

George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
PhD Program

EDRS 814, Section B01 – Anti-Colonial Methodologies (CRN 43048)
3 credits, Summer 2024
May 28, 2024 - July 27, 2024
Tuesdays 4:30-7:10pm, In-Person, Aquia, Room 219
Thursdays, 4:30-7:10pm, Online, Zoom: <https://gmu.zoom.us/j/6213078804>

Faculty

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Recommended Prerequisite:

Successful completion (with a grade of B or higher) of EDRS 810, EDRS 811, and EDRS 812, or equivalent coursework or experience, or permission of the instructor

University Catalog Course Description

Develops knowledge and skills of anti-colonial research methodologies. Emphasizes theories that undergird anti-colonial and decolonial approaches to research as well as ethical and methodological tensions surrounding these approaches. Includes anti-colonial and decolonial methods for data collection and analysis appropriate for research in education as well as other social sciences. Offered by School of Education. Limited to three attempts.

Course Overview

This course will examine the theoretical and philosophical ideas and assumptions that undergird anti-colonial, 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

The nature of course delivery uses a blended delivery approach, weekly combining synchronous online and face-to-face instruction. Blended learning is the thoughtful fusion of face-to-face and online learning experiences. Blended learning is not an addition that builds another layer of instruction. Rather, it represents a restructuring of course activities and assignments to enhance engagement and to extend access to a range of web-based opportunities. Blended learning emerges from an understanding of the relative strengths of face-to-face and online learning to provide learning activities consistent with course goals. Blended learning combines the properties and possibilities of both to go beyond the capabilities of each separately.

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.

Learner Outcomes or Objectives

This course is designed to enable students to do the following:

1. Articulate the historical and theoretical foundations of anti-colonial, 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 (3rd edition)*. 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, welcoming, and inclusive environment that will support your critical thinking and learning. I am most dedicated to making sure we learn together, in community.

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 anti-colonial, decolonizing, and indigenous methodologies, pushing one another to question taken-for-granted beliefs and assumptions. Throughout the course, I will remind us 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.

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, settler-colonialism, 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 settler colonialism and identify the ways we can interrupt and dismantle structural oppression in order to advance justice, peace, and healing.

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. 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. 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, 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 (3)	15
3. Article critiques (2)	25
4. Final paper or Negotiated Final Product	<u>35</u>
	100

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 an anti-colonial 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. 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 (15 points)

- 15% of your grade will be based on your completion and submission of 3 separate reflective memos. 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.

Article Critiques (25 points)

- 25% 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 (35 points)

- 35% 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

Grade	Quality Points	Graduate Courses
A+	4.00	Satisfactory/Passing
A	4.00	Satisfactory/Passing
A-	3.67	Satisfactory/Passing
B+	3.33	Satisfactory/Passing
B	3.00	Satisfactory/Passing

B-	2.67	Satisfactory/Passing
C	2.00	Unsatisfactory/Passing
F	0.00	Unsatisfactory/Failing

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
May 28 (In-person)	Introducing each other, the course, making commitments, decolonizing the syllabus Anti-Colonial and Decolonizing Methodologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smith, Introduction • Patel (2014) • Dei on Decolonization and Anti-colonial Praxis: https://brill.com/display/book/edcoll/9789004404588/front-6.xml 	
May 30 (Online)	Using Decolonizing Methods to problematize current sociopolitical and unequal colonial projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ortega (2023) • Ortega et al. (2023) • Guest Speaker (Zoom): Yecid Ortega 	
June 4 (In-person)	Decolonization is not a Metaphor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smith, Chs. 1 and 2 • Tuck & Yang (2012) 	

June 6 (Online)	Imperialism and Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R. Smith (2021) • View Leigh Patel or Linda Tuhiwai Smith's talk: https://www.politicsofevidence.ca/full-conference-archive/ Guest Speaker (Zoom): TBD	
June 11 (No class meeting)	Colonizing and Decolonizing Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smith, Ch. 3 • Fals Borda, O., & MoraOsejo, L. E. (2003) Optional: Sanchez et al. (2019)	Reflection due
June 13 (Online)	Positionality, responsibility, accountability, ethics in the context of decolonizing and anti-colonial methodologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read/View: Claire Barliant, "The Hanging at Mankato," <i>Triple Canopy</i>, no. 13 (August 4, 2011), https://www.canopycanopy.com/contents/the_hanging_at_mankato Listen to the embedded recordings. 	
June 18 (In-person)	Connecting ethics and validity in the context of anti-colonial and decolonizing methodologies	Letiecq & Bailey (2004) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EXPLORE: https://nelson.wisc.edu/office-of-environmental-justice/uw-native-nations-partnerships/research-resources/tribal_university-research-partnership-resources/ • Akwesasne Good Mind Research Protocol • Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. Guidelines for Ethical Research in Indigenous Studies. https://aiatsis.gov.au/research/ethical-research • Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. 1993. "Ethical Guidelines for 	

		Research.” http://www.aincinac.gc.ca/ch/rcap/index_e.html	
June 20 (Online)	Connecting ethics and validity in the context of anti-colonial and decolonizing methodologies	Kelley et al., 2013 Lavallé, L. (Producer). (2016). <i>Reconciling ethical research with Métis, Inuit, and First Nations People</i> (video). Retrieved from https://youtu.be/D5qh7MY4el0 Guest Speaker (Zoom): TBD	
June 25 (In-person)	Anti-Colonial and Decolonizing Methodologies	Smith, Chs. 4, 5, 6 Carlson (2016)	
June 27 (Online)	Indigenous Methodologies (1)	Abigail Echo-Hawk: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4kcrXNurZfY View Kim Tallbear’s talk: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1-yVjSQ5ZPc	
July 2 (In-person)	Indigenous Methodologies (2)	Wilson (2008) Drs. Wilson and Mulrennan: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rqYiCrZKm0M	
July 4th -- No class – University Holiday			

July 9 (In-person)	Writing up and disseminating anti-colonial and decolonizing research and issues of representation (1)	Castleden, H., Sylvestre, P., Martin, D., & McNally, M. (2015) Caxaj (2015) Blodgett et al. (2011)	
July 11 (Online)	Writing up and disseminating anti-colonial and decolonizing research and issues of representation (2)	EXPLORE: https://www.messengersforhealth.org/ Search online for other articles or examples of how research has been written / disseminated in ways that acknowledge anti-colonial, decolonizing or Indigenous methodologies	
July 16 (In-person)	Decolonizing the Academy (1)	Shahjahan et al. (2021) EXPLORE: https://www.landgrabu.org/	
July 18 (Online— Last class meeting)	Decolonizing the Academy (2) Wrap-up Course Evaluation	View Bud Hall's and/or Eve Tuck's talks: https://www.politicsofevidence.ca/full-conference-archive/	
July 24 *End of semester*		All course assignments due by 7/24	Final Project Due

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/blackboardinstructional-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.

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