In several stories, both written and oral, contemporary and historical, set at the complex meeting-points of river, sea, and land at this delta we now call Vancouver, there is a striking invocation of “lost islands.” “The Lost Island” is the title of one of Mohawk writer E Pauline Johnson’s stories published in the 1911 collection, *Legends of Vancouver*, based on a series of stories told to her by Squamish storytellers Chief Joe Capilano (Sahpluk) and his wife, Mary Agnes (Lixwelut). 100 years later, Black Canadian writer Wayde Compton wrote a story with the same title. Stó:lō writer Lee Maracle in “Goodbye, Snaq,” recounts the loss of a sandbar, Snaq, rich with marine and plant life, and the subsequent manufacturing of Granville Island for commerce, industry, and later tourism. Still more “lost islands” of the Fraser River delta are remembered by Elder Larry Grant of the Musqueam Nation in the documentary film, *c’asnaʔam: the city before the city* (2017), directed by Kainai filmmaker Elle-Máijá Tailfeathers in collaboration with the Musqueam First Nation. This course will examine a variety of texts and films set at the complex meeting-points of river, sea, and land at this delta we now call Vancouver. What does it mean to live and work on unceded, ancestral Coast Salish Territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish) peoples, and how can we meaningfully acknowledge these responsibilities through our practices of research, writing, and reading? Acknowledging the land we stand on as the basis of how we build understanding, as well as an acknowledgement of one’s positionality, are key tenements of Indigenous studies.

This course will explore ideas of collaboration as a research methodology, informed by Indigenous research protocols, for how to retrieve these stories of “lost islands” while remaining critical about the fact that these islands are not lost, but reflecting settler-colonial stealings of land, cultural authority, languages, bodies, and authorship. These stories about lost islands, written 100 years apart yet told over a much longer period of time, invoking thousands of years of history, told from radically different perspectives, pose to the reader some shared questions: who claims land, by what force or authority, and by whose history? Who claims or reclaims the stories about these lost or stolen lands? What are the potential opportunities and pitfalls of using collaborative methods in retrieving, editing, and republishing these stories? Is there another way of imagining people’s relationship to land, of creating new decolonial relations of autonomy and affiliation, that displace the status quo of the settler-colonial nation and private property? The challenge is to build comparative methods that grapple with intersectional histories of resistance, and that capture the complexities of urban, unceded, Coast Salish ancestral territories like those in Vancouver. How to bring these stories ‘home’, making visible the connections to existing communities, and what Indigenous-led process of collaboration will be effective in this work?