

DEPARTMENT Humanities and Social Sciences

COURSE OUTLINE - Fall 2026

NT2300(EC): Introduction to Indigenous Governance 3 (3-0-0) 45 Hours for 15 Weeks

Northwestern Polytechnic acknowledges that our campuses are located on Treaty 8 territory, the ancestral and present-day home to many diverse First Nations, Metis, and Inuit people. We are grateful to work, live, and learn on the traditional territory of Duncan's First Nation, Horse Lake First Nation, and Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation, who are the original caretakers of this land. We acknowledge the history of this land, and we are thankful for the opportunity to walk together in friendship, where we will encourage and promote positive change for present and future generations.

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Wayne Wapeemukwa
OFFICE: Online
E-MAIL: WWapeemukwa@nwpolytech.ca
OFFICE HOURS: By appointment (virtual)

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION: Introduction to indigenous governance and resurgence through contemporary perspectives on the political relationship between Indigenous people and Canada.

PREREQUISITE(S): None **COREQUISITE(S):** None

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

No textbook purchase is required. All readings, primary-source selections, links, and assignment instructions will be available through myClass. Students require regular access to myClass and a word-processing program.

DELIVERY MODE(S): Asynchronous

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Interpret difficult primary and secondary texts by accurately reconstructing their arguments, citing specific evidence, and identifying their implications for Indigenous governance. (*Response Portfolio*)
2. Analyze Pope Francis's 2022 apology at Maskwacis by situating it within the Doctrine of Discovery and its translation from European debates into Canadian colonial policy. (*Opening Reflection*)
3. Reassess an initial interpretation of the apology through an Indigenous thinker or school of thought, evaluating what resurgence, reconciliation, refusal, or grounded normativity reveals about apology, repair, and Indigenous governance. (*Final Paper*)

TRANSFERABILITY:

Please consult the Alberta Transfer Guide for more information. You may check to ensure the transferability of this course at the Alberta Transfer Guide main page <http://www.transferalberta.alberta.ca>

**** For courses with alpha (letter) grading, a grade of D or D+ may not be acceptable for transfer to other post-secondary institutions. Students are cautioned that it is their responsibility to contact the receiving institutions to ensure transferability**

EVALUATIONS:

Assessment	Weight	Due
Response Portfolio	20%	Rolling module deadlines; complete by Dec. 2, 5:00 p.m.
Opening Reflection: Apology and Discovery	30%	Oct. 7, 5:00 p.m.
Final Paper: Re-reading the Apology	50%	Dec. 15, 5:00 p.m.

GRADING CRITERIA:

Please note most institutions will not accept your course for transfer credit if your grade is below **C-**.

Grading Chart

Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines	Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines
A+	4.0	95-100	C+	2.3	67-69
A	4.0	85-94	C	2.0	63-66
A-	3.7	80-84	C-	1.7	60-62
B+	3.3	77-79	D+	1.3	55-59
B	3.0	73-76	D	1.0	50-54
B-	2.7	70-72	F	0.0	00-49

COURSE SCHEDULE/TENTATIVE TIMELINE:

Module / date	Topic	Required readings and activities
1 - Sept. 2	Introduction: worldviews, land, and constitutional order	Read the course outline. Leroy Little Bear, "Jagged Worldviews Colliding"; Kiera L. Ladner, "Up the Creek: Fishing for a New Constitutional Order."
2 - Sept. 9	What is the Doctrine of Discovery?	Robert J. Miller, "Doctrine of Discovery"; Olive Patricia Dickason, "Concepts of Sovereignty"; Lauren Benton and Benjamin Straumann, "Acquiring Empire by Law."
3 - Sept. 16	The apology and the first reflection	Kent McNeil, "Papal Bulls Dividing the Americas"; Phyllis Webstad's story; Pope Francis, apology at



Module / date	Topic	Required readings and activities
		Maskwacis (video and transcript). Opening Reflection introduced.
4 - Sept. 23	First contact and the juridical status of Indigenous peoples	Hans Schelkshorn, Rethinking European Modernity, ch. 7; Daragh Grant, "Francisco de Vitoria and Alberico Gentili on the Juridical Status of Native Americans"; Francisco de Vitoria, De Indis (selections).
Sept. 30	No classes	National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. No new module or required work.
5 - Oct. 7	The Valladolid debate	Luke Glanville, introduction to Sepúlveda on the Spanish Invasion of the Americas; Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, Democrates Alter / Democrates Secundus (selections); Bartolomé de las Casas, Defense of Amerindian Rights (selections). Opening Reflection due.
6 - Oct. 14	Grotius: commerce, jurisdiction, and colonial difference	Hugo Grotius, Mare Liberum, chs. 1 and 5 (selections); Maaik Stelder, "The Colonial Difference in Hugo Grotius: Rational Man, Slavery and Indigenous Dispossession."
7 - Oct. 21	The agricultural argument	John Locke, Second Treatise, ch. 5; Locke, "On the Poor Law and Working Schools"; Emer de Vattel, The Law of Nations, ch. 7 and ch. 18 (selections).
8 - Oct. 28	Canada: from civilizing theory to policy	John S. Milloy, A National Crime, Introduction; Report on the Affairs of the Indians in Canada (Bagot Report, selections); Nicholas Flood Davin, Report on Industrial Schools for Indians and Half-Breeds (selections).
9 - Nov. 4	Resurgence	Taiaiake Alfred, "Indigenous Resurgence," in Wasáse, pp. 179-203; Leanne Betasamosake Simpson and Eve Tuck, "Indigenous Resurgence and Co-resistance"; Glen Sean Coulthard and Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, "Grounded Normativity / Place-Based Solidarity."
Nov. 9-13	Fall break	No classes or new required work.
10 - Nov. 18	Reconciliation, reciprocity, and treaty relationship	Sheryl Lightfoot, "The Pessimism Traps of Indigenous Resurgence"; Robin Wall Kimmerer, Braiding Sweetgrass, Preface and Part One, "Planting Sweetgrass"; Yann Allard-Tremblay, "The Two Row Wampum: Decolonizing and Indigenizing Democratic Autonomy."
11 - Nov. 25	Refusal	Audra Simpson, "Ethnographic Refusal," in Mohawk Interruptus, pp. 95-114; Howard Adams, A Tortured People, ch. 10, "Challenge to Colonized Culture," and ch. 12, "Neocolonialism." Final Paper introduced.
12 - Dec. 2	Conclusion: what would it mean to	Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor"; Vatican Dicasteries for Culture and



Module / date	Topic	Required readings and activities
	repudiate discovery?	Education and for Promoting Integral Human Development, Joint Statement on the 'Doctrine of Discovery' (2023); United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, arts. 26-28. Response Portfolio complete.
13 - Dec. 9	Independent synthesis and writing	No new reading. Use this module to revisit the Opening Reflection, meet with the instructor if desired, and complete the Final Paper.
Dec. 15	Final assessment deadline	Final Paper due by 5:00 p.m. through myClass.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

Because this course is asynchronous, there are no required live meetings. Students are responsible for checking myClass regularly, completing each module by its posted deadline, reading announcements, retaining copies of submitted work, and contacting the instructor promptly when circumstances affect their participation.

Course readings include racist and dehumanizing language and arguments used to justify conquest, dispossession, forced assimilation, and residential schooling. We study these materials critically, not to endorse them. Students should quote harmful language only when analytically necessary and should use respectful contemporary terminology in their own prose.

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:

Academic Misconduct will not be tolerated. For a more precise definition of academic misconduct and its consequences, refer to the Student Rights and Responsibilities policy available at <https://www.nwpolytech.ca/about/polytechnic-leadership/policies-directory>.

****Note:** All Academic and Administrative policies are available on the same page. ******

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON ASSIGNMENTS:

Response Portfolio (20%). Students will complete 10 brief responses, each about 250 words, to the designated module prompts. Each response reconstructs a central claim or concept, cites a specific passage, and poses a question or implication. Responses are submitted by the posted module deadlines and, after Module 11, are assessed holistically for completion, accuracy, textual engagement, and intellectual development. This replaces in-class starters and supports steady reading in an asynchronous course.

Opening Reflection: Apology and Discovery (30%). In 1,000-1,500 words, analyze Pope Francis's 2022 apology at Maskwacis in relation to the Doctrine of Discovery. Identify what the apology acknowledges, what political or legal assumptions it leaves intact, and why those choices matter. Use the apology and at least two readings from Module 2-3.

Final Paper: Re-reading the Apology (50%). In 1,800-2,200 words, revisit **your own** Opening Reflection **through** the lens of one Indigenous thinker or school of thought studied in Modules 9-11 (resurgence, reconciliation, refusal, grounded normativity, or another approved framework). Explain the framework accurately, identify what it changes or exposes in the earlier analysis, and present a revised argument about apology, repair, and Indigenous governance. The paper must engage your own words from your own Opening Reflection, the selected framework, and at least three course readings. This take-home final assessment is due during the final-assessment period. What did your original response miss? What would Indigenous authors say about your essay?

Late Work and Extensions

Students should contact the instructor as early as possible if they need an extension or accommodation. Approved extensions will establish a new deadline. Unapproved late work may be subject to a penalty stated in the assignment instructions. The applicable NWP policies govern academic accommodations and exceptional circumstances.