

The University of British Columbia
Department of Central, Eastern, and Northern European Studies

CENS 203 (3): Indigenous Arctic Art and Activism

Acknowledgement

UBC's Point Grey Campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, occupied, and unceded territory of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam) people. I acknowledge the land rights of the Musqueam people, who for millennia have passed their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next on this site. In this course, we pay respect to the Musqueam people by centering the Indigenous perspectives from which the course content emerges.

Course Information

Course Title	Course Code Number	Credit Value
Indigenous Arctic Art and Activism	CENS 203 (meets with NORD 341)	3 Credits

Meeting Times and Place			
CENS 203/101	Tuesday/Thursday	9:30 – 11:00	Buchanan D217

Course Instructor	Contact Details	Office	Office Hours
Tim Frandy	tim.frandy@ubc.ca	Buchanan Tower 901	T/R 11:00 – 12:00, or by appointment

Calendar Description

This course examines contemporary political and social conflicts in the arctic and circumpolar north, looking specifically at the ways Indigenous people have used art, performance, and activism as a tool for resistance and decolonization.

Prerequisites and Co-requisites

No prerequisites or co-requisites

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

LO1: Demonstrate a familiarity with the diverse Indigenous cultures of the Arctic and circumpolar region, and the ways it connects to Indigenous peoples in British Columbia.

LO2: Demonstrate a sound knowledge of the environmental, social, and political challenges that Indigenous people face in the circumpolar regions, and the ways Indigenous people have responded to them and resisted them through artistic expression.

LO3: Analyze the way the colonization reinvents itself in different social and political moments, and the ways contemporary Indigenous artists draw upon traditional culture and multicultural influences to create complex political and artistic visions.

LO4: Analyze the ways art operates as both a tool and a discourse within social movements.

LO5: Craft effective and nuanced analysis and interpretation of Indigenous art from different critical perspectives, using both scholarly and primary source materials.

Course Overview

CENS 203 looks at Indigenous political art in the circumpolar region, focusing largely on the arts from Sápmi, Inuit Nunangat, and Siberia. The course looks at the ways both traditional and contemporary arts serve as a political and social tool: to promote awareness, to cultivate community, to shape discourse, and to leverage social power. The course is thematically arranged, looking at the shared experiences Indigenous peoples have with colonization, resistance, and decolonization today.

Course Format

CENS 203 is a lecture/discussion course, focused on close readings of Indigenous literature, film, music, and digital media, with additional contextual information supplemented through lectures. Course materials (all in English) will be presented in class and online. In-class activities will include discussion, lectures, and student presentations.

Learning Materials

Two books are required for purchase and are available for purchase at the UBC Bookstore:

- Korneliussen, Niviaq. *Last Night in Nuuk* (aka *Crimson* aka *HOMO Sapienne*). Nuuk: Milik.
- Tagaq, Tanya. *Split Tooth*. New York: Viking.

The library has a small number of physical and electronic copies (only a few people may “borrow” the e-books at a time). The books are widely available in physical and electronic versions, on Amazon, iBooks, and Google Books, and can be purchased for \$20 or less combined.

All other required readings and materials (see Course Reading List below) are posted on our course Canvas site (canvas.ubc.ca).

Assessment of Learning

Class Participation	15%
Midterm exam	30%
Comparative Artist Presentation	25%
Final exam	30%

90-100% = A+	76-79% = B+	64-67% = C+	50-54% = D
85-89% = A	72-75% = B	60-63% = C	00-49% = F
80-84% = A-	68-71% = B-	55-59% = C-	

Class Participation (15%)

The success of this course depends on in-class discussion of readings. For that reason, it's essential that all students come prepared for discussion, with course materials read in advance of class. Students will be assessed holistically on their presence, preparedness, and willingness to engage with course materials

during in-class discussion and activities. In general, your participation grade will be calculated in relation to your other grades in the course (e.g., if you earn 75% on your graded work, your participation will begin at 75%). Active course engagement and participation will raise it; deficient course participation (e.g., if you seldom come to class or are on your phone through the whole class) will lower it.

The instructor reserves the right—in the event that discussions are unproductive because of lack of preparation—to require students to do reading journals to earn their participation grade for the course. In the event you cannot attend class, please send me an email *in advance of class* as a courtesy, so I can plan accordingly (some activities might not work if there are too few students attending class).

Midterm Exam (30%)

The first midterm exam is a writing-based exam that explores topics from the first half of the course, specifically land-use issues and confronting colonization. Questions will be provided at least one week in advance on a Midterm Exam Study Guide. The exam will be taken in class on **Thursday, October 17th**.

Comparative Artist Profile Presentation (25%)

Students enrolled in CENS 203 will be required to give one joint 10-15 minute presentation to the class that profiles 2-3 Indigenous artists (including musicians, writers, dancers, etc.) and their work. At least one of these artists must be from a circumpolar people (broadly defined). While your group may choose the additional Indigenous artists, I encourage you to choose someone more “local”—whether from British Columbia, the Pacific Northwest, or a place you grew up or feel connected to.

For the presentation, research your chosen artists’ biographical information online, what they say about their own art, and how others regard it. Bring in 1-2 works from each artist to share with the class, and teach us something about the artists, the ways they express their artistic vision, their engagement with political or social struggles, how they have impacted their communities, etc. Be sure to make connections between the artists in some way, whether these connections are similarities or differences of artistic vision, political engagement, or approaches to activism.

In week 2, students will sign up for dates to present. You will need to coordinate with other students signed up for your presentation day to coordinate your presentation. E.g., you should work to determine which artists you’ll be presenting on, you should coordinate your slides into a single slide deck, you should coordinate a few concluding takeaway remarks, etc. In general, a group of two will profile two artists over 10 minutes; a group of three will profile three artists over 15 minutes. I recommend each group member take the lead on an individual artist, and that one group member is prepared to close the discussion with conclusion that highlights what we can learn from these artists collectively.

A short Powerpoint presentation (or other suitable A/V component, as appropriate) is highly recommended. Students are required to upload their slides/media to Canvas (wherever possible), to assist in evaluation of the presentation.

Students are expected to deliver the presentation extemporaneously. Notes are welcome, but reading from a script is not allowed. The reason for this policy is generative AI.

Most classes will begin with a presentation (or in some cases two). Though it is not required, students are encouraged to seek out artists that are topically connected to our week’s theme. **Deadlines will be rolling for this assignment.**

Final Exam (30%)

The final exam is a writing-based exam that explores topics from the last half of the course. It will be taken on paper, during the **final exam period (TBD)**. Questions will be provided at least one week in advance of the exam on a Final Exam Study Guide.

All assignments are assessed on 1) command of content and concepts developed in the course; 2) the quality of humanistic analysis and argument presented in the assignment; 3) the efficacy of communication in the finished product.

Overview of Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Assignments
1	9/5	Introduction to the Course	
2	9/10, 9/12	Land & Water; Hunting & Fishing	
3	9/17, 9/19	Land & Extraction	
4	9/24, 9/26	Confronting Colonialism: Church & Schools	
5	10/1, 10/3	Navigating Trauma	
6	10/8, 10/10	Queering Indigeneity	
7	10/15, 10/17	Revitalizing Foodways	Midterm Exam, Oct. 17
8	10/22, 10/24	Cultural Sustainability and the Public Humanities	
9	10/29, 10/31	Indigenous Arts & Cultural Hybridity	
10	11/5, 11/7	Indigenizing Epic: Atararjuat	
11	11/12, 11/14	MIDTERM BREAK NOV 11-13; Diasporic Indigeneity (Gary Anderson Class Visit)	
12	11/19, 11/21	Indigenizing the Novel: Split Tooth	
13	11/26, 11/28	Indigenous Arts & Cultural Hybridity: Genghis Blues	
14	12/3, 12/5	Revitalizing Culture through Digital Media	
Finals	10/10-10/21	Final Examination Period	tbd

Course Reading List and Schedule

All the reading materials are available on the course Canvas site. You are expected to read the materials prior to class and come prepared to discuss them.

Week 1 (9/3-9/7)

Introduction to the Course

Tuesday

No class (Imagine Day)

Thursday

No readings due

Week 2 (9/8-9/14)

Land & Water; Hunting & Fishing

Tuesday

Nils Aslak Valkeapää. "Mu Ruoktu lea mu Váimmus." 8 pages.

Nils Aslak Valkeapää. Selections. *Beaivi Áhčážan*.

Paulus Utsi. Selections. Ed. Harald Gaski, *In the Shadow of the Midnight Sun*. 109-118.

Sofia Jannok. "We are Still Here." <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EVB0jvnaIqU> 5 minutes.

Sofia Jannok. "This is my Land." <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=riXVuhlMNQA> 5 minutes.

Thursday

Alethea Arnaquq-Baril. Angry Inuk (film). <https://go.exlibris.link/Q976bhZF> 82 minutes.

John Utsi. "The Waves." Ed. Harald Gaski, *In the Shadow of the Midnight Sun*. 179-192.

Alvin Nelson, British Columbia perspective on indigenous water rights. Report.

Niillas Somby. Gáddegánddát. (in class). 30 minutes.

Week 3 (9/15-9/21)

Land & Extraction

Tuesday

Yeremei Aipin. Selections from Eds. Alexander Vaschenko and Claude Clayton Smith, *The Way of Kinship: An Anthology of Native Siberian Literature*. 3-65.

Maria Vagatova. Selections from Eds. Alexander Vaschenko and Claude Clayton Smith, *The Way of Kinship: An Anthology of Native Siberian Literature*. 175-87.

Thursday

Hannu Hyvönen. Last Yoik in the Saami Forests. Film. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LKLgP8tnyGo> 54 minutes.

Lindsey Nixon. "Wet'suwet'en Strong." <https://canadianart.ca/features/wetsuweten-strong/>

Sara Marielle Gaup Beaska. "We Speak Earth." <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VzBmDpDAskQ> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VTL87q6O6Kw> 7 minutes

Elle Márjá Eira, Mai-Lis Eira. "The Sámi Have Rights." (in class) 10 minutes.

Week 4 (9/22-9/28)

Confronting Colonialism: Church & Schools

Tuesday

Galina Keptuke. Selections from Eds. Alexander Vaschenko and Claude Clayton Smith, *The Way of Kinship: An Anthology of Native Siberian Literature*. 95-125.

Francis Joy. <https://www.beneathnorthernlights.com/reconstructing-culture-through-art-for-the-memory-of-sami-noaidi-aikia-aikianpoika/>

Eeva-Kristiina Harlin and Outi Pieski. "The Legacy of Ládjogahpir: Rematriating Sápmi with Foremother's Hat of Pride." Ed. Carrie Hertz, *Dressing With a Purpose*. 203-210.

Elle Márjá Eira. IditSilba. (in class) 11 minutes.

Amanda Kernell. 2016. Sámi Blood. (in class) 108 minutes.

Thursday

Ellen Marie Vars. Boarding School. 10 pages.

Dennis Saddleman. "Monster." <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uD2ysbp8708>

Witness Blanket. <https://witnessblanket.ca/>

Amanda Kernell. 2016. Sámi Blood. (in class) 108 minutes.

Week 5 (9/29-10/5)

Navigating Trauma

Tuesday

Sofia Jannok. Áhpi. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hr13WV7UkgA>

Jovnna-Ánde Vest. The Cloudberry Trip. 10 pages.

Sara Margrethe Oskal. Daughter of the Sun. (in class) 10 minutes.

Elle Maija Tailfeathers. *Bihittoš*. (in class) 12 minutes.

Thursday

Joseph Dandurand. 2020. *The East Side of it All*. Selections.

Yuri Vaella. Selections from Eds. Alexander Vaschenko and Claude Clayton Smith, *The Way of Kinship: An Anthology of Native Siberian Literature*. Pgs. 78-93.

Week 6 (10/6-10/12)

Queering Indigeneity

Tuesday

Niviaq Korneliussen. Last Night in Nuuk (Fia, Inuk, Arnaq) 112 pages.

Ilona Verley. "How former Canada's Drag Race contestant Ilona Verley came to terms with being on the trans spectrum." <https://www.straight.com/living/how-former-canadas-drag-race-contestant-ilona-verley-came-to-terms-with-being-on-trans>

Chelazon Leroux. "'Canada's Drag Race' Season 3: 'After the Sashay' with Chelazon Leroux." <https://xtramagazine.com/video/canadas-drag-race-season-3-after-the-sashay-with-chelazon-leroux-227776>

Thursday

Niviaq Korneliussen. Last Night in Nuuk (Ivik, Sara) 68 pages.

Week 7 (10/13-10/19)
Revitalizing Foodways

Tuesday

Tejal Rao. 2016. "The Movement to Define Native American Cuisine." *New York Times*. http://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/17/dining/new-native-american-cuisine.html?smid=tw-share&_r=0
Salmon N Bannock. <https://www.salmonandbannock.net>
Amanda S. Green. 2018. "Indigenous reflexivity and resistance in global food activism: The case of Sápmi." *Food and Foodways* 26(3): 175-197.

Thursday

-midterm exam-

Week 8 (10/20-10/26)
Cultural Sustainability and the Public Humanities

Tuesday

Tim Frandy and B. Marcus Cederström. "Introduction to Culture Work." In *Culture Work: Folklore for the Public Good*. 3-12.
Arctic Winter Games. <https://www.awg2024.org> and <https://www.youtube.com/@2023arcticwintergames>
Ojibwe Winter Games. <https://ldfwintergames.wordpress.com>

Thursday

Julian Brave Noisecat. "The Tribal Canoe Journey, an Odyssey to Reclaim Traditional Territory." <https://canadiangeographic.ca/articles/the-tribal-canoe-journey-an-odyssey-to-reclaim-tradition-and-territory/>
B. Marcus Cederström, Thomas DuBois, and Tim Frandy. Birchbark Canoes and Wild Rice. <https://vimeo.com/170565548> 10 minutes.
"A Qayaq to Carry Us." <https://www.pbs.org/video/lived-knowledge-djhbyk/> 8 minutes
Cathy Morris. "The Angyaq Sets Sail Once Again." <https://www.burkemuseum.org/news/angyaq-sets-sail-once-again>
Sven Haakanson. "Rebuilding Angyaat on Kodiak Island." <https://www.burkemuseum.org/news/rebuilding-angyaat-kodiak-island>

Week 9 (10/27-11/2)
Halloween Film Fest: Indigenous Arts & Cultural Hybridity

Tuesday

HALLOWEEN FILM FEST

Thursday

SlinCraze. Suhtadit. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aOWH0W6t6eM> 4 minutes.
Tanya Tagaq. "Colonizer." <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8LbWNiej8J8> 5 minutes.
Tanya Tagaq. "Tongues." <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ziaqLa0uinU> 3 minutes.
Otyken. Legend. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tXLoP9iSU5Y> 3 minutes
Otyken. Storm. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CqwrwwOzVcQ> 4 minutes
Otyken. Genesis. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SU1apJTv94o> 3 minutes
Anders Sunna. <https://anderssunna.com>

Jenni Laiti. <https://www.jennilaiti.com>

Week 10 (11/3-11/9)
Indigenizing Epic

Tuesday

Zacharias Kunuk. *Atanarjuat*. Film. 167 minutes.

Thursday

Zacharias Kunuk. *Atanarjuat*. Film. 167 minutes.

Week 11 (11/10-11/16)
Diasporic Indigeneity

Tuesday

-no class (midterm break)-

Thursday

Sallie Anna Steiner. "A Growing Art: Traditional Arts and Heritage Rediscovery in Northern Minnesota Scandinavian Communities." In *Culture Work: Folklore for the Public Good*. 216-226.

Gary Anderson. *Skyfixer*. Selections.

Ron Riekk. *My Ancestors are Reindeer Herders and I am Melting in Extinction*. Selections.

Vivian Prescott. <https://www.thedodgemag.com/vivianfaithprescott1> and <https://www.terrain.org/2022/poetry/vivian-faith-prescott/>

Week 12 (11/17-11/23)
Indigenizing the Novel: Split Tooth

Tuesday

Tanya Tagaq. *Split Tooth*. 1-101.

Thursday

Tanya Tagaq. *Split Tooth*. 102-189.

Week 13 (11/24-11/30)
Indigenous Arts & Cultural Hybridity: Genghis Blues

Tuesday

Genghis Blues. 88 minutes.

Thursday

Genghis Blues. 88 minutes.

Week 14 (12/1-12/7)
Revitalizing Culture Through Digital Media

Tuesday

Simon Parkin. "Never Alone: Could a Video Game Help to Preserve Inuit Culture?" <https://www.newyorker.com/tech/annals-of-technology/never-alone-video-game-help-preserve-inuit-culture>

“Kunuuksaayuka.” 4 pages.
Play in class: Never Alone

Thursday

John Last. “Skábma: Snowfall is a Huge Win for Indigenous Game Makers.” <https://www.wired.com/story/skabma-snowfall-indigenous-game-makers/>

Play in class: Skábma

Instructor-Specific Policies of Note

Late Work

It is important that you stay on task and meet weekly deadlines... students get into trouble when they fall behind. But sometimes life gets in the way of our ability to meet deadlines. If you are having problems meeting deadlines (particularly for major assignments), please communicate with me as soon as possible, and we can try to come up with a solution. Please let me know before you're going to miss a deadline, rather than afterwards, since that's really the much more polite thing to do.

Missing Class

Though I want you all in class, there are all kinds of reasons to miss class. If you're feeling sick, you should stay home. If you have personal situations arise (family situations, work commitments, other responsibilities, etc), then you should attend to those. If you really need a mental health day, maybe you should take one. I always appreciate a quick email, so I can adjust my plan for the day if we have greatly reduced numbers (for instance, if we're doing group work).

In the event you miss class, you're welcome to get PowerPoints from me by bringing a USB drive to class or my office hours.

There's no direct penalty for missing class, although missing class will likely have some inevitable impact on your graded work. Regardless, I encourage you to be in touch if you're going to be missing class (particularly for longer stints), and we can work together to make sure it's minimally impactful.

Generative AI Use

For the purposes of CENS 203, generative AI is not allowed to be used on graded work. Any graded work that fails three AI generator detector tests with 75% or more probability will be automatically given a 0, and a meeting with the professor will be required. A second offence will be reported as academic misconduct. The instructor further reserves the right to hold oral interviews with students to formally assess learning, in the event that AI use is suspected.

Be warned: many common writing tools, like Grammarly, offer up language revision suggestions that trigger AI generators. It is the student's responsibility to check their work against AI generators.

The reason for this policy is that generative AI does not encourage students to grow as critical thinkers or better writers. If we ask bots to generate assignments, write assignments, and grade assignments, we have failed to understand the purpose of the university. They short-circuit the system of honesty and trust in which learning needs to happen. Or, in more practical terms, AI and Grammarly create flowery language that says nothing, and they create massive issues with fair assessment across a class.

The good news is that Generative AI should not be a major factor in the course, due to the assessment structure of oral presentations and hand-written exams.

University and Course Policies

Academic Integrity

The academic enterprise is founded on honesty, civility, and integrity. As members of this enterprise, all students are expected to know, understand, and follow the codes of conduct regarding academic integrity. At the most basic level, this means submitting only original work done by you and acknowledging all sources of information or ideas and attributing them to others as required. This also means you should not cheat, copy, or mislead others about what is your work. Violations of academic integrity (i.e., misconduct) lead to the breakdown of the academic enterprise, and therefore serious consequences arise and harsh sanctions are imposed. For example, incidences of plagiarism or cheating may result in a mark of zero on the assignment or exam and more serious consequences may apply when the matter is referred to the Office of the Dean. Careful records are kept in order to monitor and prevent recurrences. A more detailed

description of academic integrity, including the University's policies and procedures, may be found in the [UBC Calendar: Student Conduct and Discipline](#).

Students might additionally consult the UBC Library Plagiarism Guide for general information on plagiarism, information on safe practices to avoid plagiarism and more <https://guides.library.ubc.ca/tutorial-lfs/citing/plagiarism>

Academic Concessions

UBC's academic concession policy (<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,329,0,0>) states that students seeking academic concession for any of three reasons: conflicting responsibilities; medical circumstances; and compassionate grounds, would take the following steps:

If you miss marked coursework for the first time (assignment, exam, presentation, participation in class) and the course is still in-progress, please submit a Student Self-Declaration (<https://www.arts.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/24/2019/10/Student-Self-Declaration-Form-1.6-Arts.pdf>) to the instructor as soon as possible so that your in-term concession case can be evaluated.

If this is not the first time that you have requested concession or if classes are over, you are required to fill out the Arts Academic Advising's online academic concession form, so that an advisor can evaluate your concession case. For additional information you can consult this site: <https://students.arts.ubc.ca/advising/academic-performance/help-academic-concession/>

If you are a student in a different Faculty, please consult [your Faculty's webpage on academic concession](#), and then contact me where appropriate.

Academic Accommodation

Academic accommodations help students with a disability or ongoing medical condition overcome challenges that may affect their academic success. Students requiring academic accommodations must register with the [Centre for Accessibility](#) (previously known as Access & Diversity). The Centre will determine that student's eligibility for accommodations in accordance with [Policy LR7: Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Academic accommodations are not determined by your instructors, and instructors should not ask you about the nature of your disability or ongoing medical condition, or request copies of your disability documentation. However, your instructor may consult with the Centre for Accessibility should the accommodations affect the essential learning outcomes of a course.

Class Preparedness

For every class you are expected to have required reading and/or due assignments completed, and are ready to participate in discussions. If you require additional audio/visual equipment for a presentation or project in class, please notify me through email at least 3 business days before the class so that I can reserve the equipment.

Academic Freedom

The classroom is a place for the open discussion of ideas and issues. The points of view expressed by the instructor represent a professional perspective of matters related to Critical European Studies, and you and your peers are expected to contribute. However, if at any time you wish to further discuss an issue taken up from class, or do not feel comfortable to engage, please feel free to contact the instructor.

Early Alert

We participate in the Early Alert Program which helps me support students who are facing difficulties that are interfering with school. If you are feeling stressed, please notify the TA or the instructor and indicate that you would like assistance. While we are not trained to help with personal problems, we can get you help from people who are. Any information that they receive from you or us is strictly confidential and is in the interest of your academic success and wellbeing. For more information, please visit [EarlyAlert](#).