EDRS 897, Section B02 – Decolonizing Methodologies
3 credits, Summer 2022
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4:30-7:10pm, Online

Faculty
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Prerequisite

Successful completion (with a grade of B or higher) of EDRS 810, or equivalent coursework or experience, or permission of the instructor

University Catalog Course Description

Develops knowledge and skills of decolonizing research methodologies.

Course Overview

This course will examine the theoretical and philosophical ideas and assumptions that undergird decolonizing and Indigenous methodologies. Students will acquire understanding of these theories and methodologies using a variety of modalities. The course will highlight how these methodological orientations are changing the essence of what it means to engage in social science inquiry and even what "science" means.

Course Delivery Method

This course will be delivered online (76% or more) using a synchronous format via Blackboard Learning Management system (LMS) housed in the MyMason portal. You will log in to the Blackboard (Bb) course site using your Mason email name (everything before @masonlive.gmu.edu) and email password. The course site will be available on May 23, 2022.

Under no circumstances, may candidates/students participate in online class sessions (either by phone or Internet) while operating motor vehicles. Further, as expected in a face-to-face class meeting, such online participation requires undivided attention to course content and communication.

Technical Requirements

To participate in this course, students will need to satisfy the following technical requirements:

- High-speed Internet access with standard up-to-date browsers. To get a list of Blackboard's supported browsers see: https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting_Started/Browser_Support#supported-browsers
  To get a list of supported operation systems on different devices see: https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting_Started/Browser_Support#tested-devices-and-operating-systems
- Students must maintain consistent and reliable access to their GMU email and Blackboard, as these are the official methods of communication for this course.
- Students may be asked to create logins and passwords on supplemental websites and/or to download trial software to their computer or tablet as part of course requirements.
- The following software plug-ins for PCs and Macs, respectively, are available for free download:
  - Adobe Acrobat Reader: https://get.adobe.com/reader/
  - Windows Media Player: https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/14209/get-windows-media-player
  - Apple Quick Time Player: www.apple.com/quicktime/download/

Expectations

- Course Week: Our course week will begin on the day that our synchronous meetings take place as indicated on the Schedule of Classes.
- Log-in Frequency:
  Students must actively check the course Blackboard site and their GMU email for communications from the instructor, class discussions, and/or access to course materials at least 3 times per week. In addition, students must log-in for all scheduled online synchronous meetings.
- Participation:
  Students are expected to actively engage in all course activities throughout the semester, which includes viewing all course materials, completing course activities and assignments, and participating in course discussions and group interactions.
- Technical Competence:
  Students are expected to demonstrate competence in the use of all course technology. Students who are struggling with technical components of the course are expected to seek assistance from the instructor and/or College or University technical services.
- Technical Issues:
  Students should anticipate some technical difficulties during the semester and should, therefore, budget their time accordingly. Late work will not be accepted based on individual technical issues.
- Workload:
  Please be aware that this course is **not** self-paced. Students are expected to meet *specific deadlines* and *due dates* listed in the **Class Schedule** section of this syllabus. It is the

student's responsibility to keep track of the weekly course schedule of topics, readings, activities and assignments due.

- Instructor Support:
  Students may schedule a one-on-one meeting to discuss course requirements, content or other course-related issues. Those unable to come to a Mason campus can meet with the instructor via telephone or web conference. Students should email the instructor to schedule a one-on-one session, including their preferred meeting method and suggested dates/times.
- Netiquette:
  The course environment is a collaborative space. Experience shows that even an innocent remark typed in the online environment can be misconstrued. Students must always re-read their responses carefully before posting them, so as others do not consider them as personal offenses. *Be positive in your approach with others and diplomatic in selecting your words*. Remember that you are not competing with classmates, but sharing information and learning from others. All faculty are similarly expected to be respectful in all communications.
- Accommodations:
  Online learners who require effective accommodations to insure accessibility must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services.

Learner Outcomes or Objectives

This course is designed to enable students to do the following:
1. Articulate the historical and theoretical foundations of decolonizing and Indigenous methodologies;
2. Describe some common methods used in each of these approaches;
3. Discuss common practices associated with designing research studies that engage these approaches;
4. Discuss tensions and critiques of these approaches;
5. Outline ethical considerations related to these approaches, including issues of representation through dissemination;
6. Discuss validity implications related to engaging in these approaches.

Professional Standards (that are met through this course)

Not applicable

Required Texts

Smith, L. T. (2021). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples*. Zed Books Ltd.

Wilson, S. (2008). *Research is ceremony: Indigenous research methods*. Fernwood Publishing.

My Approach/Commitment

In this course, my primary goal is to establish a safe and inclusive environment that will support your learning. I am most dedicated to making sure we learn together but also that we stay safe, healthy, and sane, as well as emotionally available for the loved ones we are taking care of.

Throughout the course, I invite your questions and critiques, desiring thoughtful dialogue to be central to our learning experience. In this course, we will work to understand a variety of positions and practices associated with decolonizing and indigenous methodologies, pushing one another to question taken-for-granted beliefs and assumptions. Throughout the course, I will remind each other that there is not one right way to carry out a social science research study. In order to facilitate our learning environment, I will work to cultivate a classroom space that generates respectful, thoughtful, and empathetic understanding. What we come to learn is a shared experience; thus, we will all work to cultivate a community of learners.

In our learning community, I will position myself as co-learner, as well as teacher. Hence, if I am teaching and you are not learning, then I am not teaching. Please let me know! Throughout the course, I welcome your feedback and will encourage your participation in an informal mid-course evaluation. In addition, throughout the course, you can expect feedback from me, with this feedback designed to support your growth as a social science researcher.

Anti-Racism Statement

I affirm that in this class, faculty and students will work together to cultivate a more equitable, inclusive, and just learning environment for all participants, regardless of racial background. We will actively seek ways to
- Make constant, conscious decisions to interrupt racism and cultivate equity, inclusion, and justice for people of all racial backgrounds, and in particular those from Black communities, indigenous communities, and other communities of color, who are most likely to bear the direct and indirect costs of systems of white supremacy;
- Interrogate histories of white supremacy and white-dominant culture, and to examine the ways in which these histories have impacted our individual beliefs, our interpersonal relationships, our institutional and structural policies and processes, and our entire society;
- Make a commitment to being responsible for our own relationships to, and actions within, systems of white supremacy; and
- Cultivate a practice of self-awareness and self-reflection that allows us to critically evaluate our own role in upholding white supremacy and identify the ways we can interrupt cycles of racism at the individual, interpersonal, institutional, and structural levels.

Diversity and Inclusion Statement

The College of Education and Human Development, an intentionally inclusive community, promotes and maintains an equitable and just work and learning environment. We welcome and value individuals and their differences including race, economic status, gender expression and

identity, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, national origin, first language, religion, age, and ability status.

- We value our diverse student body and desire to increase the diversity of our faculty and staff.
- We commit to supporting students, faculty and staff who have been the victims of bias and discrimination.
- We promote continuous learning and improvement to create an environment that values diverse points of view and life experiences.
- We believe that faculty, staff and students play a role in creating an environment that engages diverse points of view.
- We believe that by fostering their willingness to hear and learn from a variety of sources and viewpoints, our students will gain competence in communication, critical thinking and global understanding, and become aware of their biases and how they affect their interactions with others and the world.

Names and Pronouns Use Statement

If you wish, please share your name and gender pronouns with me and how best to address you in class and via email. I use she/her/hers for myself and you may address me as "Dr. Call-Cummings" in email and verbally. Additionally, I invite students to approach me before or after class and during office hours. I recognize that a student's name and pronoun(s) can change during a semester if they are in transition. I encourage students to use the tools Mason provides to change your name and pronouns on Mason records if you so choose: https://registrar.gmu.edu/updatingchosen-name-pronouns/

Course Performance Evaluation

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor (e.g., Blackboard, VIA, hard copy).

As an 800-level course, this class requires a significant time commitment. It is **reading intensive.** Thus, please plan accordingly, as the readings have been carefully selected to support your growth as a researcher. Throughout the course, know that I will be here to support you and facilitate the learning process! My intent is to make this a truly meaningful learning (and growing) experience.

In all of your assignments, I am looking for evidence of: (1) understanding and the application of the concepts and processes learned and discussed in class and online; (2) critical reflection and responses to issues and concepts; (3) clarity of expression; (4) explicit connections among ideas; and (5) complete work with no grammatical or spelling errors. All assignments are due on the date listed in the Schedule table below. Incompletes and Withdrawals are strongly discouraged and are only given when the conditions of the university are met and after a conference with the instructor at the initiation of the student.

Assignments   **Points**

1. Class participation   25
2. Reflective memos and Think Aheads (5)   25
3. Article critiques (2)   20
4. Final paper or Negotiated Final Product   30

Your work should be original, thoughtful, rigorous, and thorough. Plagiarism in any form is not acceptable. Please err on the side of documenting and citing sources.

Important note: As a decolonizing methodologies class, we will all experience tensions, disjunctures, perhaps even questioning or confusion because of or related to our positionalities, ontologies, epistemologies, and axiologies. For example, I identify as a white woman. I in no way claim indigeneity nor do I think I am necessarily the best person to teach this class. Yet, I am in a position to do so. My goal for this class is to learn together, to open our understandings and to broaden our methodological thinking. If there is something in this course that is not working for you, please let me know. If you have an idea for how to change or adapt the course to better suit your needs or goals, please let me know. I am eager to make this the best possible experience for all of us, and I acknowledge that that might/will include changing the syllabus or various assignments or expectations. Consider this syllabus a proposal, a starting point.

Assignment Descriptions

Participation (25 points)
25% of your grade will be based on your familiarity and critical grappling with the assigned readings, videos, interviews, and other resources, and with your communication of evolving understandings in class discussions. You do not need to display brilliance, but you do need to engage with the authors, speakers, instructors, and your classmates and try to make sense of the ideas brought out. At the beginning of the course, you will be assigned to a small group (3-4 people/group) to participate in the discussions and practices, allowing for mini learning communities to grow within the class, and for richer and more meaningful discussions to unfold. These groups will be designed to include individuals from a range of identities and life experiences, disciplines and substantive focal points. Each group will be in charge of leading at least two discussions during the course. We will negotiate how this will happen. These opportunities will figure in to your participation grade.

Reflective Memos (25 points)
25% of your grade will be based on your completion and submission of five separate reflective memos or "Think Aheads". Reflective memos (3) should go into greater depth on the topics covered in three of the classes during the semester. You must illustrate how you apply the readings and discussions to your own research praxis. Each of the three required memos is worth 5 points. You may choose when you turn these in during the semester. My hope is that you will space them out so that you can benefit from my feedback and create an ongoing dialogue with me during the course.

Two of these memos are "Think Aheads". "Think Aheads" are one-page *pre*-flective memos. You will write one of these with your small discussion group (so, one turned in for the whole group) in order to disseminate thoughts and questions, as well as other resource ideas, to the rest

of the class prior to the day your group leads class discussion on the week's readings. The second "Think Ahead" will be written by each person and disseminated to the rest of the class prior to your final presentations. These second "Think Aheads" will encourage your peers to think on certain topics or questions prior to experiencing your final presentation. More information will be discussed in class. Each of the two "Think Aheads" is worth 5 points.

Article Critiques (20 points)

20% of your grade will be based on two separate article critiques. When assigned, you will choose a scholarly article in your field and critique it according to our discussions in class. These critiques should build on class discussions and should apply the theories, philosophies, and practices discussed in class. More details will be discussed in class.

Final Paper or Negotiated Final Product (30 points)

30% of your grade will be based on a final paper or negotiated final product. Recognizing the commitments of decolonizing and Indigenous theory, it is important that this course build into it structures and an opportunity to showcase your learning and growth in multiple ways. Thus, this final product could take numerous forms: a scholarly paper, an original song, a website or blog, a new research project, or something else entirely. The class schedule will indicate when you will need to turn in a proposal for the final product. We will engage in dialogue during class to ensure equity and consensus in how these final products are taken up and graded. The final two class sessions will be used to present everyone's final product to the rest of the class.

Grading

The following is the grading scale. As noted above, your final grade is based on the number of points you earn throughout the semester.

Grading Scale
A   93% - 100%
A-   90% - 92.9%
B+   87% - 89.9%
B   83% - 86.9%
B-   80% - 82.9%
C+   77% - 79.9%
C   74% - 76.9%

Professional Dispositions

See https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/polices-procedures/

Class Schedule

DATE	TOPIC/FOCUS	TO BE COMPLETED PRIOR TO CLASS	ASSIGNMENTS DUE and/or NOTES ON CLASS TIME
June 7	Introducing each other, the course, making commitments	• Smith, Introduction • Search the Mason website for a mention of colonialism or imperialism. Note the URL and share it with the class through the discussion board.	• _After_ this first class, review BB lists of decolonizing and indigenous readings. Make preliminary readings decisions for classes 6-9 (see below) and communicate with instructor if you need help with any purchases or borrowing.
June 9	Imperialism and Research	• Smith, Chs. 1 and 2 • Brayboy (2005) • View Leigh Patel or Linda Tuhiwai Smith's talk: http://www.politicsofevidence.ca/full-conference-archive/	• **Discussion Group 1:**
June 14	Colonizing and Decolonizing Knowledge	• Smith, Ch. 3 • Fals Borda, O., & Mora-Osejo, L. E. (2003). • Shotton et al. (2018) • View Trinh T. Minh Ha's Reassemblage (link on BB)	• **Discussion Group 2:**
June 16	Positionality, responsibility, accountability, ethics in the context of decolonizing methodologies	• Patel (2014) • Read/View: Claire Barliant, "The Hanging at Mankato," _Triple Canopy_, no. 13 (August 4, 2011), https://www.canopycanopycanopy.com/contents/the_hanging_at_mankato Listen to the embedded recordings.	• **Discussion Group 3:**
June 21	Connecting ethics and validity in the context of decolonizing methodologies	• Akwesasne Good Mind Research Protocol: http://www.mcmaster.ca/	• **Discussion Group 4:** • **Article Critique 1 DUE**

		ors/ethics/download/akw esasne.pdf • Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. Guidelines for Ethical Research in Indigenous Studies. http://www.aiatsis.gov.au /research/ethical.html • Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. 1993. "Ethical Guidelines for Research." http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ch/rcap/index_e. html • Lavallé, L. (Producer). (2016). *Reconciling ethical research with Métis, Inuit, and First Nations Peopl*e (video). Retrieved from https://youtu.be/D5qh7MY 4el0	
June 23	Indigenous Methodologies (1)	• Smith, Chs. 4, 5, 6 • Choose two additional readings from the list on BB	• **In class: Readings Roundtable led by Discussion Group**
June 28	Indigenous Methodologies (2)	• Wilson (2008) • Choose two additional readings from the list on BB	• **In class: Readings Roundtable led by Discussion Group**
June 30	Decolonizing Methodologies (1)	• Choose three readings from the list on BB	• **In class: Readings Roundtable led by Discussion Group**
July 5	*No class meeting*		
July 12	Decolonizing Methodologies (2)	• Choose three readings from the list on BB	• **In class: Readings Roundtable led by Discussion Group**
July 14	Writing up and disseminating decolonizing research and issues of representation (1)	• Castleden, H., Sylvestre, P., Martin, D., & McNally, M. (2015) • Blodgett et al. (2011)	

July 19	Writing up and disseminating decolonizing research and issues of representation (2)	• Caxaj (2015) • Search online for an article or example of how research has been written / disseminated in ways that acknowledge decolonizing or Indigenous methodologies	• **Final Product Proposal DUE**
July 21	Decolonizing the Academy (1)	• View Eve Tuck's talk: http://www.politicsofevidence.ca/full-conference-archive/	• **Article Critique 2 DUE**
July 26	Decolonizing the Academy (2)	• Shahjahan et al. (2021) • View Kim Tallbear's talk: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1-yVjSQ5ZPc	• **Think Ahead #2 DUE**
July 28	Final presentations	• Read "Think Aheads" posted in BB	• **Final Product DUE no later than August 6, 2022**

Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.

Core Values Commitment

The College of Education and Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles: http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/.

GMU Policies and Resources for Students

Policies

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/).

- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see https://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/).

- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their Mason email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students **solely** through their Mason email account.

- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services. Approved accommodations will begin at

the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor (see https://ds.gmu.edu/).

- Students must silence all sound emitting devices during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

Campus Resources

Support for submission of assignments to VIA should be directed to viahelp@gmu.edu or https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/assessments . Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/
- For information on student support resources on campus, see https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus

Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking:

As a faculty member, I am designated as a "Non-Confidential Employee," and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason's Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason's confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance or support measures from Mason's Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.

Safe Return to Campus Statement
- All students taking courses with a face-to-face component are required to follow the university's public health and safety precautions and procedures outlined on the university Safe Return to Campus webpage (https://www2.gmu.edu/safe-return-campus). Similarly, all students in face-to-face and hybrid courses must also complete the Mason COVID Health Check daily, seven days a week. The COVID Health Check system uses a color code system and **students will receive either a Green, Yellow, Red, or Blue email response**. Only students who receive a "green" notification are permitted to attend courses with a face-to-face component. **If you suspect that you are sick or have been directed to self-isolate, please quarantine or get testing. Faculty are allowed to ask you to show them that you have received a Green email and are thereby permitted to be in class.**
- Mason campuses are mask-optional, except in certain event venues, health care settings, on public transit, or child care settings. However, if you're more comfortable wearing a mask, feel free to continue. We still encourage you to wear a mask indoors. There are several minor and targeted exceptions requiring masks listed on the Face Coverings page. If you are in a situation requiring a mask, but need a medical exemption from wearing a mask, visit the Office of Disability Services for more information. Mason offers a free N-

95 mask to students at Mason's COVID test sites and information kiosks on the Fairfax, Arlington, and SciTech Campuses.

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/ **.**