of Native American/Indigenous Studies, discourse analysis, and close reading.
- **the ability to integrate the knowledge learned in general education and its relevance to the student’s life and career.** We will do this by building upon our foundational knowledge of literary analysis and understanding of the relation between literature and its contexts. By examining social and cultural forces we will reflect on our own relations to this past and its continuations into our present. We will witness the dynamic nature of ideas and individual responses to the demands they make as well as the life that is given to them by individuals and society.

This capstone course demonstrates the relevance to the major of the general education knowledge area of Literature and the relevance of the cross-cutting capacities of effective communication and critical thinking by building upon our foundational knowledge of literary analysis and our understanding of the relation between literature and its contexts and by providing a variety of communication opportunities (class discussion and presentation; a variety of writing tasks).

This course fulfills the requirements of the writing-intensive course in the major by requiring a variety of writing tasks totaling approximately 40 pages and valued at 90% of the grade.

Student Responsibilities in an Online Setting:

- Ensure that their computer is compatible with Moodle.
- Follow the calendar of events and complete all assignments by their deadline.
- Participate in a thoughtful manner
- Respect rules of netiquette, including:
 - Respect your peers and their privacy.
 - Be courteous and encouraging when interacting with other students, especially if you disagree with their comments. Use constructive criticism.
 - Refrain from engaging in inflammatory comments.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

In order to participate in this course, you will need:

- An internet connected computer with the most updated versions of your preferred web browser installed. Use of smartphones and tablets is not recommended.
- In the event that your computer crashes or internet goes down, it is essential to have a backup plan in place where you are able to log in using a different computer or travel to another location that has working internet.
- Any files you intend to use for your course should be saved to a cloud solution (Google Drive, Dropbox, etc.) and not to a local hard drive, USB stick, or external disk. Saving files this way guarantees your files are not dependent on computer hardware that can fail.

If you have questions about the course-specific material or have trouble accessing any of the content in this course, contact me. For Moodle technical issues that you cannot resolve on your own, contact the e-Learning and Instructional Support office. The e-LIS Helpdesk Phone is (248) 805-1625, or you may [click here to submit a Moodle help ticket](#).

SYNCHRONOUS CLASS MEETINGS

Synchronous class meetings will begin on time. We will use the same Zoom meeting room across the term, which is provided and secured by Oakland University, and meets FERPA student privacy requirements. To protect student privacy, we will work in closed offices or use headphones—no other members of your faculty’s households will overhear our discussion. We will not be recording our meetings to protect student privacy. You will also not record or screen-shot our class meetings without class agreement. Students are encouraged, but not required, to have video on. We encourage you to log into the Zoom room early to ensure you have time to navigate technical difficulties. We will always end class promptly on time, as we respect that you have other responsibilities. Please kindly keep your attention focused on our class until the end of the period without “packing up early” like we tend to do in in-person classes. To raise your hand to participate, please drop your name in the chat box. Students will not be called on in the order that their names are dropped—rather your faculty are working to ensure that equal voices

are heard and perspectives are respected. You do not need to direct us to who may be “in front of you” in line to speak.

EMAIL POLICY

****the best way to communicate with Professors Knutson and/or Professor Peiser is by coming to their student hours (or making an appointment). Face-to-face conversations help us better understand one another, and help us find an answer suited to *your* needs.****

- NO work will be accepted by email for any reason.
- You are an adult addressing your English professor, and should correspond accordingly. Your emails should have a proper greeting, your name, and complete sentences.
- If you have a last-minute question about an assignment, please use Moodle to consult a classmate, as you will likely get a response more quickly.
- We make every effort to check my email regularly and respond promptly, but will generally not answer emails after 5pm.
- When emailing, please place your full name and course #-section# in the subject line. E.g. Smith, Jamie 4900-003.
- Your email should include a clear question to which we can respond. If your needs require lengthy response, we will advise you to meet me during office hours.

There are no literature emergencies, and so there is no need to panic about email communication. We will get to your queries as quickly as possible, and *everything will be ok*.

Classroom Behavior

1. **Academic conduct policy.** All members of the academic community at Oakland University are expected to practice and uphold standards of academic integrity and honesty. Academic integrity means representing oneself and one's work honestly. Misrepresentation is cheating since it means students are claiming credit for ideas or work not actually theirs and are thereby seeking a grade that is not actually earned. I am required to report academic dishonesty and/or plagiarism to the Dean of Students. If a student is found guilty a zero for the course will be assigned and academic suspension or expulsion may result. Following are some examples of academic dishonesty:
 - a. **Cheating.** This includes using materials such as books and/or notes when not authorized by the instructor, copying from someone else's paper, helping someone else copy work, substituting another's work as one's own, theft of exam

- copies, falsifying data or submitting data not based on the student's own work on assignments or lab reports, or other forms of misconduct on exams.
- b. **Plagiarizing the work of others.** Plagiarism is using someone else's work or ideas without giving that person credit; by doing this, students are, in effect, claiming credit for someone else's thinking. Both direct quotations and paraphrases must be documented. Even if students rephrase, condense or select from another person's work, the ideas are still the other person's, and failure to give credit constitutes misrepresentation of the student's actual work and plagiarism of another's ideas. Buying a paper or using information from the World Wide Web or Internet without attribution and handing it in as one's own work is plagiarism.
 - c. Falsifying records or providing misinformation regarding one's credentials.
 - d. **Unauthorized collaboration** on computer assignments and unauthorized access to and use of computer programs, including modifying computer files created by others and representing that work as one's own.

For more information, review OU's [Academic Conduct Regulations](https://www.oakland.edu/deanofstudents/policies/). (Link to Academic Conduct Regulations: <https://www.oakland.edu/deanofstudents/policies/>)

2. **Behavioral Code of Conduct.** Appropriate behavior is required in class and on campus. Disrespectful, disruptive and dangerous behavior are not conducive to a positive learning environment and may result in consequences. Core Standards for Student Conduct at OU includes
- a. Integrity. See academic conduct policy points above.
 - b. Community. Policies regarding disruptive behavior, damage and destruction, weapons, and animals.
 - c. Respect. Policies regarding harassment, hazing, and [sexual misconduct](https://www.oakland.edu/policies/health-and-safety/625/) (Link to Sexual Misconduct policy: <https://www.oakland.edu/policies/health-and-safety/625/>)
 - d. Responsibility. Policies regarding alcohol, drugs, and other substances
 - e.

See the [Student Code of Conduct](https://www.oakland.edu/deanofstudents/student-code-of-conduct/philosophy-and-purpose/) for details. (Link to Student Code of Conduct: <https://www.oakland.edu/deanofstudents/student-code-of-conduct/philosophy-and-purpose/>)

STATEMENT ON LANGUAGE AND HISTORICAL VIOLENCE

Because of the historical and cultural erasure that has been (and continues to be) practiced in the U.S., as a class we'll be addressing many of these facets of erasure. This means that it will be necessary for you as a student to be a student of language use and a student of your own perspective. Our educations (U.S. curricula) have been the most powerful tools of erasure of Native peoples, so you as a student will need to pay close attention to how you write and speak

about Indigenous experience and be mindful of the language you use, so you don't perpetuate these historical wrongs (we, your professors, will be your guides). In an important way our discussions and your assignments will be the places where you'll practice what you learn. Terms like “savage,” for example, perpetuate forms of violence. To use them uncritically or to use them unnecessarily does a kind of violence that we will be working in the class to identify and address. You will be expected to build a respectful vocabulary for our discussions and to become more aware of using language that doesn't perpetuate historical violence.

ACCOMMODATION AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Oakland University is committed to providing everyone the support and services needed to participate in their courses. Students with disabilities who may require special accommodations should make an appointment with campus [Disability Support Services](#) (DSS). If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to your professor a letter from Disability Support Services in a timely manner (for exam accommodations provide your letter at least one week prior to the exam) so that your needs can be addressed. DSS determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact DSS at 248-370-3266 or by e-mail at dss@oakland.edu. For information on additional academic support services and equipment, visit the [Study Aids](#) webpage of Disability Support Services website. (Link to Disability Support Services website: <https://www.oakland.edu/dss/>)

GRADING PROCEDURES & ATTENDANCE

This class uses a “labor-based grading contract,” which we have adapted from [Asao B. Inoue](#) and Kate Ozment. It eschews traditional grades in favor of assessing you based on how much you work, your labor. You will still get feedback and evaluation; it is just not tied to your grade. We are using this system for several reasons. Assessing you with traditional numerical grades encourages you to care more about a number than what you are learning. You are more interested in figuring out “what we want” than engaging in the learning process or taking risks and trying something new. A lot of research backs this up; for example see [Alfie Kohn \(2011\)](#). It rewards students who come in with more training and background, who work less hard to get a high grade. Students who come from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds or are first generation may struggle much more to figure out how to succeed. In short, grades can exacerbate inequity. We are implementing this system now because the context of emergency learning during a pandemic means that “grades” cease to have their socially agreed-upon meaning. Additionally, we are working to eschew colonialist systems of “value” in this course.

The Baseline: The B Grade.

The B is the default grade of this course. If you do all the work that is asked of you and in the manner and spirit it is asked, you will earn a B. If you miss synchronous sessions, turn in assignments late, forget to do assignments, or do not follow other directions, your grade will be

lowered according to the chart on the following pages. If you complete extra labor, defined on the following pages as well, you can improve your contracted grade. You are guaranteed a B if you meet all of the following conditions:

Participation. You agree to fully participate in at least 84% of our synchronous sessions (18 out of 21). Participating means do not work on things for other classes or do an activity that makes it impossible for you to stay engaged with us. If you are online but never chat or verbally contribute, you are not participating. All students are expected to come to class having thoroughly read all of the assigned course material—this means understanding the plot and events of the text, given time to reading passages closely, and questions and ideas about the text. Students should listen respectfully to their classmates, bring questions and ideas for us to discuss *every day*, and enter into conversation rather than congratulatory remarks (e.g. “Can you talk more about why the relationship between these characters is dangerous?” rather than “I like what you said about these characters’ relationship.”). Participation can be illustrated in the following ways:

- Speaking in synchronous full-class session
- Using chat function in synchronous full-class session
- Speaking when in small group/break-out room
- Using chat function in small group/break-out room
- Contributing during synchronous meeting to class collective notes GoogleDoc
- Responding to surveys Dr. Knutson and Peiser provide for our class
- Giving peer feedback

We do not differentiate between excused and unexcused reasons for missing discussion sessions, so choosing to take a mental health day and having a doctor’s note because you are physically sick are the same. Save your “passes” for when you really need them. We are living in Plague Times, so we will consider circumstances like prolonged illness on a case-by-case basis, and we will come up with an equitable solution.

Lateness. You agree to log in on time and stay for the entire session. Do your best with technology glitches—we all know these will happen.

Sharing and Collaboration. You agree to work cooperatively and collegially in groups, mostly during breakout rooms, but occasionally synchronously and asynchronously on your own.

Late, Missed, and Ignored Work. You agree to turn in and on time all work and assignments expected of you in the spirit they are assigned, meaning you will complete the labor of each assignment. Missing work and doing it late is stressful. We encourage you to keep up with your work and regularly turn things in on time. During the semester, you have some grace on turning in assignments late. This is how we define these categories:

Late work is if you turn in any work or document late but within 48 hours. For example, if something is due on Friday at 11:59 p.m. and you turn it in by Sunday at 11:59 p.m., it counts as late work. Missed work is if you turn in any work or document more than 48 hours after a stated deadline. For example, if something is due Friday at 11:59 p.m. and you turn it in after Sunday at 11:59 p.m., it is missed work. Assignments reflect the work we are actively doing, so missing them hurts your ability to engage and your classmates' ability to engage with you. Ignored work is any work or document that is never turned in. You have to do all the work assigned in the course to meet the learning objectives, so you cannot meet expectations with any ignored work.

Required Assignments

There are no weights to the assignments. All labor is treated equally in the chart and contract. These are the assignments you need to complete to meet the requirements of the contract.

Reading Assignments: You are responsible for all reading.

Weekly Journal Posts. Eight writing exercises, each around 1000 words. These are asynchronous work that continue the technique or method introduced in the discussion sections. They will be due on Sunday at 11:55pm and ask you to respond to the texts we are reading, our discussions, and the ways that your understanding of and relationship to the Land is informed and changed. Journals are always due on the WordPress site. (no additional post is due the week you submit the 3 Sisters Self Portrait, or the Current Events Research Post)

3 Sisters Self Portrait: You will research and craft a creative-based special Wordpress blog post on how you identify as one of the Three Sisters of Indigenous companion planting. More details on Moodle. Assignment due on WordPress Blog.

Current Events Research Post: You will conduct research and craft one special topics post on a current event in Indigenous land and food sovereignty. This assignment is due on the WordPress blog. More information on the schedule & on Moodle.

Final Project: You will complete one part of a collaborative archive garden, which illustrates your and your classmates' experience learning about the land and Indigenous archives and food sovereignty, especially during a time when we cannot be physically together, but are perhaps more close to the Land than settler society has been for some time. Students will collectively design the outline for the project, designate roles, work tasks, due-dates, and contributions by the faculty. This project will make use of the WordPress blog, have an audience in mind, illustrate research skills, and incorporation of major course objectives.

Improving Your Grade

To earn a B+ (3.4), A- (3.7), or A (4.0), you need to complete additional labor. You may complete as many of the following activities as you would like. Each raises you one step (0.3), so doing three of them earns you a 4.0. All written documents can be submitted to the “Additional Labor” folder on Moodle. The final date to submit additional labor documents is April 12, 2021.

Exemplary Labor: If by the end of our semester, you miss no synchronous sessions, participate in all activities, have no late, missed, or ignored assignments, it will count toward one step up on your final grade.

Additional Journal Contexts Response: You can select one of the additional videos linked on the course Moodle page to watch, and write a blog post about its basic argument (no more than one paragraph on this), and the ways that it intersects with our course lessons and readings. You will need to cite at least two texts from the syllabus, and argue for what additional lessons or further ideas this supplement material adds to course learning.

Breakdown of Grade Components

	# of non part. days	# of late assignments	# of missed assignments	# of ignored assignments
A (4.0)	3	3	1	0
B (3.0)	3	5	1	0
C (2.0)	4	6	2	0
D (1.0)	5	7	3	1
F (0.0)	6	8	4	2

Grade of Incomplete

A grade of Incomplete is reserved for rare circumstances where a student has maintained good standing in the class, is near completion of the course, but cannot complete the class because of serious reasons. Documentation is required to receive a grade of Incomplete.

ADD/DROPS

The university policy will be explicitly followed. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of [deadline dates for dropping courses](#) and officially drop the course. (Link to deadlines for dropping courses: <https://www.oakland.edu/registrar/registration/dropornot/>)

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Oakland University sits on the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary lands of the Anishinaabe people, also known as the Three Fires of the Confederacy comprised of the Ojibwe, the Odawa, and the Potawatomi. In particular, the University resides on land ceded in the 1807 Treaty of Detroit. We recognize, support, and advocate for the sovereignty of Michigan's Indian nations, for historic Indigenous communities, for Indigenous individuals and communities who live here now, and for those who were forcibly removed from their Homelands.

STATEMENT ON PRONOUNS AND NAME CHANGES

Many people might go by a name in daily life that is different from their legal name. In this classroom, we seek to refer to people by the names that they go by. Pronouns can be a way to affirm someone's gender identity, but they can also be unrelated to a person's identity. They are simply a public way in which people are referred to in place of their name (e.g. "he" or "she" or "they" or "ze" or something else). In this classroom, you are invited (if you want to) to share what pronouns you go by, and we seek to refer to people using the pronouns that they share. The pronouns someone indicates are not necessarily indicative of their gender identity.

*Please update your Zoom name to the name + pronouns you'd like us to use when engaging with you in our classroom.

Unit 1: Orienting Ourselves with Indigenous History & Worldview

Week 1

Jan. 7 (Th)

Introductions: What is an archive? [Where do you know from?](#); [Map of Native Land](#); [Treaty of Detroit](#)

Week 2

Jan. 12 (T)

Readings: [Kyle Whyte, "Indigenous Experience, Environmental Justice, and Settler Colonialism"](#); Kimmerer, 3-40

Due Sunday 11:55pm: Blog post response "Where Do You Know From"

Jan. 14 (Th)

Readings: Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Ch. 1 "Imperialism, History, Writing and Theory" (Kresge e-reserve); Kimmerer, 41-94

Week 3

Jan. 19 (T)

Readings: [Roxanne Dunbar Ortiz, "This Land"](#); Kimmerer, 95-143

Jan. 21 (Th)

Readings: Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Ch. 2 "Research through Imperial Eyes" (Kresge e-reserve);
Library Instruction Day: Emily Spunaugle's lesson on Library of Congress
>>come with notes on which of the Three Sisters you feel you identify with!

Week 4

Jan. 26 (T)

Readings: [Tuck and Yang, "Decolonization is Not a Metaphor"](#); Kimmerer, 143-194

Jan. 28 (Th)

Readings: Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Ch. 3 "Colonizing Knowledges" (Kresge e-reserve); Kimmerer, 194-248

Week 5

Assignment Due Sunday 1/31/2021 on the Blog: 3 Sisters Post

Feb. 2 (T)

Readings: Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Ch. 8 “Twenty-five Indigenous Projects” (Kresge e-reserve); Kimmerer, 248-309

Feb. 4 (Th)

Readings: Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Ch. 9 “Responding to the Imperatives of an Indigenous Agenda: A Case Study of Maori” (Kresge e-reserve); Kimmerer, 310-352

Unit 2: Seeds as Text, and the Land

Week 6

Feb. 9 (T)

Readings: Mihesuah and Hoover, Ch. 2 ““You Can’t Say You’re Sovereign if You Can’t Feed Yourself”: Defining and Enacting Food Sovereignty in American Indian Community Gardening” (Elizabeth Hoover) (Kresge e-reserve); Kimmerer, 352-end

Watch: *Gather*

Feb. 11 (Th)

Readings: Mihesuah and Hoover, Ch. 3 “Searching for Haknip Achukma (Good Health)” (Devon Mihesuah) (Kresge e-reserve); Ortiz, *from Sand Creek*, Preface-pg 35

Week 7

Feb. 16 (T)

Readings: Mihesuah and Hoover, Ch. 7 “Planting Sacred Seeds in a Modern World: Restoring Indigenous Seed Sovereignty” (Rowen White) (Kresge e-reserve); Ortiz, *from Sand Creek* 36-68

Feb. 18 (Th)

Readings: Mihesuah and Hoover, Ch. 14 “Indigenous Climate Justice and Food Sovereignty: Food, Climate, Continuance (Kyle Whyte) (Kresge e-reserve)

Library Research Instruction: Emily Spunaugle on responsible research and digital literacy about Native and Indigenous Peoples

Feb. 20-28 -- SPRING BREAK

Week 8

DUE Sunday Feb 28 2021, 11:55pm --research-based current event blog post on Indigenous Issues related to land rights and food sovereignty—students read each others' beforehand, and come ready to discuss them all

March 2 (T)

Readings: Ortiz, *from Sand Creek* 69-end; read each others' blog posts?

Unit 3: How Archives Work: Archive Theory, Erasure, and the Labor of Anti-Racist (Anti-Oppression) Archival Work

March 4 (Th)

Readings: Layli Long Soldier, *Whereas* pgs. 4-27; Revisit 1807 [Treaty of Detroit](#)

Archival Interventions: [U of Michigan's Pohrt Collection](#)

Week 9

March 9 (T)

Readings: Layli Long Soldier, *Whereas* pgs. 28-46

March 11 (Th)

Readings: Layli Long Soldier, *Whereas* pgs. 47-80

Week 10

March 16 (T)

Readings: Layli Long Soldier, *Whereas* pgs. 81-101

March 18 (Th)

Review the [Hinsdale Atlas](#) online before class starts

(Virtual) Special Collections Day with Emily Spunaugle, featuring the Hinsdale Atlas, Freedman Rolls, etc

Unit 4: Non-Linear Time and New Archival Pathways

Week 11

March 23 (T)

Readings: Wilson, *The Seed Keeper*

Watch: Nanobah Becker's *The 6th World* (15:07) on You Tube (Think about how Becker envisions the future of her people (Dine) and the role corn (and pollen) will play. How is a new archive being imagined in this film?)

[Students decide on format for final project]

March 25 (Th)

Readings: Wilson, *The Seed Keeper*

Watch: Danis Goulet's *Wakening* (8:51) on You Tube (Think about the roles of Wesakechuk and the Windigo in this film. And think about what Wesakechuck is doing *for* the Windigo -- what are the ways that Cree stories are held by colonial institutions and what are the consequences? Humans are captured by the Windigo to be eaten and the Windigo is a figure of greed.)

Week 12

March 30 (T)

Readings: Wilson, *The Seed Keeper* [these page numbers TBA]

April 1 (Th)

Readings: Wilson, *The Seed Keeper*

Week 13

April 6 (T)

Readings: Wilson, *The Seed Keeper*

April 8 (Th)

Readings: Wilson *The Seed Keeper*

Week 14

April 13 (T)

In-class work time for the final project

April 15 (Th)

In- class work time for the final project

Additional Zoom work time + meetings (aka synchronous accountability work time) available the week of exams by request!