

## **TDHT 120/ ETHN163G: Indigenous Theatre and Performance (REMOTE)**

**Instructor:** Julie Burelle (she/her). **Email.** Via Canvas inbox

**Office hours (on Zoom):** Wednesday 2-4pm

**TA :** Desmond Hassing (he/him) **Email.** Via Canvas inbox

**Asynchronous Lecture (on Canvas):** posted on Friday (for the following week)

**Synchronous Lecture/Section (on Zoom):** Tuesday and Thursday 11am-12:20

**All Zoom links on Canvas**

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### **Land Acknowledgment**

While we await an official land acknowledgement agreed upon by Kumeyaay elders, the [Inter-Tribal Center](#) and other campus participants, we offer these thoughts:

*For millennia, the Kumeyaay people have been a part of this land. This land has nourished, healed, protected and embraced them for many generations in a relationship of balance and harmony. As members of the UC San Diego community, we acknowledge this legacy. We promote this balance and harmony. We find inspiration from this land; the land of the Kumeyaay.*

We thank Michael Miskwish, a Kumeyaay historian and professor of our neighboring university SDSU, for these words. In saying these words, it is also important to reflect on what a land acknowledgment is. At its best, a land acknowledgment is a relational and situated practice. An acknowledgment should be more than words and should be a step towards creating better, more meaningful relations with the land and its original inhabitants (human and non-human). So, it is important that we name whose territory we are on (we are on unceded Kumeyaay territory at UCSD) and that this naming be accompanied by a reflection on the relation we hold to this land. The word uncended is important since Indigenous people have not willingly given the land. We cannot tiptoe around this historical truth or the role we play in it.

As storytellers we can play a role with our bodies and our words in holding space for this historical truth and in forging new stories on this land. We hope that this land acknowledgment sends us on that journey in a good way.

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### **Anti-Racism Statement**

UCSD's Department of Theatre and Dance believes that theatre and dance are transformational art forms that have the power and promise to change individuals and society. Transformation can only manifest when we are challenged as collaborators, liberated as creators, and respected as people. From writing to casting to production to performances, we acknowledge stories are told through the bodies, words, deeds, and spirits of the Storytellers

in the room, and we will work to create an environment where artists and scholars who are Black, Indigenous, Asian Diasporic, Latina/o/X, Chicana/o/X, Middle Eastern, African Diasporic, Trans, Queer, Neuro-Diverse, and People with Disabilities can flourish. White Supremacy, and the xenophobia, religious bigotry, and cisheteropatriarchy that sustain it, will not be tolerated in our classrooms, or in our artistic and scholarly work. We recognize that these have long been sites for reproducing these power dynamics and we all strive to remake them with a vision toward the future we all deserve.

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### **Preferred pronouns**

If you feel comfortable doing so, please let us know what your preferred pronouns are.

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### **Course Description**

This course introduces students to contemporary Indigenous theatre and performance (written and produced and performed in what is now known as Canada and the United States, and to the theoretical frames provided by Indigenous scholars and artists to engage with these works. While in no way exhaustive, this broad survey includes theatre, dance, film, and music and begins in the 1960's and ends with current productions.

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### **Course Learning Outcomes**

Upon completion of this course, students will:

1. Have a better understanding of the rich and dynamic history of Indigenous theatre and performance in North America. Students will be able to identify key elements of Indigenous dramaturgy.
  2. Have acquired more critical tools to engage with Indigenous performances and discuss their political and artistic interventions in conversation with Indigenous theories and histories.
  3. Be better prepared to engage as a collaborator(s) in diverse contexts in ways that are respectful, informed, and transformational.
  4. Understand the importance of self-education when it comes to ongoing histories of colonialism and their intergenerational effects so that Indigenous (and other marginalized) colleagues are not tasked with that burden.
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### **Class format**

**Asynchronous portion on Canvas:**

- I will post a lecture on Canvas each **Friday** for the following week's materials (so lecture posted on Friday of week 1 is for week 2's materials).

### **Synchronous portion on Zoom:**

- **Tuesday:** Lecture, discussion and group presentations about the plays and materials. Each week, a group of students will be in charge of leading discussion, bringing questions to the table and selecting excerpts on which they would like the class to focus.
- **Thursday:** Variable format. Some weeks, we will split into two groups to work on final assignment (see details below). When a guest is visiting us on Zoom, we will stay as one group.

*This class is highly participatory and depends on each participant's open and generous contributions. I assign a fair amount of reading and you must keep up with it.*

**Note about final assignment:** Our final project consists in a public staged reading of a new play by Beth Piatote (Nez Perce) on Zoom as part of a two nights event featuring conversations with Indigenous artists and scholars. Professor Piatote will come to meet with us early in the quarter and will return at the end of quarter. The staged reading will be presented in lieu of our final exam. Students can participate in a number of ways by acting, co-directing, acting as dramaturg, helping out technically, creating promotion materials, etc. Not everyone needs to act.

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### **Evaluation**

- Class participation (each week as well as when you lead discussion): 20%
- 5 response papers: 20% (Half a page, due by Friday, 5pm of that week. You are in charge of keeping track of how many you have handed in). Worth 5pts each, drop your lowest grade.
- [Paper](#) (5-7 pages, double-spaced, 12pt font): 30%
- Participation in final project (staged reading + 1 page reflection paper): 30%

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### **Communicating with us**

We strive to create an open and supportive environment and our virtual doors are open for feedback and individual conversation. Reach us during office hours or via email (through Canvas). We are all navigating complex and unpredictable circumstances. For some of us, this means crowded living arrangements and/or blurred boundaries between school and home life. Others may find themselves isolated in new and challenging ways. We are facing new and compounded stressors. And, in this moment of social reckoning, I understand that school work can feel secondary or disconnected from the world at times. I want to suggest that this class can be a space to think deeply, critically, and creatively about the stories we tell (or keep silent) about the world, our communities, etc.

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### Content Warning

While this class emphasizes the tremendous resilience, immense creativity and healing practices of Indigenous artists and communities, it nevertheless includes complex material depicting individuals and communities dealing with difficult and traumatic experiences. This includes settler colonial, racial, sexual and gendered violence, the history of boarding schools and their attempt at cultural genocide, intergenerational trauma and its multiple manifestations, among other topics. Please exercise self-care.

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**Most texts\* will be available on Canvas and/or through e-reserve (via Canvas). To access e-reserve from an off-campus location, you need to have a working VPN. See here for more information: <https://library.ucsd.edu/computing-and-technology/connect-from-off-campus/Links to an external site.>**

\* the only exceptions are Kim Senklip Harvey's play *Kamloopa* for week 6 and Kevin Loring's play *Thanks for Giving* for week 8. Please purchase your own copies through Amazon or Talon Books.

### Schedule

#### **Week 1: Gathering, Naming the Elders, Setting the Stage**

- **Tuesday March 30:** Class presentation, setting the stage, etc.
- **Thursday April 1:** For today, read excerpts of Lindsay Lachance's text (pages 1-30), read Spiderwoman Theatre's *Reverbeberation* (PDF) and Watch the production: <http://hidvl.nyu.edu/video/000086242.html> (Links to an external site.)
- **Friday April 2:** Asynchronous lecture posted on Canvas Watch at your own pace for next week.

#### **Week 2: Antikoni and Lindsay Lachance's Indigenous Dramaturgy**

- **Tuesday April 6:** For today, read Beth Piatote's *Antikoni* (PDF provided) and Lachance (pages 35-48).
- **Thursday April 8:** Visit by Beth Piatote
- **Friday April 9:** Asynchronous lecture posted on Canvas Watch at your own pace for next week.

#### **Week 3: Exposing the Poison: Humor and Tragedy**

- **Tuesday April 13:** Read Tomson Highway's *The Rez Sisters* and Drew Hayden Taylor *The Baby Blues*, read excerpts from Yvette Nolan's *Medicine Shows* (PDF provided).
- **Thursday April 15:** Table work on *Antikoni*
- **Friday April 16:** Asynchronous lecture posted on Canvas Watch at your own pace for next week.

#### Week 4: Subverting the Canon

- **Tuesday April 20:** Visit by Randy Reinholz. Read Daniel David Moses' *Almighty Voice and his Wife* and Randy Reinholz's *Off the Rails*.
- **Thursday April 22:** Discussion and continuation of table work on Antikoni.
- **Friday April 23:** Asynchronous lecture posted on Canvas Watch at your own pace for next week.

#### Week 5: Sovereign Acts

- **Tuesday April 27:** For today, read Mary Kathryn Nagle's *Sovereignty* and explore the various websites listed on Canvas. <http://www.thereddressproject.org/> (Links to an external site.) and <http://walkingwithoursisters.ca/> (Links to an external site.)
- **Thursday April 29: Work on Antikoni**
- **Friday April 30:** Asynchronous lecture posted on Canvas Watch at your own pace for next week.

#### Week 6: Theatre as Ceremony + Paper is due (Friday at 5pm)

- **Tuesday May 4:** For today, read *Kamloopa* by Kim Senklip Harvey (purchase your own copy) and *The Unplugging* by Yvette Nolan
- **Thursday May 6: Visit by Kim Senklip Harvey**
- **Friday May 7:** Asynchronous lecture posted on Canvas Watch at your own pace for next week.

#### Week 7: Friendship, relationality, coming of age

- **Tuesday May 11:** Watch the movie *Kuessipan* and read Tara Beagan's *In Spirit*
- **Thursday May 13: Work on Antikoni**
- **Friday May 14:** Asynchronous lecture posted on Canvas Watch at your own pace for next week.

#### Week 8: Two Spirit Acts

- **Tuesday May 18:** Read Waawaate Fobister's *Agokwe* and *Thanks for Giving* by Kevin Loring. Explore Kent Monkman's website. <http://kentmonkman.com/main.php> (Links to an external site.)
- **Thursday May 20: Work on Antikoni**
- **Friday May 21:** Asynchronous lecture posted on Canvas Watch at your own pace for next week.

#### Week 9: Aural Interventions

- **Tuesday May 25:** Listen to Jeremy Dutcher's music, read Dylan Robinson's chapter, and watch Samian's *Les Nomades*, and A Tribe Called Red's *Sopranos Azteca*. (All links will be posted on Canvas)
- **Thursday May 27: Final work on Antikoni**

- **Friday May 28:** Asynchronous lecture posted on Canvas Watch at your own pace for next week.

#### **Week 10: Moving Indigeneity: Dance**

- **Tuesday June 1:** Visit from Sam Mitchell and Rosy Simas.
- **Thursday June 3:** NO Class Attend Staged Reading
- **Friday June 4:** No Class, attend Second evening.

**Exam Week: 1 page reflection paper due on June 8<sup>th</sup> by 1:30pm via Canvas.**

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#### **The Fine Print:**

- **Canvas:** This course uses Canvas for readings, posting grades, posting class notifications, etc. If you are registered for the course, you have access to the website. Please go to [ted.ucsd.edu](https://ted.ucsd.edu) to login. If you have problems follow the login instructions on the right. For further questions contact the Acs helpdesk immediately: 858.534.3227 or [acs-help@ucsd.edu](mailto:acs-help@ucsd.edu)
- **Plagiarism Policy:** Plagiarism is grounds for failure in this class and expulsion from the university. Please make sure that your work is original or ask questions if you are unsure of proper citation practices. Consult this website before submitting your paper: <https://students.ucsd.edu/academics/academic-integrity/plagiarism.html> Links to an external site. and note that “not knowing about plagiarism” is not a valid excuse.