WS 301-4 Special Topics in Women’s Studies: Indigenous Women

Instructor: Maxine Hayman Matilpi
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Phone/Email:

This course will examine a broad range of themes and issues relating to the historical and contemporary experience of Indigenous women in “Canada.” With a focus on the effects of colonization and resistance, topics to be explored will be Indigenous women and:

- the problems of language and history;
- the writing of Indigenous women's history;
- life in pre-contact societies;
- the European invasion of the “Americas”;
- grandmothers and stories;
- assimilation and residential schools;
- the process of decolonization;
- leadership, power, and status.

Course material will be presented through short lectures, film, poetry, guest speakers, and discussions.

Required Readings:
- Anderson, Kim A Recognition of Being: Reconstructing Native Womanhood
- Sterling, Shirley My Name is Seepeetza
- Campbell, Maria Half-breed
- Custom Courseware

Marking Scheme:
- Attendance and Participation: 10%
- Letter: 5% each student will prepare a one-page letter to the editor of a newspaper, an MLA or an MP. This assignment is ungraded.
- Mid-term Exam: 30%. Covers course content including lectures, films, guest speakers, class discussions, and readings.
- Discussion Group Facilitation and Report: 25% Students will be randomly assigned to groups of 5 which will meet 5 times, giving each student an opportunity to facilitate a discussion. Evaluation of this assignment is based upon the relevance of discussion questions in relation to the readings and topics, the depth of analysis, and the ability to learn from constructive feedback.
- Critical Reflection Journal: 30% Each student will write one journal entry per week. You will be evaluated on the depth of your engagement with the course material.

Maxine Matilpi, a citizen of the Kwakiutl Nation (Fort Rupert, B.C.), has worked as a lawyer for First Nations in BC and as Chief Negotiator for the Kwakiutl Nation. She is currently an LL.M. candidate at the University of Victoria.

Prerequisites: 6 credit hours in Women's Studies including WS 101 and/or WS 102 or WS 100.

The Department of Women's Studies encourages clarity of thought and expression and good writing. Students will be evaluated on these skills in all courses given by the Department.