



a place of mind
THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
Faculty of Education
Department of Educational Studies

EDST 508B: Indigenous Epistemology and Methodology

Winter term 2, January – April 2015

Tuesdays, 4:30 – 7:30pm

Department of Educational Studies

(*Ts'kel Indigenous Graduate Studies*)

Dr. Michael Marker

Course Description

This course presents and explores vital methodological considerations related to research with Indigenous knowledge systems and community ways of understanding.

Through discussion, readings, films, and other activities, students will be encouraged to explore the ways that Indigenous knowledge has been transmitted through oral tradition and cultural protocols. Culturally responsive research methods are formed from respectful relationships to individuals, communities, and their social systems. Indigenous epistemologies challenge normative western methodologies and invite new ways of perceiving concepts such as culture, history, and power.

Students will be inspired to consider research methods that put place and ecological understandings at the heart of knowledge mobilization. EDST 508b helps graduate students review literature and develop a critical vocabulary to inform a broad set of concerns in ethnography and qualitative research methods. EDST 508b is concerned with the need to write and present research in a manner that is respectful to Indigenous communities while maintaining a transformative presence in the academy.

Graduate students who take this course should be prepared to participate in an advanced discussion on First Peoples' lived community experience while revitalizing their own research and writing.

Readings will be made available on Connect.

Course Themes

Decolonizing Indigenous Writing:

How can Indigenous scholars develop and affirm an academic tradition that claims ownership to traditional ways of knowing and shows respect for community values and imperatives?

Critical Issues in Cultural Representation and Identity:

Indigenous peoples have a unique location in the historic and political landscape of North American society. Contentions around this identity and the meaning of aboriginal otherness have animated a number of literary problems related to ethics and cultural appropriation. Aboriginal people have an approach to knowledge that is embedded in the landscape and the mythic proportions of belonging to a place. Oral traditions and political traditions merge to form a unique amalgam of practical and sacred knowledge

Intellectual Self-Determination:

Native scholarship has been centrally concerned with respecting community values and traditional authority structures. The goals and purposes of academic writing have been at cross-purposes with collective tribal values. The readings in this section navigate through these zones of conflict and collaboration.

Multiple Interpretations of Reality and Writing:

This section examines some core tensions between oral and textual approaches to knowledge. The questions of how writing operates out of counterpoised assumptions from oral traditions raises larger themes of discord between Native and non-Native ways of knowing.

Indigenous Media and Issues

Researching Toward Culturally Responsive Schools

Indigenous communities confront many practical problems and issues in the construction of schools that reflect local needs and cultural values. What is the role or the researcher in listening and writing to affirm policies that support community goals in curriculum and process? How should research inform the development of curriculum, pedagogy and leadership structures?