



The University of Western Ontario
HISTORY 9718A

Race and Gender on Imperial Frontiers: Comparative Settler Colonialisms

Fall 2025

Instructor: Laurel Clark Shire, Associate Professor, GSWS & History

Office Hours: W 10am-11am, Th 11am-12pm
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Course Description:

In this course we will read and discuss recent literature on the history of settler colonialism in North America alongside comparative studies of other settler societies around the globe. In the past few decades, scholars have begun to use “settler colonialism” to describe societies in which outsiders (white Europeans in most modern cases) invaded a place in order to settle there permanently, and used political, legal, cultural, and economic structures to transform it into their space, turning themselves into its “natives.” Unlike other kinds of imperial regimes, large numbers of women from the invading culture helped to colonize settler colonies with their reproductive and domestic labour, but they were otherwise very similar to other imperial ventures, and to varying degrees most combined the appropriation of indigenous land with resource extraction and forced labor. New gender norms and racial hierarchies arose from “white” settler colonial methods of taking land and extracting labor. These new relations of power and privilege had very different consequences for white settlers, displaced Indigenous people, and imported laborers. Due to time constraints, this course will focus mainly on the experiences and interactions of Indigenous peoples and invading settlers, with less time (though not importance) given to the forced migrants and enslaved people that European empires and settlers exploited.

Graduate Course Level Learning Outcomes/Objectives

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- Explain how settler colonialism is a continuing structure, not a past event
- Name and describe the primary characteristics of settler colonies in the past and present, including their intersectional legacies and comparative similarities and differences
- Write a concise assessment of a scholarly book or article that includes the thesis argument, types of evidence, and major contributions to knowledge and historical debate
- Apply the theories, methods, and themes from our course readings about settler colonialism to another context and write a scholarly comparative analysis of that example event/context

Course Timeline and Format

Unless otherwise specified, all of the readings are mandatory – but you should be reading them strategically for argument and relevant content (not reading every word, necessarily, and certainly not in order from page 1 to the end).

***readings marked with an asterisk are available on-line via Western Libraries.**

**** readings marked with 2 asterisks are available as .pdfs on the course Brightspace site**

Books have been ordered for the bookstore, and prices are listed below for Amazon.ca, but you are not required to purchase them. Everything is available online via Western libraries or as a pdf on the Brightspace page.

Week 1 – 8 Sept. Welcome & Introductions. Foundations in Settler Colonial Studies

Expectations. Assignments. Sign up for the week you will lead discussion. Get group 1 or 2 assignment. How to skim/read like an academic historian. What to expect each week, and how we will use and critique AI tools.

Before we meet, please read:

****Patrick Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology* (1999), pp. 1-9.**

***Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native" *Journal of Genocide Research* 8 (4), 2006: 387–409.**

***Patrick Wolfe, "Land, Labor, and Difference: Elementary Structures of Race," *The American Historical Review* 106 (2001): 866-905.**

****Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, *Settler Colonialism*. Daraja Press, 2021 (51 pages, on OWL)**

***Simpson, Audra. 2016. "Whither Settler Colonialism?" *Settler Colonial Studies* 6 (4): 438-445.**

*****Prepare before class to turn in: reading notes. See guide to making a reverse outline on OWL.**

Week 2 –15 Sept. Post-Colonial Theory

***Stoler, Ann Laura. 2002. *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (UC Press, 2002, 2010). Available via Weldon Library. Read (skim) Chapters 1-3 and 7. \$43.95 new on Amazon ISBN : 0520262468 ISBN : 9780520262461**

***Stoler, Ann Laura. 2016. *Duress: Imperial Durabilities in Our Times* (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 2016) available online via Weldon Library. Read (skim) the Preface and Chapters 1-4. \$41.95 new on Amazon ISBN : 9780822362524 ISBN : 082236252X**

Discussion leader(s):

Groups 1 & 2 write reverse outlines of chapters assigned from *Carnal Knowledge* and *Duress*. See guide to making a reverse outline on OWL.

Week 3 – 22 Sept. Native Power

***DuVal, Kathleen. 2006. *The Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent*.**

Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. Available at Weldon Library. ISBN: 0812239180

\$45.99 new on Amazon

Discussion leader(s):

Group 1 writes a review of DuVal's book, see below for instructions (p. 7)

Week 4 – 29 Sept. *Laying the Groundwork: Colonial Comparisons in the Americas*

*Seed, Patricia. 2001. *American Pentimento: The Invention of Indians and the Pursuit of Riches*.

Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Available at Weldon Library.

\$48.99 new on Amazon ISBN: 9780816637669 ISBN: 0816637660

Discussion leader(s):

Group 2 writes reviews of Seed's book, see below for instructions (p. 7)

Week 5 – 6 Oct. *English Colonialism Begins in Ireland*

* Montaña, J. P. (2017). "Cultural Conflict and the Landscape of Conquest in Early Modern Ireland." *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, 40, 120–141.

*Montrose, Louis. (1991). "The Work of Gender in the Discourse of Discovery." *Representations* 33: 1–41.

*Lussana, S. (2024). 'Carrying it on her shoulder, like an Irish-woman': early modern English traveller perceptions of women in Ireland, America, and Africa, 1555–1745. *Women's History Review*, 1–22.

Discussion leader(s):

Groups 1 and 2 write reverse outlines for all 3 articles

If you want to read a whole book on settler colonialism in Ireland: Montaña, John Patrick. *The Roots of English Colonialism in Ireland*. Cambridge University Press, 2011. Available full text online via Weldon.

Week 6 – Indigenous People's Day, no class 13 Oct.

Week 7 - 20 Oct. Colonial Brazil.

*Metcalf, Alida C. 2005. *Go-Betweens and the Colonization of Brazil, 1500-1600*. 1st ed. Austin: University of Texas Press. Available online via Weldon library. **\$45.95 new on Amazon** 978-0292712768

Discussion leader(s):

Group 1 writes reviews of Metcalf's book

Week 8 – 27 Oct. Memory and Forgetting – Settler Amnesia as Elimination

** O'Brien, Jean M. 2010. *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians out of Existence in New England* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press). Paper copies (3) at libraries. \$27.99 CAD on Kobo. \$38.99 new on Amazon. 978-0816665785

Discussion leader(s):

Group 2 writes reviews of O'Brien's book

Week 9 – Fall Reading Week. No class Nov. 3

Week 10 - 10 Nov. Race, Racism, Settler State Bio-Power and Indigenous Sovereignty

- *Bonita Lawrence. "Gender, Race, and the Regulation of Native Identity in Canada and the United States: An Overview" *Hypatia* 18 (2003): 3-31.
- *J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, "Colonialism in Equality: Hawaiian Sovereignty and the Question of U.S. Civil Rights," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 107 (2008): 635-650
- **Melinda Micco, "Blood and Money: The Case of Seminole Freedmen and Seminole Indians in Oklahoma " in Miles, Tiya, and Sharon Patricia Holland, Eds. *Crossing Waters, Crossing Worlds : The African Diaspora in Indian Country*. Duke University Press, 2006, chapter 6 (24 pages).
- *Moreton-Robinson, Aileen. 2015. *The White Possessive: Property, Power, and Indigenous Sovereignty*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press. Available online via Weldon Library. Read the Introduction and Chapter 1.

Discussion leader(s):

Groups 1 and 2 write reverse outlines for all 4 articles/chapters

Week 11 – 17 Nov. Domesticity as Elimination

**Shire, Laurel Clark. 2016. *The Threshold of Manifest Destiny: Gender and National Expansion in Florida*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. \$50.20 new on Amazon. Available on OWL. ISBN-10 : 9780812248364 ISBN-13 : 978-0812248364

Discussion leader(s):
Group 1 writes reviews

Week 12 – 24 Nov. Reproductive Control as Elimination

*Theobald, Brianna. *Reproduction on the Reservation: Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Colonialism in the Long Twentieth Century*. University of North Carolina Press, 2019. Available via Weldon library. \$40.34 on Amazon. 1469653168

Discussion leader(s):
Group 2 writes reviews

Week 13 – 1 Dec. Fostering and Adoption as Elimination

* Jacobs, Margaret D. 2014. *A Generation Removed: The Fostering and Adoption of Indigenous Children in the Postwar World*. Omaha: University of Nebraska Press. Available via Weldon Library. \$47.95 new on Amazon. 978-0803255364

Discussion leader(s):
Group 1 writes reviews

Week 14 – 8 Dec. The Well Manicured Garden of History: Memory and Nationalism in Settler States

** Charumbira, Ruramisai. 2015. *Imagining a Nation: History and Memory in Making Zimbabwe*. University of Virginia Press. Copies at Huron and Weldon. 280 pages. \$45USD for paper or e-book, UVA press. 978-0813938226

Discussion leader(s):
Group 2 writes reviews

Recommended books I wish we had time to read:

Kevin Bruyneel, *The Third Space of Sovereignty: The Postcolonial Politics of U.S.-Indigenous Relations* (2007).

- Kevin Bruyneel. 2021. *Settler Memory: The Disavowal of Indigeneity and the Politics of Race in the United States* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2021).
- Jodi A. Byrd, *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism*
- Sarah Carter, *The Importance of Being Monogamous: Marriage and Nation Building in Western Canada to 1915*. Athabasca University Press, 2008. Available online via Weldon here:
- Christine Taitano DeLisle, *Placental Politics: CHamoru Women, White Womanhood, and Indigeneity under U.S. Colonialism in Guam* (Critical Indigeneities) 2022
- Walter Hixson, *American Settler Colonialism: A History* (2013), pp 1-22, 197-202.
- Margaret D. Jacobs, *White Mother to a Dark Race: Settler Colonialism, Maternalism, and the Removal of Indigenous Children in the American West and Australia, 1880-1940* (2009)
- Deborah Rosen, *Border Law: The First Seminole War and American Nationhood* (2015)
- Natsu Taylor Saito, *Settler Colonialism, Race, and the Law: Why Structural Racism Persists*
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Enrollment Restrictions

Enrollment in this course is restricted to graduate students in History, as well as any student that has obtained special permission to enroll in this course from the course instructor as well as the Graduate Chair (or equivalent) from the student's home program.

Course Syllabus:

Your final course grade will be determined as follows:

weekly participation in seminar (20%)

Did you attend? Had you done the reading effectively? Were you prepared to ask questions and interact with the readings and your peers in a respectful and critical manner? Did you ask questions or make comments that drew common threads or useful comparisons across different readings (from this or any week of the course)? Did you participate meaningfully each week, or only when we read something you were interested in? Did you share your thoughts, positive or negative, or did you save "what you really think" for discussions outside of class? If you must miss a seminar meeting due to illness or a personal emergency, please inform me in writing and provide any available documentation to the Graduate Chair.

discussion leadership in seminar (5%)

Once during the seminar you (and possibly 1-2 others) will begin our discussion of the week's readings with a short presentation (5-10 minutes) to the whole seminar that outlines: 1) main arguments 2) methodologies 3) sources 4) reviews of author(s)'s work and its implications for the field and 5) discussion questions. Hit each of these effectively, and you'll earn all 5 points.

four reverse outlines and four book reviews (48%, 6% each)

We will read 8 monographs in this course as well as about 20-25 articles or chapters. In four weeks you will all turn in a **reverse outline** of the assigned articles/chapters. This exercise will help you learn how to read scholarship for its main argument and contribution to the historiography. Directions for how to prepare a reverse outline are on the course OWL Brightspace page.

In the other weeks, a portion of the class will write a 500-800 word **review of the book** (monograph) assigned, in the weeks assigned for each group (groups will be assigned in the first seminar). Each of you will write FOUR (4) reviews. A good book review pinpoints and pithily summarizes the thesis, methods, and sources of the study; identifies the most important implications of the research findings and places them in conversation with others who agree and disagree in the field; points out any substantive omissions or problems; indicates what new questions the study has raised for future research. If you are unsure what a good book review looks like, browse the review section of your favorite academic history journal. The book reviews build on the reverse outlines by putting them into a short narrative summary of the book's arguments, evidence, and significance. These skills are transferrable and extremely in demand – learning how to read, summarize, and convey information quickly is the goal, and it is what most history graduate alumni are doing in whatever their chosen profession is.

Send each to lshire@uwo.ca before class on the date we discuss the book. **These cannot be accepted after the seminar meets on that book (whether or not you attend) so please plan accordingly.** You may use assistive AI (such as Grammarly, spell check, etc) to refine and correct your original draft. Please cite any AI tools you have used in your bibliography.

15- 20 page essay about a settler colonial/colonial historical example (27%)

Choose a reasonably delimited question about the history of settler colonialism (anywhere in the world and at any time in history) and conduct original research into primary and secondary sources to answer it. You might choose a particular cultural artifact/event or primary source to analyze, or carve out a small piece of a larger research project to explore in this essay. **You should use as many of our shared course materials as are relevant to your research question, in addition to those you find in your research. Your grade will be based in part on whether you demonstrate the ability to connect your analysis to the ideas, theories, and histories we have studied this term. If it is clear to me that you should have made a connection or cited a particular source, and you did not, you will lose points.** For example, nearly everything we read in weeks 1 and 2 should apply in one way or another to any settler colonial context, and you should show that you understand the field by making those connections in your essay. **If your topic is not clearly linked to settler colonial or colonial history, you will fail this assignment.** Your final draft is due on December 19, 2025 by 5pm. It must include a title, footnotes or endnotes, and a bibliography in Chicago/Turabian (exceptions will be made for students from disciplines that use other citation styles, discuss with me please). If possible and appropriate, you are encouraged to use this to begin research for a conference paper, journal

article, MA thesis/IRP/cognate, or dissertation chapter. If your seminar paper does continue into one of those venues, I will be happy to provide feedback even after the course is complete.

You may use generative AI to help you brainstorm, refine your thesis argument, and proofread your final essay. Please note that AI cannot think for you – it only works if you give it the main argument and subarguments with which to generate sentences. If you choose to use a generative AI Writing Tool, it is expected that the AI writing tool be properly referenced using the same reference style you have used for notes and Bibliography, and a description outlining how AI writing tool was used/for what purpose, and how it enhanced your essay. This description needs to be explicit and accompany all assignments that utilize AI writing tools. Failure to include a proper reference and description will be considered a breach of academic integrity and a form of academic misconduct. If you have any questions about the use of AI assistants, please reach out to your instructor for clarification.

Course Materials:

See the weekly schedule of readings above or the course OWL Brightspace page for a complete list of all assigned readings. Books are available at Western Libraries or on the Brightspace site for this course, and all were ordered for the bookstore <https://bookstore.uwo.ca/>

Methods of Evaluation:

Weekly participation in seminar	20%
Discussion leadership in seminar	5%
4 reverse outlines and 4 book reviews	48%
15-20 page essay	27%

Students must complete all components of the course in order to pass. Students are expected to attend all seminar meetings unless they are ill. Students are still expected to read and complete course assignments during or after illness.

See statement on the use of AI below under Additional Statements.

Additional Statements

Health/Wellness Services:

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health Support at <https://www.uwo.ca/health/psych/index.html> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Students seeking help regarding mental health concerns are advised to speak to someone they feel comfortable confiding in, such as their faculty supervisor, their program director (graduate chair), or other relevant administrators in their unit. Campus mental health resources may be found at http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/resources.html

Accessibility Options:

Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for all its members, including graduate students. As part of this commitment, Western provides a variety of services devoted to promoting, advocating, and accommodating persons with disabilities in their respective graduate program. Graduate students with disabilities (for example, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, mobility impairments) are strongly encouraged to register with Accessible Education Western (AEW), a confidential service designed to support graduate and undergraduate students through their academic program. With the appropriate documentation, the student will work with both AEW and their graduate programs (normally their Graduate Chair and/or Course instructor) to ensure that appropriate academic accommodations to program requirements are arranged. These accommodations include individual counselling, alternative formatted literature, accessible campus transportation, learning strategy instruction, writing exams and assistive technology instruction. Request for Accommodations/Medical Issues

Students are entitled to their privacy and consequently they do not need to disclose personal information to their course professors. In the event that students feel the need to discuss personal information, they should see the graduate chair. Unlike undergraduate students, graduate students cannot be referred to Social Science Academic Counselling to have their medical or non-medical circumstances evaluated and to receive a recommendation for accommodation. Those facilities are for undergraduates only, and there is no process beyond the department to secure recommendations for accommodation. Our process is that faculty should deal with routine requests for extensions. However, a student's request for accommodation (on medical, non-medical, compassionate grounds) should go to the graduate chair, Prof. Francine McKenzie (historygradchair@uwo.ca) who will consult and communicate with faculty. Additionally, faculty and students should communicate with the grad chair about any case in which work is not submitted before grades are due. In the event that the graduate chair is also the course professor, then a request for accommodation can be taken to the department chair.

Statement on the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI):

You may use generative AI to help you brainstorm, refine your thesis argument, and proofread your final essay. Please note that AI cannot think for you – it only works if you give it the main argument and subarguments with which to generate sentences. If you choose to use a generative AI Writing Tool, it is expected that the AI writing tool be properly referenced using the same reference style you have used for notes and Bibliography, and a description outlining how AI writing tool was used/for what purpose, and how it enhanced your essay. This description needs to be explicit and accompany all assignments that utilize AI writing tools. Failure to include a proper reference and description will be considered a breach of academic integrity and a form of academic misconduct. If you have any questions about the use of AI assistants, please reach out to your instructor for clarification.

Academic Offences:

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual Course Outlines similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

NOTE: See Policies and Statements on the Graduate section of the History Department Website, https://history.uwo.ca/graduate/program_information/graduate_policies_and_statements.html. This includes additional information on academic support services for health and wellness and gender based sexual violence. You can also find information on other academic policies, including copyright, plagiarism, and accessibility.

Statement on Gender-Based and Sexual Violence:

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website:

https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca