

TDHT 120/ ETHN163G: Indigenous Theatre and Performance

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

Office hours GH 305: Wednesday 9:30-10:50

TA : Cambria Herrera (she/they) **Email.** Via Canvas inbox

Lectures: M-W-F 1-1:50 SOLIS110

Sections: Friday 2-2:50 GH247 or 3-3:50 GH247

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 unceded 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.

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, or prejudice based on class or caste, 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.

Preferred pronouns

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

Course Description

This course introduces students to contemporary Indigenous theatre and performance (writ large) 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.

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.

Class format

Lectures

- 1 lecture M-W-F from 1 to 1:50pm.

Sections:

- Cambria Herrera leads 2 sections on Fridays. Be ready to move, be on your feet and work on a collaborative artistic final project.

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). 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.

Evaluation

- Class attendance and participation: 20%
- Submitting 10 weekly question by Friday 9am: 20%
- Paper (5 pages, double-spaced, 12pt font): 30%
- Participation in final project* + 2 page reflection paper: 30%

*Staged reading + discussion with playwright and invited guests will take place in the Wagner Theatre in Galbraith Hall, in front of an audience, on June 15th between 11:30 and 2:30.

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).

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.

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/>

* the only exceptions is Emilie Monnet's *Okinum* for week 5 which you can buy as an E-book. Please purchase your own copy.

Schedule

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

Lectures:

- Monday, April 3: Class presentation, setting the stage, etc.
- Wednesday April 5: WE MEET IN THE WAGNER THEATRE TODAY to meet dancers from Atamira Dance Company who will perform at ArtPower <https://artpower.ucsd.edu/event/atamira-dance-company/>.

- Friday April 7: For today, read excerpts of Lindsay Lachance's *The Embodied Politics of Relational Indigenous Dramaturgies* (pages 1-30) and Leanne Betasamosake Simpson's "Theorizing Resurgence from within Nishnaabeg Thought" from *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back* (2011)(pages 31-47). Weekly Question and #FINAID survey due.

Sections:

- April 7: Introductions, getting to know each other, moving on our feet.

Week 2: Spiderwoman and her daughters

Lectures:

- Monday April 10: Read Spiderwoman Theatre's *Reverberation* (PDF) and Watch the production: <http://hidvl.nyu.edu/video/000086242.html> Links to an external site.
- Wednesday April 12: Read Monique Mojica's *Chocolate Woman Dreams the Milky Way*
- Friday April 14: Conversation. Weekly question due at 9am.

Sections:

- April 14 : Moving on land, creating community.

Week 3: *Antikoni* and Aesthetic Diplomacy

Lectures:

- Monday April 17: For today, read Beth Piatote's *Antikoni* (PDF provided)
- Wednesday April 19: For today, read Lindsay Lachance's *The Embodied Politics of Relational Indigenous Dramaturgies* (pages 35-48).
- Friday April 21: Read Propublica's inquiry on NAGPRA: <https://www.propublica.org/article/repatriation-nagpra-museums-human-remains> Links to an external site.. Weekly question due at 9am.

Sections:

- April 21: Visit on Zoom by Beth Piatote. BOTH SECTIONS WILL TAKE PLACE at 2pm. Discussion will be recorded if you cannot make it to the earlier section.

Week 4: Exposing the Poison: Humor and Tragedy

Lectures:

Monday April 24: For today, read Tomson Highway's *The Rez Sisters*

Wednesday April 26: For today, watch *Reservation Dogs*, episodes 1-2 on Hulu, and read Yvette Nolan's *Medicine Shows* (Excerpts)

Friday April 28: Conversation. Weekly question due at 9am.

Sections:

- April 28: Table work on *Antikoni*, Watch [Rutherford Falls | The Truth Behind Tribal Capitalism](#) Links to an external site.

Week 5: Sovereign Acts

Lectures:

- Monday May 1: For today, read Mary Kathryn Nagle's *Sovereignty*
- Wednesday May 3: For today, read Emilie Monnet's *Okinum*
- Friday May 5: Conversation. Weekly question due at 9am.

Sections:

- May 5: Work on *Antikoni*

Week 6: Reclaiming Colonial Forms + Paper is due (Friday at 5pm)

Lectures:

- Monday May 8: For today, read *Almighty Voice and his Wife*
- Wednesday May 10: For today, read *The Wild West Show of Gabriel Dumont*
- Friday May 12: Conversation. Weekly question due at 9am.

Sections:

- May 12: Work on *Antikoni*

Week 7: Friendship, relationality, coming of age

Lectures:

- Monday May 15: Watch the movie *Kuessipan* by Myriam Verreault and Naomi Fontaine
- Wednesday May 17: For today, read *Kamloopa* by Kim Senklip Harvey
- Friday May 19: Conversation. Weekly question due at 9am.

Sections:

- May 19: Work on *Antikoni*

Week 8: Two Spirit Acts

Lectures:

- Monday May 22: Read Waawaate Fobister's *Agokwe*. Explore Kent Monkman's website. <http://kentmonkman.com/main.php>Links to an external site.
- Wednesday May 24: *Thanks for Giving* by Kevin Loring.
- Friday May 26: Conversation. Weekly question due at 9am. ON ZOOM

Sections:

- May 26: Work on *Antikoni*

Week 9: Indigenous Futurity, Science Fiction

Lectures:

- Monday May 29: NO class
- Wednesday May 31: Read Yvette Nolan's *The Unplugging*. ON ZOOM
- Friday June 2: Guest Lecture by Desmond Hassing. Conversation. Weekly question due at 9am.

Sections:

- June 2: Work on Antikoni

Week 10: Aural Interventions: Repatriation of songs

Lectures:

- Monday June 5: Listen to Jeremy Dutcher's music, read Dylan Robinson's chapter (pages 1-25 if you are non-Indigenous, pages 25-36 are intended for Indigenous readers),
- Wednesday June 7: Listening to Tanya Tagaq
- Friday June 9: Conversation. Weekly question due at 9am.

Sections:

- June 9: Work on *Antikoni*

Exam Week: Staged Reading, June 15th, 11:30 to 2:30 in the Wagner Theatre in Galbraith Hall + 2 page reflection paper due on June 15th by 5pm via Canvas.

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 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
- **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> and note that "not knowing about plagiarism" is not a valid excuse.