

**INDIGSTU 1020E:
INTRODUCTION TO INDIGENOUS STUDIES**

Western University, London, Ontario, Canada
Indigenous Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences
Fall/Winter: 2026-2027

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION:

An interdisciplinary survey of Indigenous issues, from academic and community perspectives including indigenous knowledge, historical background, oral history, socio-political context, arts, language and culture. Specific practical examples will be explored by researchers and community members actually engaged in their contemporary documentation and resolution.

Method of Delivery: In person

Course Weight: 1.00 credits

Breadth: CATEGORY A

Subject Code: INDIGSTU

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

We/I acknowledge that Western University is located on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabek (Ah-nish-in-a-bek), Haudenosaunee (Ho-den-no-show-nee), Lūnaapéewak (Len-ahpay- wuk) and Chonnonton (Chun-ongk-ton) Nations, on lands connected with the London Township and Sombra Treaties of 1796 and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum. With this, we/I respect the longstanding relationships that Indigenous Nations have to this land, as they are the original caretakers. We acknowledge historical and ongoing injustices that Indigenous Peoples (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) endure in Canada, and we accept responsibility as a public institution to contribute toward revealing and correcting miseducation as well as renewing respectful relationships with Indigenous communities through our teaching, research and community service.

See: https://indigenous.uwo.ca/initiatives/land_acknowledgement.html

STATEMENT ON GENDER-BASED AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE:

Western [is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence](#) and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced gender-based or sexual violence (either recently or in the past), you will find

information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts, [here](#). To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

COURSE READING MATERIALS:

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:

1. Starblanket, Gina, David Long, and Olive Patricia Dickason. *Visions of the Heart: Issues Involving Indigenous People, 6th Edition*. Don Mills Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2025.
ISBN: 9780190170233
2. Sinclair, Sara and Stephanie Sinclair. *A Steady Brightness of Being: Truths, Wisdom, and Love from Celebrated Indigenous Voices*. Toronto: Penguin Canada, 2025.
ISBN: 9780735250369
3. Hayden-Taylor, Drew. *Take Us To Your Chief And Other Stories*. Toronto: Douglas and McIntyre, 2016. **ISBN: 9781771621311**

Where to purchase:

- Copies of the textbook can be purchased at the Campus Bookstore.
(<https://bookstore.uwo.ca/textbooks-and-course-materials>)

BRIGHTSPACE READINGS:

There will be other readings to posted online. Review your syllabus reading schedule to know what readings are due that week. You can find any additional readings on BRIGHTSPACE under the Unit called “Additional Course Readings.”

If students need assistance with the course OWL site, they can seek support on the [OWL Brightspace Help](#) page. Alternatively, they can contact the Western Technology Services Helpdesk. They can be contacted by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Course Learning Outcomes:

The learning outcomes for this Indigenous Studies focus on shifting perspectives, analysing colonial history, and building frameworks for reconciliation in Canada. These outcomes are typically categorized into four main categories in this course:

1. Critical Analysis of Colonialism & Policy

Students analyze how systemic frameworks have shaped, and continue to shape, the lives of Indigenous peoples in Canada.

- **Analyze the historical impact** of federal policies, such as the Indian Act and the Residential School System.
- **Deconstruct institutional barriers** and systemic racism affecting contemporary Indigenous communities.
- **Evaluate the legal frameworks** of treaties, land claims, and the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples \(UNDRIP\)](#).

2. Indigenous Ways of Knowing & Worldviews

Students move beyond Eurocentric perspectives to understand diverse Indigenous epistemologies.

- **Apply Culturally Appropriate** approaches to integrate Indigenous methodologies with Western academic frameworks.
- **Explain the interconnectedness** of language, culture, identity, and stewardship of the land.
- **Recognize the diversity** of distinct First Nations, Inuit, and Métis cultures, governance, and histories.

3. Ethical Community Engagement & Protocol

Students develop the practical, respectful communication skills needed for collaborative work.

- **Demonstrate cross-cultural competency** by framing research questions and dialogue in a non-extractive, respectful manner.
- **Identify appropriate protocols** for ethically engaging with Indigenous communities, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers.
- **Utilize Indigenous oral and visual** traditions of communicating knowledge.

4. Positionality & Reconciliation Action

Students reflect on their own roles and locate pathways to support meaningful societal change.

- **Evaluate personal positionality**, social power locations, and cultural identity within colonial history.
- **Formulate specific strategies** to advance the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action within professional environments.
- **Support Indigenous resurgence** and self-determination efforts through professional or academic advocacy.

COURSE FORMAT AND DELIVERY METHODS:

The course is broken down into lectures, experiential learning projects, in class activities, and assignments. Read the following descriptions to understand the format for those components.

Method of Delivery:

The course is in-person delivery mode. The course is broken down into lectures, a tutorial and assignments. Read the following descriptions to understand the format for those three components.

Lectures:

Class lectures will be three hours in length. Lectures will include a variety of teaching methods: traditional lecturing, group activities, out of class hands on learning, storytelling, creative, expression, and discussion. PowerPoint slides and any handouts will be uploaded to BRIGHTSPACE

before each lecture. The instructor does not share informal lecture notes. Students are expected to listen and take their own notes during each class. Attendance at lectures is mandatory.

- Lecture: Length 110 minutes (1 hr and 50 minutes)
- Tutorial 50 minutes

Class lectures will be two hours in length. Lectures will include a variety of teaching methods: traditional lecturing, group activities, out of class hands on learning, storytelling, creative, expression, and discussion. PowerPoint slides will be uploaded to OWL/BRIGHTSPACE before each lecture. The instructor does not share informal lecture notes. Students are expected to listen and take their own notes during each class. Attendance at lectures is mandatory.

Tutorial:

The primary purpose of a university tutorial in this class is to review some of the more creative literature included in the required course reading materials to allow students to actively engage with, debate, discuss and read the words of Indigenous writers, thinkers, and leaders.