Anthropology 433-530
COAST SALISH CULTURE AND CONTEMPORARY LIFE

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Brian Thom

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES
This course develops the idea that culture is the centre of much of contemporary political discourse. In Coast Salish First Nations communities, culture is at the heart of debates over land claims, self-government, individual and collective rights, property rights, and relationships with the environment. Through reading detailed ethnographic accounts of landscape and place, spirit power, kinship & social organization, subsistence economies, and oral traditions in Coast Salish communities, the students will grapple with the contemporary social and political challenges and opportunities for the practice and expression of these cultural lives.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT
This course will provide an opportunity for students to develop the skills in critically reading and engaging the media; read and appreciate ethnographies; gain knowledge about local indigenous culture and contemporary political issues; learn theoretical perspectives on ‘place’, ‘relationality’, ‘power’, ‘governmentality’, and human and indigenous rights, and social justice; and strengthen writing skills where ethnographic data is drawn on to support making an argument.

Unique to the Fall 2015 offering of this course, we are working to coordinate a term-long project to be undertaken in collaboration with an Island Coast Salish community. Pending community and ethics approvals, class research projects will be community-focused and will be a significant contribution of collaborative research outcomes.