

ANTHROPOLOGY 3305G-001
History, Territory, and the Politics of Identity
COURSE OUTLINE
Winter 2020



Figure 1. The head of a statue of Christopher Columbus was pulled off amid protests against racial inequality in Boston on June 10, 2020. [Source](#)



Figure 2. A statue of Christopher Columbus lies facedown after being toppled by protesters on the grounds of the state capitol in St. Paul, Minnesota, on June 10, 2020. The protest was led by Mike Forcia, a member of the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa. [Source](#)



Figure 3. George Floyd's image is projected on the Robert E. Lee Monument in Richmond, Virginia, on June 18, 2020. Virginia Governor Ralph Northam has ordered the removal of the statue, but next steps have been delayed by pending lawsuits. [Source](#)

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Office Hours: TBA

Mode of delivery: For 2020/2021 this course will be conducted online with asynchronous content accessible through OWL and synchronously using Zoom videoconferencing technology, with discussions to take place weekly during the scheduled synchronous class time.

Synchronous class time: Tuesdays 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. EST.

Credit value: 0.5 credit

Calendar Course Description

The formation of collective identities is a process entwined with the production of historical narratives, especially in struggles against states, and/or to annex, dominate or secede from existing states. Based on case studies, the topics covered include: history/memory/identity-making, repression/resistance, displacement; nation-states and citizenship, sovereignty and territory.

Antirequisites: none.

Prerequisites: Any Arts and Humanities or Social Science 0.5 or 1.0 Essay course and registration in third year or higher in any program.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. The decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Course Syllabus

The brutal murder of 46-year-old George Floyd in Minneapolis ignited large street protests where the most prominent slogan was "Black Lives Matter." The protests spread in many countries around the world against structural racism, exploitation, and police repression. These mass uprisings were accompanied by the toppling or attempts to tear down monuments and statues long considered national "heroes," by ruling "white" elites. For many others, especially African-Americans and indigenous populations these "national heroes" were criminals, a great number of them guilty of racism, actively participating in the slave trade, and/or in robbing indigenous people of their lands and livelihoods violently or by deception. This present political upheaval against systemic racism is concurrently then a battle over how to read the past, how to interpret it, what to select or silence and how and where to narrate it, and most important how to make it relevant in the present. In this class, we examine such political dimensions of history, especially when examining the "nation" and its emergence as a specific kind of community, claiming sovereignty over specific stretches of territory with external borders. The new nations that emerged out of the old empires, emphasized features or boundaries to distinguish them from others, such as sharing a common history, language, or religion. This attempt to conflate national identity, with a sovereign state in a specific territory was also a phenomenon that took place in the later decades of the 20th century. The dismantling of the Soviet Union, along with Yugoslavia and other countries resulted in the formation of even smaller nation-states all claiming they have the "right to self-determination."

This process led to new “national” fortresses of exclusion and inclusion, which required rewriting the past to justify claims to political independence. Yet, there are other forms of identification that are beyond or below the “nation” such as Buddhism, Islam, or belonging to a tribe, village, or region. Often, these other scales of belonging coexist peacefully with the “nation”, other times they pose serious challenges to existing states. This class is based on past and present case studies – for example, Rwanda, former Yugoslavia, indigenous struggles, Black Lives Matter movements in North America, Palestine, and Western Sahara that exemplify the emergence or the vanishing of polities and struggles over territories, histories and identities.

Please note that some of the case studies may change, the final draft, however, will be available before the first day of class.

A full course schedule including a week-by-week breakdown of topics and assigned readings will be available on the course’s OWL site before the first day of class.

Learning Outcomes

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

- Analyze history, territory and identity as interrelated concepts.
- Identify theories and definitions pertaining to nations and nationalism, as a compelling but historical form of collective identity.
- Distinguish national belonging from other forms of collective identities, which may be sub-national or supra-national, distinguishing the ‘national’ from ‘nation-state’ and citizenship.
- Apply the concept “differentiated citizenship” to real case studies.
- Analyze territorial markers and how they inform and shape social and cultural boundaries.
- Apply scholarly approaches to analyze imperial and colonial powers as political and economic formations that re-map territories and reconfigure societies and cultures.
- Analyze historical narratives as inseparable from the exercise of power and the struggle against it.
- Identify diverse forms and expressions in reproducing the past, including official and professional history, popular memory, oral history.
- Analyze how identity-making and history are distinguished but concurrently entwined.
- Grasp the complexities of history, territory and identity in a number of cases, such as the former Yugoslavia, India, Palestine, indigenous peoples, Cyprus, Rwanda and others.

Course Materials

Students will access readings through OWL’s Course Reading feature before first day of class.

Evaluation

Assignments/activities - 25% (Short interactive activities and commentaries. Dates TBD)

Quiz 1	15%	Feb 1 (covers readings and doc/video clip from Jan 4 – Jan 25)
Quiz 2	15%	Mar 15 (covers readings and doc/video clip from Feb 1 – March 8)
Essay	30%	Due April 5
Final Quiz	15%	During final exam period (covers readings and doc/video March 15-April 5)

Course Specific Conditions Required to Pass this Course

In order to pass this essay course, students must submit and receive a passing grade on their final essay.

Course Specific Statements and Policies

In addition to required readings the quizzes cover material learned from a) documentaries or films, the titles and links will be posted on the course website before the first day of class; and b) ideas that emerge from the brief lectures and class discussions we will have during the one-hour synchronous period.

Academic Integrity - Statement on Plagiarism

Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing. It is also a scholastic offence to submit the same work for credit in more than one course. Plagiarism is a major scholastic offence.

Statement on Seeking Special Accommodations

No accommodations will be granted retroactively more than 10 days after an assignment's due date or a missed quiz or test. Please see your academic counsellor immediately if you will be seeking accommodations based on medical or compassionate grounds.

Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

Students will have up to two (2) opportunities during the regular academic year to use an on-line portal to self-report an absence during the term, provided the following conditions are met: the absence is no more than 48 hours in duration, and the assessment for which consideration is being sought is worth 30% or less of the student's final grade. Students are expected to contact their instructors within 24 hours of the end of the period of the self-reported absence, unless noted on the syllabus. Students are not able to use the self-reporting option in the following circumstances:

- for exams scheduled by the Office of the Registrar (e.g., December and April exams)
- absence of a duration greater than 48 hours,
- assessments worth more than 30% of the student's final grade,
- if a student has already used the self-reporting portal twice during the academic year

If the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence are *not* met, students will need to provide a Student Medical Certificate if the absence is medical, or provide appropriate documentation if there are compassionate grounds for the absence in question. Students are encouraged to contact their Faculty academic counselling office to obtain more information about the relevant documentation.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds, or for other reasons. **All documentation required for absences that are not covered by the Self-Reported Absence Policy must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's Home Faculty.**

For Western University policy on Consideration for Student Absence, see: [Policy on Academic Consideration for Student Absences - Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs](#)

[Student Medical Certificate \(SMC\)](#)

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Multicultural Calendar](#).

Institutional Statements and Policies

All students should familiarize themselves with Western's current academic policies regarding accessibility, plagiarism and scholastic offences, and medical accommodation. These policies are outlined in Western's academic policies by clicking on this link: [Western's academic policies](#).

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