North American Indigenous Music Seminar (57-826)

Class Meetings: Mondays and Wednesdays, 10:30am-11:50am
Room M157, CFA

Instructor: Dr. Alexa Woloshyn
(Call me Dr. Woloshyn or Prof. Woloshyn)

Office: Room 160B, CFA
Office Hours: Mondays/Wednesdays 3-5pm, or by appointment
Telephone: 412-268-5451
Email: awoloshy@andrew.cmu.edu

Course Description:
This course examines diverse Indigenous musical practices in North America, including powwow, round dance, intertribal flute music, and Inuit vocal games. We highlight the heterogeneity of Indigenous musical cultures both within specific practices and through the frequent engagement with non-Indigenous musical genres, such as the symphony, ballet, string quartet, and dubstep. This course pursues the understanding of diverse Indigenous musical practices through the lens of historical, socio-cultural Indigenous issues, such as cultural genocide and residential schools, sovereignty, identity, and decolonization.

North American Indigenous Music Seminar challenges us as musicians and global citizens to engage with issues and musical practices not typically addressed in music studies. The diverse musical practices of Indigenous peoples in North America are an important cultural legacy, and this course equips us to examine a wide range of musical practices and issues. The course also requires us to build on critical listening and music analysis skills through application to both new (e.g., powwow) and familiar genres (e.g., symphony). This course will reinforce how music reflects and responds to the socio-cultural and political issues of its time and will encourage us to think outside of their own experiences.

Learning Outcomes -
By the end of this course, students should be able to demonstrate the following competencies:
• Compare and contrast the historical and socio-cultural contexts for various communities of Indigenous peoples in North America
• Aurally identify and contextualize diverse Indigenous musical practices
• Execute close readings of musical scores to analyze musical collaborations between non-Indigenous and Indigenous musical genres
• Apply the work of critical Indigenous scholars to Indigenous musical practices
• Implement course readings and discussions into the real world to support the work of Indigenous scholars, artists, and communities

Student accommodations: CMU has a policy of providing reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities, including physical requirements and medical needs. Please consult the Disability Resources policies and procedures online. Keep in mind that according to Disability Resources at CMU, “Students requesting accommodations or services due to a disability must contact the Office of Disability Resources.” If you believe you require
an accommodation, please talk to me early in the semester and make an appointment with Disability Resources (access@andrew.cmu.edu).

**Student wellness:** As a student, you may experience a range of challenges that can interfere with learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, substance use, feeling down, difficulty concentrating, and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may diminish your academic performance and/or reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. CMU services are available, and treatment does work. You can learn more about confidential mental health services available on campus at: [http://www.cmu.edu/counseling/](http://www.cmu.edu/counseling/). Support is always available (24/7) from Counseling and Psychological Services: 412-268-2922.

**Religious holidays:** Carnegie Mellon University is a diverse community, with students, staff and faculty of many spiritual and faith traditions. Given this diversity, it is impossible to avoid conflicts with every religious observance. Instead, students may bring scheduling conflicts to my attention so that a reasonable accommodation may be made.

**Course Materials:**
*Required* - Readings will be posted on Canvas or distributed in class.


*Reading and Listening:* You are responsible for completing the assigned readings in their *entirety*. You should complete any assigned reading and listening *before* class. For advice and help on successful academic skills (e.g., taking notes, time management), make an appointment with your department advisor and/or visit Academic Development (Cyert Hall Suite B5).

You are responsible for keeping informed of announcements, updates, and details about assignments and in-class activities on Canvas.

**Evaluation:**
- **Response Papers (4 x 20 points)**: 80 points (due by 9pm on Feb 4, Feb 28, Apr 8, Apr 24)
- **Creative Final Project**
  - Proposal (5 points): 80 points (due Mar 5)
  - Presentation (15 points): (Apr 30 or May 2)
  - Final (60 points): (final version due by 9am on May 7)
- **Preparation and Participation** 40 points

Total = 200 points

~ Summaries of assignments below ~

**CMU Grading Scale:**
- A— 180+; excellent
- B— 160-179; good
- C— 140-159; satisfactory
- D— 120-139; passing
- F— 0-119; failure
Course Policies:
- Email me with any questions you may have about assignments and/or course material. During weekdays, I will try to answer messages within 24 hours of receipt; email may not be answered on weekends. Students are required to use their official student email account for all email correspondence with me. Please include a descriptive subject line (e.g., “Clarifying definition of katajjaq”). Before sending me an email, check to see if the answer is available in the syllabus, on Canvas, or in your notes.

*You are responsible for regularly checking your university email. Important announcements and updates will be sent to your CMU address.*

- In the case of a documented situation (medical or family emergencies, university-related responsibilities, and so on), you may be excused from mandatory attendance. In addition, if required, you may be eligible for an extension or rescheduled deadline. If you have questions about the attendance and/or assignment policies, please raise them early in the semester. Do not assume your absence or late submission will be accepted. Always confirm with me. You are responsible for any material you miss. If you have a legitimately excused absence, please talk to me about it at least one week in advance of your absence (if it’s scheduled); this will allow us sufficient time to make arrangements for you to make up missed work. You can stop by my office hours to discuss the situation or email to arrange a different face-to-face meeting time.

You are permitted two unexcused absences: that is, an absence for which you can provide no documentation and/or a situation that does not warrant an excused absence. Each subsequent unexcused absence will subtract 2 points from the total course points you earn. Every two late arrivals equals one absence. If you miss an in-class assessment due to an unexcused absence, you will earn a zero: no make-up will be offered.

All assignments are due at the start of class on their respective due dates, unless otherwise stated. Late assignments will not be accepted and will result in a zero.

- Students may use laptops to take notes and access assigned readings. However, you are encouraged to take notes by hand. And minimize distractions on your laptop, both for your own intellectual focus and for students who are sitting near you.

- Assignments will be submitted on Canvas; no hard or email copies accepted. Normally, students will be required to submit their course assignments to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their assignments to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism.

- Academic Integrity: Academic credit awarded to an individual should represent the work of that individual. Therefore, students at Carnegie Mellon are expected to produce their own original academic work. Ignorance is not a defense, so all students should also familiarize themselves with the University’s policies on cheating and plagiarism. Such charges are subject to disciplinary action. Numerous online resources are available to advise you in using sources responsibly and avoiding plagiarism. A place to start: http://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize/
## Course Schedule: (flexible and subject to change)

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading &amp; Listening</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 17</td>
<td>Introduction I. Cultural Genocide: a history of settler colonialism in Turtle Island</td>
<td>No assigned reading/listening.</td>
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<td>• Going Home Star (ballet) - Christos Hatzis and Joseph Boyden</td>
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<td>• Secret Path - Gord Downie and Jeff Lemire</td>
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<td>• Drum Groups: Black Bear, Black Lodge Singers, Northern Voice, Northern Cree, Chippewa Travellers</td>
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<td>Feb 5/7</td>
<td>II. Nation to Nation: Intertribal Flute Music</td>
<td><strong>Response Paper 1 due by 9pm Feb 4</strong></td>
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<td>• Love Songs of the Lakota - Kevin Locke</td>
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<td>• Beneath the Raven Moon and Dance with the Wind - Mary Youngblood (“Play with Me”; “Dance with the Wind”; “Beneath the Raven Moon”; “Within My Heart”)</td>
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<td>• Two World Concerto - R. Carlos Nakai and James DeMars</td>
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<td>• various Idle No More flash mob round dances</td>
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<td>• A Tribe Called Red (ATCR)</td>
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<td>• Giiwedin (opera) - Spy Dénommé-Welch and Catherine Magowan</td>
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<td>• Tundra Songs - Derek Charke, with Tagaq and Kronos Quartet</td>
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<td>• Take the Dog Sled - Alexina Louie</td>
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<td>• Inuit Games for orchestra - Pat Carrabré</td>
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<td>Feb 28</td>
<td>No Class</td>
<td><strong>Response Paper 2 due by 9pm</strong></td>
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<td>Mar 5</td>
<td>III. Sovereignty and Cultural Self-Determination: Issues of representation</td>
<td><strong>Creative Project Proposal due</strong></td>
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<td><em>Reel Injun</em> (film)</td>
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Evaluation Summaries (detailed instructions are on Canvas):
1) Response Papers - worth 20 points each (4 x 20 = 80 points). Students will submit brief (2-3 pages) response papers to each unit. Each response should be based on critical reading and thoughtful reflection, and should integrate the reading, listening, and class discussions of the unit to demonstrate appropriate comprehension of the issues. No additional research is required.

   Deadlines:
   I. Cultural Genocide - by 9pm on Feb 4
   II. Nation to Nation - by 9pm on Feb 28
   III. Sovereignty and Cultural Self-Determination - by 9pm on April 8
   IV. Identity and Decolonization: Indigenous Now - by 9pm on April 24

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   • “Sivunittini” - Tagaq and Kronos Quartet
   • Orchestral Powwow - Cris Derksen
   • Tracing Mississippi and Lowak Shoppala' - Jerod Impichchaachaaha' Tate |
| Mar 26/28  | III. Sovereignty and Cultural Self-Determination: the Inuit context and traditions | Inuit drum-dance songs and vocal games  
   Nanook of the North (film) |
   • Tanya Tagaq, Nelson Tagonna, The Jerry Cans, Quantum Tangle  
   Angry Inuk (film) |
| April 9/11 | IV. Identity and Decolonization: Indigenous Now - Language Reclamation | Response Paper 3 due by 9pm on April 8
   • Jeremy Dutcher, Los Nativos, Tolteka, Tall Paul |
   • Buffy Sainte-Marie, Eekwol, Northern Voice, ATCR, Kinnie Starr |
| Apr 23     | IV. Identity and Decolonization: Indigenous Now | • We Are the Halluci Nation - A Tribe Called Red |
| Apr 25     |                                                            | Response Paper 4 due by 9pm on April 24                                              |
| Apr 30/    |                                                            | Presentations                                                                            |
| May 2/7    |                                                            | Final Project due by 9am on May 7 (no final exam)                                        |
2) **Creative Final Project** - worth 80 points. The final project is due by 9am on May 7. Students will select one Indigenous musician/composer/band or an Indigenous musical practice (not directly addressed in our course reading, listening, and discussion). Students will produce a creative assignment that engages with the chosen topic. Possibilities include a photo or video essay of the local powwow or other Indigenous musical event; radio program or podcast; multimedia performance; newly composed work; special event; documentary; installation; graphic novel or other fiction writing project. The idea needs to be approved by me to make sure it is both realistic and appropriate for the course; proposals are due on March 5.

Students will give a 10-minute presentation on either April 30 or May 2.

3) **Preparation and Participation** - worth 40 points. Regular attendance and active participation in class will be essential to our collective study of the course materials. You will be assessed on the following:

1) Completing assigned reading and listening in advance of class. Please note that if a reading is listed under Jan 22/24, then it should be completed *before* class on Jan 22. Students may be asked to share responses to any assigned reading prompts and/or submit them at the end of class.
2) Paying attention and participating in class discussions. This participation includes initiating responses and questions, without relying exclusively on a direct request from the instructor. Responses to other students’ comments demonstrate attentive listening.
3) Submitting quality responses to in-class prompts; these responses use appropriate terminology and offer the kinds of specifics required in the prompt.
4) Incorporating content from the four unit responses in small- and large-group discussions.
5) Contributing to a respectful and productive learning environment. This includes not only appropriate language and tone but also attentiveness and focused investment in our time together (this means students are not on their phones, sleeping, reading a book, etc.).

Excellent = 35-40
Good = 30-34
Fair = 25-29
Poor = 20-24
Unacceptable = 0-19

**Further Reading** -


