

# RACE, ETHNICITY, INDIGENEITY AND POLITICS

200/300-level Undergraduate Course  
Fall 20XX

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<b>Instructor:</b>	Mark Williamson	<b>Time:</b>	Tuesdays 10am-12pm
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**Course Description:** Striking disparities exist in the health and socioeconomic outcomes of racialized, Indigenous and non-racialized peoples in Canada. Yet public opinion polls show that many Canadians do not believe that racism is a serious problem in their country. This course investigates the dynamics of racial hierarchies and how politics interact with those inequalities. The first part of the course introduces students to concepts around racial, ethnic and Indigenous identities. The second part of the course considers how those identities shape political behaviour, representation in political institutions and intergroup attitudes. Finally, we examine proposals to address racial inequality and some of the barriers to their realization. Throughout the course, we contextualize the Canadian case through comparisons to other countries. By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Think critically about how race, ethnicity and Indigeneity shape contemporary political behaviour and institutions in Canada
- Scrutinize academic and non-academic survey research on identity, discrimination and reconciliation
- Have informed discussions about race in Canada and be able to share their knowledge with others outside the university setting
- Identify the barriers to realizing justice and equality in Canada and critique proposals to overcome these challenges

## Prerequisites:

- Introduction to Political Science; Introduction to Canadian Politics

**Land Acknowledgement:** This course takes place on the [traditional lands](#) of the Mississaugas of the Credit, Anishinaabeg, Chippewa, Haudenosaunee and Wendat peoples. This territory is subject to the [Dish With One Spoon Wampum](#), a treaty between the Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee nations that bound them to peacefully share and protect the land. Subsequent Indigenous nations and non-Indigenous settlers have been invited into this covenant. We are also meeting in a place covered by [Treaty 13 and the Williams Treaties](#), two agreements by which the Canadian and Ontario governments have historically failed to honourably abide.

Acknowledging the history of this land is a sign of respect toward its original peoples, but also a call for all those who benefit from the land today to work towards decolonization. I encourage you to learn more about the [Indigenous history of Toronto](#) (from the Haudenosaunee word *Tkarón:to*) and reflect on how you can use what you learn in this course to promote reconciliation.

## COURSE ORGANIZATION

**Class Meetings:** We will have lectures every Tuesday from 10am to 12pm in [room]. In the event that a class needs to be cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances, a video recording of the lecture will be posted to the course webpage. See below for expectations of lecture attendance.

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays 2-4pm, virtually via zoom ([link](#)) or in-person at 714 Jorgenson Hall. Sign up online for a specific time at [calendly.com/mark-williamson/office-hours](https://calendly.com/mark-williamson/office-hours).

**Course Website:** There is a course website on Brightspace. There is no assigned textbook. All important documents (syllabus, readings, lecture slides, assignments, etc.) will be posted there. It is your responsibility to regularly check the page for updates. Written assignments will also be submitted there.

## EVALUATION

There are four components to your grade:

Participation: 10%

Learning by Teaching Assignment: 25% (Due: October 1)

Choose Your Own Adventure Assignment: 30% (Due: December 5)

Final Exam: 35% (Date TBD)

**Participation:** Attendance will be taken using an online survey software that will be introduced in class. Students will be asked to answer questions in lecture, but this part of your grade is only based on whether you participate and not the specific answers (right or wrong) that you give.

Students can miss up to three lectures, no questions asked, before absences impact the attendance portion of their grade. Please do not come to class if you are sick. Please do get in touch with the professor if you have to miss more than three lectures due to illness.

**Learning by Teaching Assignment:** It is often said that you do not fully master an idea until you are able to teach it to others. In this spirit, and in place of a mid-term exam, you must (1) pick a concept, argument or other idea that was core to the materials in the first half of the semester (the professor will provide a list to choose from) and (2) craft an original piece that would teach someone who did not take this class about the concept, argument or idea you picked. Any medium you would like to use as a teaching tool is fine, except for a standard written essay. Be creative. You can record a short podcast, write a short blog post, pen a poem, craft an informative infographic, make a short video (Vox or Vice style news segments). Use your discretion and talent. Your work must be your own. This assignment will be graded based primarily on whether what you have created demonstrates a thorough understanding of the concept or idea, but it will also be graded on (1) whether it uses language that is accessible to non-experts outside of this class, (2) demonstrates significant effort, and (3) demonstrates thoughtfulness and creativity.

**Choose Your Own Adventure Assignment:** Discussions of race, ethnicity and Indigenous peoples are increasingly common in Canadian popular discourse. For this assignment, you will write a 5 to 7-page double-spaced essay reviewing a small piece of this

discourse. You are able to choose which medium appeals most to you from among the following:

- **Book Review:** The professor will provide a list of recent books on issues of race, ethnicity and Indigeneity in Canada and elsewhere (e.g. *The Skin We're In*, by Desmond Cole). You will choose a book, read it throughout the term and then write an academic-style book review. (Details will be provided on the format of book reviews, but you can find examples in the most recent *Canadian Journal of Political Science* [here](#)). Your review should critically examine what we learn about race and politics from this book and also where you either disagree with the author or believe they could have extended their contribution.
- **Films Review:** The professor will provide a list of recent movies on issues of race, ethnicity and Indigeneity in Canada and elsewhere (e.g. *Killers of the Flower Moon*). You will select three of those movies, watch them, and then analyze the content, tone and framing of racial issues in those films. Pay special attention to dialogue, casting and character development and how they relate to concepts discussed in class.
- **Media Coverage Review:** The professor will provide a list of recent topics that have appeared in Canadian media related to the course content (e.g. Wet'suwet'en and Coastal GasLink). You will choose a topic of interest, locate 8 media articles on that topic and analyze the content, tone and framing of that coverage. To what extent does this coverage exhibit patterns discussed in course materials, such as stereotyping or White invisibility? Duncan McCue's *Decolonizing Journalism* can be a helpful guide.
- **Political Party Platforms Review:** Compare and contrast federal political parties' discussions of race, immigration and/or Indigenous politics in their recent electoral manifestos (available [here](#)). You should choose four documents to analyze; these can be either different parties' platforms in the same election year or the same party over time or a combination of these two approaches. You may also want to connect these documents to other statements/events that occurred in a given election year using media coverage and/or secondary literature.

More details on each of these options, including lists of books/films/topics, will be provided in a separate assignment description document during the semester. Across all of these assignments, your analyses should make connections to course content and cite academic or other literature where relevant. You can (and should!) discuss and engage with the material with your classmates (e.g. watching a movie together), but each student must submit their own assignment with their own ideas and writing.

**Final exam:** There is one final exam for this course, the date of which will be announced by the registrar's office during the term. We will discuss format and details of the exam in the weeks leading up to it. A review sheet will be distributed via Brightspace. The exam will focus on the concepts and arguments covered in lectures throughout the semester, as well as those covered in readings.

Exams will be rescheduled only if the university as a whole decides to shut down. There will be no make-up exams for students who have made conflicting travel arrangements or created other scheduling conflicts on the day of the exam. Both exams take place during regularly scheduled classes.

## COURSE POLICIES

**Academic Integrity:** Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Toronto Metropolitan University's [Policy 60](#) outlines the behaviours that constitute academic dishonesty and the processes for addressing academic offences. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to: providing false information to receive an extension on an exam or assignment; using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement; submission of essentially the same written assignment for two different courses without the prior permission of faculty members; falsifying sources or facts; using unauthorized aids in exams; looking at someone else's answers during an exam; obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on an exam or assignment. Suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following university procedures. If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes academic dishonesty, appropriate research methods or the use of citations, please reach out to me directly.

**Accommodations:** If you have a need for accommodation documented through the Academic Accommodation Support centre, please have documentation sent to the professor or speak with the professor at your earliest convenience so that I can make sure you receive appropriate accommodation throughout the semester.

**Children in Class:** For students with children, it is understandable that unforeseen disruptions can occur in childcare. Bringing a child to class with you when such disruptions occur is acceptable. In these cases, all students should work together to create a welcoming environment for both the parent and child.

**Decorum:** Students are expected to arrive to class on time and behave in a manner that is respectful to the professors and to fellow students. Opinions held by other students should be respected; harassment, derogatory comments, personal attacks on others, or interrupting the class will not be tolerated. Please avoid the use of cell phones and electronics for non-class related purposes.

**Regrading:** If you have concerns about a grade, you may ask to have the professor regrade your exam or assignment, with the understanding that your grade could be revised up or down. Please make requests for re-grades within 10 days of having received the assignment/exam back.

**Late submissions:** Extensions on assignments (i.e., permission to turn in an assignment late without the penalty, or to schedule a makeup exam) will be granted by the professor only when deemed absolutely necessary: because of religious obligations, or medical emergency or illness, or for reasons of accommodation that are documented by a counselor. Please email or speak to the professor as soon as you know about any unforeseen circumstances that conflict with assignments or exams. There will be no make-up exams due to travel or other scheduling conflicts.

Late final assignments will be deducted 1/3 of a grade for each 24-hour period in which they are late. In other words, if they are turned in any time after 5:00pm on the due date and before 5:00pm the next day, an assignment that would under normal circumstances receive an A would receive an A-, an assignment that might normally receive an A- would receive a B+ and so forth.

## COURSE OUTLINE & MATERIALS

Note: weekly readings and topics are subject to change. Refer to Brightspace for the most up-to-date version of the syllabus. All readings, videos and other course materials will be posted on Brightspace. Please read articles/chapters **before** the indicated lecture in the schedule below.

### Week 1: Introduction

- Kanchan Chandra. 2006. What is ethnic identity and does it matter? Publisher: Annual Reviews, *Annu. Rev. Polit. Sci.* 9:397–424
- Maya Sen and Omar Wasow. 2016. Race as a bundle of sticks: Designs that estimate effects of seemingly immutable characteristics. *Annual Review of Political Science* 19 (1): 499–522

### Week 2: Racial Hierarchies

- Robyn Maynard. 2017. *Policing Black lives: State violence in Canada from slavery to the present*. Fernwood Publishing (Ch. 2)
- Erin Tolley. 2015. *Framed: Media and the coverage of race in Canadian politics*. UBC Press (Ch. 1)
- Lee Maracle. 2017. *My Conversations with Canadians*. BookThug (Ch. 13)

### Week 3: Measuring Race, Ethnicity and Indigeneity

- Megan Gannon. 2016. Race Is a Social Construct, Scientists Argue. *Scientific American* (February)
- Lynn Gehl. 2024. Canada must act to end the pretendian problem. *Policy Options* (June)
- Read the Canadian Census questions on ethnic and cultural origins (Q23 to Q25) here: [link](#). Think about how you or someone you know might answer these questions.

### Week 4: Identity attachments

- Pamela D. Palmater. 2011. *Beyond Blood: Rethinking Indigenous Identity*. UBC Press (Ch. 1)
- Rosalee A. Clawson and Zoe M. Oxley. 2020. *Public opinion: Democratic ideals, democratic practice*. CQ Press (Ch. 7, s. 1-2)

### Week 5: Intersectionality

- Ange-Marie Hancock. 2007. When multiplication doesn't equal quick addition: Examining intersectionality as a research paradigm. *Perspectives on politics* 5 (1): 63–79

- Emerald Bensadoun and David Akin. 2021. The fall of Green Party leader Annamie Paul: What happened behind the scenes. *Global News* (October). <https://globalnews.ca/news/8224694/annamie-paul-green-party-behind-scenes/>
- “Women and the Indian Act.” 2020. *The Canadian Encyclopedia*.

## Week 6: Fall Reading Week

## Week 7: Political Behaviour

- Randy Besco. 2019. *Identities and Interests: Race, Ethnicity, and Affinity Voting*. UBC Press (Ch. 5)
- Two short CBC articles offering contrasting perspectives on political participation by Indigenous authors:
  - Waabshkigaabo. 2021. As an Anishinaabe citizen, I can’t vote in good conscience in federal elections. *CBC News* (September)
  - André Bear. 2021. As an Indigenous sovereigntist, I will vote in this year’s federal election. *CBC News* (September). <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/first-person-andre-bear-vote-federal-election-1.6178086>
- Matthew Polacko and Allison Harell. 2023. Racial discrimination at the polls? The Canadian case of Jagmeet Singh. *Politics, Groups, and Identities*, 1–20

## Week 8: Representation

- Jane Mansbridge. 1999. Should blacks represent blacks and women represent women? A contingent “yes”. *The Journal of Politics* 61 (3): 628–657
- Meaghan Williams and Robert Schertzer. 2019. Is Indigeneity like Ethnicity? Theorizing and Assessing Models of Indigenous Political Representation. *Canadian Journal of Political Science/Revue canadienne de science politique* 52 (4): 677–696

## Week 9: White Identity

- Ashley Jardina. 2019. *White identity politics*. Cambridge University Press (Ch. 1)
- Edana Beauvais and Dietlind Stolle. 2022. The Politics of White Identity and Settlers’ Indigenous Resentment in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Political Science/Revue canadienne de science politique* 55 (1): 59–83

## Week 10: Intergroup Attitudes

- Take an Implicit Association Test (IAT) on the Project Implicit Site ([link](#)).
- Jeffrey S. Denis. 2015. Contact Theory in a Small-Town Settler-Colonial Context: The Reproduction of Laissez-Faire Racism in Indigenous-White Canadian Relations. *American Sociological Review* 80, no. 1 (February): 218–242

- John F. Dovidio, Fabian M. H. Schellhaas, and Adam R. Pearson. 2018. The Role of Attitudes in Intergroup Relations. In *Handbook of Attitudes*, edited by Dolores Albarracín and Blair T. Johnson, vol. 2: Applications. Routledge

### Week 11: Settler Colonialism

- Chelsea Vowel. 2020. *Settling on a name: Names for non-Indigenous Canadians*, February
- Adam J. Barker, Toby Rollo, and Emma Battell Lowman. 2016. Settler colonialism and the consolidation of Canada in the twentieth century. In *The Routledge Handbook of the History of Settler Colonialism*, edited by Edward Cavanagh and Lorenzo Veracini. Routledge
- Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang. 2012. Decolonization is not a metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1 (1): 1–40

### Week 12: Historical Injustices and Reconciliation

- Katherine B. Starzyk, Craig W. Blatz, and Michael Ross. 2009. Acknowledging and redressing historical injustices. In *Social and psychological bases of ideology and system justification*, edited by John T. Jost, Aaron C. Kay, and Hulda Thorisdottir, 463–479. Oxford University Press
- The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. 2015. (Volume 6, Chapter 1).
- Eva Jewell and Ian Mosby. 2023. Calls to Action Accountability: A 2023 Status Update on Reconciliation. *Yellowhead Institute*, <https://yellowheadinstitute.org/trc/>



# RACE, ETHNICITY, INDIGENEITY AND POLITICS

## SAMPLE FINAL EXAM

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**Name:**

**Student ID:**

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**Instructions:** You have 1 hour and 50 minutes to complete this exam. Write your name and student ID at the top of this page. There are three sections worth 100 points in total:

1. Multiple Choice (20 points): Answer all questions
2. Short Answer (30 points): Choose 3 of 5 questions to answer
3. Essay (50 points): Choose 1 of 3 prompts to answer

Please only answer the required number of questions in each section; any subsequent answers will not count toward your grade. Please raise your hand if you have any questions during the exam. Good luck!

## 1 Multiple Choice (20 points)

Answer **all** questions in this section, noting the question number and your selected answer in your response book.

1. Which of the following best exemplifies the concept of intersectionality?
  - a. A woman faces gender discrimination in the workplace.
  - b. An Asian woman experiences both racial and gender discrimination in her daily life.
  - c. An immigrant faces xenophobia in a new country.
  - d. A wealthy individual avoids the consequences of breaking the law.
2. Which of the following is NOT a type of intergroup attitude?
  - a. Prejudice
  - b. Implicit bias
  - c. Stereotyping
  - d. Cultural assimilation
3. What is the concept of “descriptive representation” in political science?
  - a. The idea that elected officials should represent the policy preferences of their constituents.
  - b. The idea that elected officials should have similar demographic characteristics (e.g., race, gender) as the constituents they represent.
  - c. The theory that political representation should focus on economic interests rather than identity.
  - d. The belief that there should be a close correspondence between vote totals and the distribution of seats in a legislature.



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20. Which of the following documents did the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada recommend should form the basis for reconciliation?
- a. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights
  - b. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
  - c. The Royal Proclamation of 1763
  - d. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

## 2 Short Answer (30 points)

Select **three** of the following five questions and write a 2-3 paragraph answer in your response book. Indicate the question number you are answering before your responses.

1. What are some of the reasons that we might see differences in rates of political participation (e.g. voter turnout) between members of different racial and ethnic groups?
2. What are the core features of settler colonialism in Canada? How is settler colonialism different from extractive colonialism?
3. How can considering the intersection of multiple aspects of identity (such as race, gender, and disability) together lead to more inclusive and equitable outcomes compared to looking at each aspect separately? Provide one example to illustrate your point.
4. What do scholars mean when they say that White identity is often “invisible?” Give an example of a situation in which whiteness might be invisible.
5. Describe the differences between Social Identity Theory and Realistic Conflict Theory. What does each theory say about when negative out-group attitudes are likely to develop?

## 3 Essay (50 points)

Select **one** of the following three prompts and write a 4-5 page essay (double-spaced) in your response book. Indicate the prompt number you are answering before your response.

1. Imagine you are a researcher working for the Library of Parliament and you have been tasked with producing a short briefing note for parliamentarians on the representation of racial/ethnic groups that are underrepresented in the House of Commons. In your note, you should describe (a) the differences between descriptive, substantive and symbolic representation; (b) 2-3 reasons why some groups may be descriptively underrepresented; and (c) one potential solution you think could help address underrepresentation.
2. Imagine you are at the dinner table and a family member says to you, “I just don’t get what reconciliation means. What do Indigenous people want?” How might you explain this concept in terms that your family member would understand? In your

response, you should discuss (a) the extent to which there is agreement among Indigenous peoples and nations about reconciliation; (b) what some of the core features of reconciliation are, based on the recommendations of Indigenous leaders and institutions (e.g. the TRC) studied in class; and (c) what some of the main barriers are to reconciliation in Canada.

3. Imagine you work for a survey company that is preparing to field a large survey on attitudes toward race relations in Canada. Your boss has asked you to write a short memo with advice on potential pitfalls and best practices. In your response, you should discuss (a) what issues should be considered when asking about people's racial, ethnic and Indigenous identities in surveys; (b) what difficulties arise when asking people about their racial attitudes in surveys; and (c) what practical steps researchers can take to address the challenges in (b).