

History/ Indigenous Studies 3267 G
Residential Schools
Winter 2025

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Office Hours: Monday 12:30- 2:00

This is a draft outline. Please see the course site on OWL Brightspace for a final version.

Course Description

The House of Commons unanimously passed a resolution in 2022 recognizing the Indian Residential School System as an act of genocide. This resolution recognized the cultural, physical, sexual, and psychological abuse that was inherently embedded within the provision of education to Indigenous children throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

This course will focus on the history and legacy of the Indian Residential School System from its colonial predecessors through to the global reckoning that has occurred since the identification of unmarked graves at former residential school sites. Central to this course will be the recognition of individual student experiences from the Indian Residential School System to humanize their lives and to assist in the reinterpretation of Canadian history.

Prerequisite(s): 1.0 History course at the 1000 level OR Indigenous Studies 1020

Course Level Learning Outcomes

- Be able to recognize and define ‘residential school denialism’ and contextualize this alongside differing historical interpretations
- Be able to compare the nuances of Indigenous education in Canada, the United States, and elsewhere in the ‘British Empire’
- Be able to articulate pre-colonial and contemporary forms of Indigenous education that exist outside of settler systems
- Be able to recognize and articulate the historical and contemporary inequalities associated with the provision of Indigenous education including chronic underfunding

Absences and Late Assignments – Students must attend at least nine lectures in order to pass this course. A three-day extension is permitted for the Media Coverage Reflection. After this extension, there will be a 2% late penalty for every day that the assignment has not been

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handed in, with a maximum deduction of 20%. The Memoir Reflection has a firm deadline of March 31 at 11:59pm.

Course Material – Course materials will be available through OWL or the university library. No additional purchases are necessary.

Methods of Evaluation

Class Participation (ongoing) – 15%

Students will submit a written question, comment, or response to the course material at the end of each lecture. These submissions will count as 10% of their final grade.

Media Coverage Reflection (February 10) – 35%

This assignment is based on the report [Debunking the ‘Mass Grave Hoax:’ A Report on Media Coverage and Residential School Denialism in Canada](#) by Reid Gerbrandt and Sean Carleton (2023). Students will write a reflection that summarizes the methodologies and major findings that are presented by the authors. The reflection should also clearly demonstrate your prior knowledge relating to the concepts of residential school denialism and the identification of unmarked graves at former residential schools. A strong reflection will consider specific media interpretations (or misinterpretations), and will contextualize this report alongside your own beliefs, demonstrating how the report supported, contested, or clarified your previous perspectives.

The report is the only document that needs to be cited for this assignment. Further research is permitted, although this is not considered necessary. The reflection should be five-pages, double spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, with Chicago Style citations.

Memoir Book Club Discussion (March 17) – 15%

Students will read either *Aki-Wayn-zih: A Person as Worthy as the Earth* by Eli Baxter (2021) or *The Boy from Buzwah: a Life in Indian Education* by Cecil King (2022). Both of these books are available as digital copies from the university library.

Further details regarding this assignment will be posted in the final syllabus.

Memoir Reflection (March 31) – 35%

Students will read either *Aki-Wayn-zih: A Person as Worthy as the Earth* by Eli Baxter (2021) or *The Boy from Buzwah: a Life in Indian Education* by Cecil King (2022). Both of these books are available as digital copies from the university library.

This assignment requires students to consider and contextualize autobiographies alongside peer-reviewed secondary sources. Students are responsible for identifying specific themes that are found within the books. Examples might include recreation and leisure, language loss and revitalization, or the reclamation of traditional educational practices. The autobiographical content should be compared and contrasted with at least three peer-reviewed secondary sources that consider similar themes. The central question to consider is the ways in which life-writing and academic-writing can be used in collaboration with each other to present a more comprehensive understanding of the Indian Residential School System. This assignment will

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require direct comparison between the content from the autobiographies and the content from the secondary sources.

The memoir reflection will be twelve pages long, double spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, with Chicago Style citations.

Date	Weekly Theme	Assigned Reading
January 6	Historical Presentism and Historical Denialism	James Miles and Lindsay Gibson, "Rethinking Presentism in History Education," <i>Theory & Research in Social Education</i> 50, 4 (2022): 509- 529
January 13	Mission Schools in New France	J.R. Miller, <i>Shingwauk's Vision: a History of Native Residential Schools</i> (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996): 39- 60
January 20	Pre-Confederation Residential Schools	Thomas Peace, "A Model to Follow? The Sussex Vale Indian School," in <i>Behind the Bricks: the Life and Times of the Mohawk Institute, the Model for the Canadian Residential School System</i> (forthcoming, 2025): 101- 124.
January 27	Imperialist Education in the British Empire	Selection from <i>Empire, Education, and Indigenous Childhoods: Nineteenth-Century Missionary Infant Schools in Three British Colonies</i> by Helen May, Baljit Kaur, and Larry Prochner (2016)
February 3	Canada's Indian Residential School System	Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, <i>Canada's Residential Schools: the History, Part One – Origins to 1939</i> (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 2015): 197- 246
February 10	Cultural Assimilation	Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, <i>Canada's Residential Schools: the History, Part One – Origins to 1939</i> (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 2015): 615- 643
February 17	No Class	No Readings
February 24	Physical, Sexual, and Psychological Abuse	Ian Mosby, "Administering Colonial Science: Nutrition Research and Human Biomedical Experimentation in Aboriginal Communities and Residential Schools, 1942- 1952," <i>Histoire Sociale/ Social History</i> 46, 91 (2013): 145- 172

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March 3	Residential School Curriculum	Alexandra Giancarlo, "To 'Elevate the Mental Powers of the Indian Children:' Race and Intelligence Testing in Canada's Indian Residential School System," <i>Historical Studies in Education</i> 34, 2 (2022): 1- 21
March 10	Recreation and Leisure	Braden Te Hiwi and Janice Forsyth, "A Rink at this School is Almost as Essential as a Classroom:' Hockey and Discipline at Pelican Lake Indian Residential School, 1945- 1951," <i>Canadian Journal of History</i> 52, 1 (2017): 80-108.
March 17	Day Schools and Indian Hostels	Helen Raptis, "Exploring the Factors Prompting British Columbia's First Integration Initiative: the Case of Port Essington Indian Day School," <i>History of Education Quarterly</i> 51 (4) (2011): 519- 543
March 24	Lawsuits and Truth Commissions	Brian Gettler, "Historical Research at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada," <i>The Canadian Historical Review</i> 98, 4 (2017): 641- 674
March 31	Residential Schools and Genocide	No readings

Use of Generative AI Tools – Students *are not* allowed to make use of Generative AI Tools such as ChatGPT for any assignments in this course.

Additional Policies – Please review the Department of History's shared policies and statements for all undergraduate courses at: https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_module_information/policies.html for important information regarding accessibility options, make-up exams, medical accommodations, health and wellness, academic integrity, plagiarism, and more.