

Feb. 26, 2020

Chair in Transgender Studies Scholar

MA Student, Anthropology, UVIC

Lydia Toorenburgh

Nitawâhtâw

Searching for a Métis Approach to Audio-Visual Anthropology: Cultural, Linguistic, Methodological, & Ethical Considerations

Wed., Feb. 26th, 2020

1:00-2:30 PM

UVic Cornett A317

Tansi, my name is Lydia. I am an Otipemisiwak (Cree-Métis person) with settler and Dutch immigrant ancestry. I have long known that I am bisexual, but have more recently begun the journey of coming into a Two-Spirit identity with the guidance of my elders. In my Masters of Anthropology research, I will be working with two powerful women scholars as we look into the challenges of marginalized individuals in accessing healthcare. To do this critical, community-engaged research, we will be using audio-visual research methods in order to amplify and prioritize the voices of the community.

Decolonizing and Indigenizing the Academy has long been an important focus in Indigenous scholarship, particularly in the social sciences. From this project has come a push for each researcher to design a unique approach rooted in their own personal, familial, community, and cultural values. With this attention to values and protocol, Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers can develop an approach that challenges the colonial thinking and practices which have so profoundly harmed Indigenous peoples around the globe. As a Cree-Métis person with mixed European ancestry, I feel a responsibility to, and a passion for, learning to work and be in the community in a good way. My thesis is an exploration toward developing my own Cree-Métis approach to audio-visual anthropology and to my academic language. Learning from the work of salient Cree-Métis filmmakers, such as Christine Welsh and Gil Cardinal, and the literature of Indigenous and audio-visual researchers, I search for a practice that speaks to my teachings and values. In addition, I discuss the importance of language and my desire to depart from the history of the words “research”, “researcher”, and “research participant”. Instead, I consider Cree words whose meanings reflect my commitment to my unique, culturally informed, anti-oppressive, decolonized approach to my work, my “participants”, and academia. All my relations!

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