SOCW 521: Indigenous Perspective on Knowing and Researching

THIS IS A SAMPLE OUTLINE.
ACTUAL COURSE OUTLINE MAY VARY IN STRUCTURE, REQUIRED READINGS, TEXTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Course Description / Introduction
This course will explore the dimensions of Indigenous ways of knowing that influences research with Indigenous communities. Students will explore how, and from where, their own knowing emerges as well as critically examine how knowledge is constructed within the larger society. The course focuses on the layers and multitudes of relationships that the self experiences with others and the world including the many ways in which power, culture, ethics, protocols, language, place and spirit shapes knowledge. Students will have an opportunity to apply this knowing to their personal knowing and researching values and framework.

Course Overview
SW521 creates space to consider Indigenous principles of knowing and being. Uy’skwuluwun (Hul’qumi’num) and Tsawalk (Nuu-chah-nulth) are words that roughly translate into to be of a good mind and heart and Nutsa maat, Heshook-ishTsawalk, and All My Relations teaches us that we are all one. Flowing from these teachings, this course is based on the premise that the relationships between all of these forces influence how an individual understands the world. For those engaged in Indigenous research, this is an opportunity to examine Indigenous ways of knowing/being, to ask both the seemingly straight forward and the openly contentious questions such as: What are Indigenous ways of knowing/being? Is it a ‘valid’ epistemology within academic research and does it matter? What are the roles of self and identity in shaping what we know? How does our relationship with family, community, culture, and the earth influence our knowing? Why is the examination of Indigenous ways of knowing significant to Indigenous research? Students will be able to examine and explore their perspective, philosophy, theory, viewpoint and assumptions of the world, which are integral to developing an Indigenous personal framework for knowing and researching.

Prerequisites
Students must be admitted to MSW program and be accepted by Graduate Studies.

Course Goals & Objectives:
- Examine the role of relationship in constructing knowledge within an Indigenous context
- Explore Indigenous ways of knowing
- Critically examine how knowledge is constructed and its influence on research
- Explore Indigenous conceptual models and their application to knowing/being.
- Analyze the relationship with, and influence of, power, place, culture, language, environment, ethics, protocol and spirit in shaping worldview
- Explore the responsibility and reciprocity to family, community, nation when carrying-out research
- Examine how the relationship to family, community, nation and earth influences knowing/being and Indigenous research practice
- Compare and contrast western methodologies in relation to Indigenous approaches to researching
- Identify and apply practical tasks associated with research (e.g. library searches)
- Articulate the basis of one’s personal way of knowing and how this knowing applies to a personal framework for knowing and researching

Confidentiality: Through course contact and assignments you will learn other students’ names and their views. All such information should be treated as confidential, just as you would in a regular classroom.
Course communication and materials should not be forwarded to people not registered in the course. People not registered for the course cannot be invited to join discussion groups.

Community, agency, and client information: Community, agency, and client information should be treated respectfully. Be sure to remove all client identifying information in your postings to discussion groups. Please note that in some highly visible situations, it may be necessary to modify certain biographical details to mask the identity of the persons, agencies, or communities involved. All discussions that occur as part of this course are to be kept confidential and not used outside of the course context.

**Course Schedule & Outline:**

**Introductions, Moodle Orientation & Draft Article Critique**

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**Topic 4**

**The Truth & Reconciliation Commission**

**Readings:**

The TRC Calls to Action

[http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf](http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf)

Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada


**Topic 5**

**Relationships**

**Readings:**


**Portfolio Proposal Due**
## Topic 6  Accountability – FINAL Article Critique Due

**Readings:**


## Topic 7  Ethics & Protocol

**Readings:**


## Topic 8  Research Methodologies – Reflection Paper Due

**Readings:**


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**Portfolio Preparation**

**Virtual Closing Circle – Portfolio Du**
Assignments & Grading Structure

Assignment #1: Article Critique
Grade: 10% + 15% (total 25%)
Due Date:
Length: 2 pages written critique

Purpose:
The purpose of this assignment is to:
- Critique 1 article, of your choice, from either of the books or other Moodle required readings
- Present your critique in a concise & succinct way
- Analyze the author’s point of view
- Assess the purpose of the document
- Examine how Indigenous experience is constructed (particularly in the published, academic article)
- Identify the author’s location and how this may influence the writing
- Explain why you agree or disagree with the process and findings of the article
- Compare your own knowing (based on experience and location) with the author’s analysis

Format:
This article critique comprises 25% (10% + 15%) of your overall mark and is completed is two parts: 1) a draft critique (10%) and, 2) a re-written final critique (15%). On the first day of class, you will hand in your draft article critique. The instructors will review the article and provide feedback. You then can take the feedback away and incorporate it into your final critique, which is due on October 8th.
Your paper should be no longer than 2 pages in length.
- Your paper should include appropriate citations and references using APA style format
- Your article critique should illustrate your analysis of the author’s stance and location. Your critique should also integrate your stance and location in relation to the research documents. Descriptive information about the authors (name, title of article) as well as an integration of the author’s location (or comment as to whether she or he located)
- Your own location and knowing that you bring with you in analyzing the documents
- Analysis of the key points of the documents
- Analysis of how Indigenous knowledge is constructed or included in the document
- Explanation of your knowing in relation to article (do you agree with them or not) and why
- Identification of your learning.

A grade will be assigned based on the extent to which you can demonstrate:
- Descriptive content
- Evidence of analytical thinking
- Reflection of your own knowing
- Comparative analysis
- Ability to write in clear and organized manner
- Ability to stay within the page limitation
Assignment #2: Community Research Interview Reflection Paper
Grade: 25%
Due Date:
Length: 10 pages maximum

Purpose:
The purpose of this assignment is to choose an Indigenous community social worker to interview and discuss Indigenous research activities in their community. Develop questions based on classroom discussions and course readings to ask another social work researcher/practitioner. Discuss research approaches, frameworks, philosophies, relationships, accountability, ethics and protocols involved in these research projects and the expected outcomes. This is a good opportunity to choose some of the course syllabus topics that might be included in your Portfolio. Situate this research in what you are learning in this course by providing a critique of what you learned and observed during this interview.

Grading will be based on how the purpose of the assignment is addressed in your reflection paper.

Assignment #3: Portfolio (Personal Framework of Knowing and Researching)
Grade: 50%
Part One Due Date:
Part Two Due Date:
Length: as agreed upon

Purpose:
The purpose of this assignment is to:
- Develop a portfolio or personal framework of knowing and researching
- Complete a Portfolio that demonstrates your way of knowing/being and the theoretical perspectives that support this,
- Apply your own way of knowing/being to your research framework
- Identify how this way of knowing will impact your research practice (such as choice of methodology)
- Analysis of external sources from Indigenous research literature that aligns with or supports your claim (you may use the resources in this course, but are also required to include 8-10 external sources)
- Provide a self-reflection of how you arrived at your knowing
- Ability to present your ideas in a clear and concise manner.

Format: This assignment has 2 parts.

Part One:
The first part of the portfolio is to develop a draft proposal outlining the thinking behind your conceptual model including the rational on how you plan on illustrating your model. Please note that everyone’s model will look differently – it may be a written paper, an actual portfolio binder, a PowerPoint with speaking notes, a combination of all of these. The instructors will read the draft and provide feedback. Once the draft is agreed upon, this is what the final assignment will be graded on.

Remember, as you develop your portfolio, that the overall purpose of this assignment is to identify your personal framework of knowing and researching and prepare and produce a portfolio that reflects your conceptual model.
Part Two:

The second component of this assignment is to present your completed conceptual model based on the proposal you submitted. As well, you are required to either share your portfolio to your classmates or present an overview of your portfolio, which shares what experiences that have led you to this knowing/being – or as our colleague Dr. Maggie Kovach would say – share the thinking behind the doing.

**Grading Criteria:**

A grade will be assigned based on the extent to which you can show:
- Illustrate the conceptual model in whatever form you have agreed upon
- Evidence of how your model includes your way of knowing/being
- Reflection of your process and arriving at your way of knowing
- Use of external sources to augment your claims
- Ability to write in a clear and organized manner
- Ability to present your ideas in a clear and organized manner

**Students with Disabilities**

The following statement is taken from the School of Social Work Policy and Procedure Manual:

“The School of Social Work, in its commitments to feminist, First Nations, and anti-oppressive practice should endeavor to take a pro-active role in providing an inclusive environment for all students, including students with disabilities. The School will continue raising awareness of ableism among its faculty, staff and the larger community

If you have a disability or specific learning need as a result of a disability please contact me. I am more than happy to ensure that you experience success in this course. Please be advised, as well, that there are support resources available to you through the university, and I encourage you to contact the Resource Centre for Students with a Disability (http://rcsd.uvic.ca/).