



# ABORIGINAL TRADITIONS

Sept 16



# Schedule

|         |                                                                 |                                                              |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sept 18 | “Aboriginal Myths”                                              | Textbook 18-24                                               |
| Sept 20 | “Aboriginal Rituals”                                            | Re-read Potlatch                                             |
| Sept 23 | Quiz<br><br>Colonialism and<br>Indigenous Religion<br>in Canada | TRC selections<br>(posted to<br>URCourses this<br>afternoon) |

# Schedule

- ~~“Discovering” of World Religions in Asia~~
- Start Confucianism Sept 25 with Dr. Ren
- Quiz Sept 23
- Will go over sample questions in class on Friday

# Contracts Due Oct 7 11:59pm

| Religion (e.g, Buddhism) | Name of the Site (e.g. Holy Rosary Cathedral) | Address (include street number) | Date and Time of Visit  |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Buddhism                 | Dhammanjali Meditation Center                 | 902 Rae Street                  | Friday Sept 15, 12:30pm |

| Student Full Name | Student Number | Theory of Ritual   |
|-------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Ian Brown         | 123456789      | Ritual and Power   |
| Gwen the Cat      | 987654321      | Ritual and Memory  |
| Juniper the Cat   | 123789456      | Ritual and Society |

Gwen and Juniper are  
excited to visit their field  
site!



# Indigenous Research Showcase

<https://www.uregina.ca/research/indigenous-research-day.html>

- Sept 23-28
- Blanket Ceremony
- Wednesday, September 25 from 1:00pm to 4:30pm  
in the Multi Purpose Room
- **Student Union - Multipurpose Room**

Dr. Ken Derry

“Indigenous  
Traditions”





# Serious Scholars of Religion





# “Indigenous Traditions”

- A recent “world religion”
- Formerly identified as “primitive”
- This is *wrong*
- Cover vast geographical scope
- Describes people not genetically related

# "Oral Religions"

- Means what it says
- Scholars treat oral stories less seriously than written stories
- Hence *Religions* have texts, *primitive religions* do not
- This is dumb
- Privileges a particular form of communication

# “Oral Religions?”

- Are oral religions primitive or “non-literate”?
- NO!
- First, writing does not mean a culture is more “advanced
- Second, many indigenous groups have had writing for a long time
- Third, the vast majority of indigenous traditions are fully literate

# Indigenous Religion

- Apr. 370 million indigenous people world wide
- 15-20% of whom practice some form of ancestral tradition
- Majority live in Africa and Asia
- Fewer than 10% in South and Central America
- Apr. 2% in North America and Oceania



# Indigenous religions as “world religion”

- Thousands of traditions from every continent classified “indigenous religions”
- No genetic relationship between Maori in Polynesian and Xhosa in South Africa
- There are patterns, but they are our patterns

# Defining “Indigenous”

- Very difficult
- Describes tremendously varied communities
- EG. New Guinea and surrounding islands contain more ethnic diversity than anywhere else on earth
- 1/4 of the world's cultures and languages
- How can we simply call them all “indigenous”?

# Defining "Indigenous Religions"

- Broad commonalities
- Central importance of kinship and location
- Possible definition for "Indigenous community":
- "One defined both by its members' *genealogical* relations to one another and by its connection to a particular *place*." (Derry, 316)

# Indigenous Religions Commonalities

- Orality
- Connection to space
- Emphasis on community
- Time as rhythmic
- Greater emphasis on life than death and afterlife
- Significance of behaviour over belief
- Authority of elders
- Sacred as ongoing process rather than static revelation



# Indigenous Religions: Authorities

- Many have reverence for authority figures such as:
- Elders
- Ritual specialists
- Diviners
- Healers

# Indigenous Deities

- Vary widely
- Common thread: personal spiritual forces have active and ongoing influence on the world
- Teachings often bound to specific places where important spiritual forces have manifested themselves
- Tend to be more concerned with goings on during life as opposed to after death
- Greater emphasis on behaviours and beliefs that benefit or harm the community

# “Aboriginal Traditions” (our chapter)

- Canadian Indigenous peoples
- First Nations
- Inuit
- Metis
- Designations: nation, band, tribe
- “Indian”