LED 100 Truth and reconciliation

Weds/Friday 10-1130, Paterson Residence Hall

Course description

How do societies heal in the wake of conflict or mass atrocities? How does memory of past violence and oppression affect the future? Can divided societies heal without truth-telling? How can we promote reconciliation between survivors and perpetrators of mass violence? Many societies, from Canada to Cambodia and from Spain to Solomon Islands, are seeking a possible answer in truth and reconciliation processes.

Truth and reconciliation commissions (TRCs) have been around since the 1980s, when Latin American countries emerging from dictatorships started to hold them as a form of “restorative justice” in the wake of human rights violations. Most famously, South Africa held a Truth and Reconciliation Commission in the aftermath of apartheid. A TRC is now a standard piece of the “transitional justice tool kit” for countries emerging from civil war or dictatorial rule. TRCs aim to uncover the truth about past events while also healing and bringing the nation together in the future. At the same time, it’s important to note the role of civil society groups in pushing for truth in a pre-TRC period, and in pushing for action after TRCs report.

This course examines truth and reconciliation processes internationally and in Canada. It devotes roughly equal attention to international case studies and to challenges of truth, justice and reconciliation within Canada. Guest lecturers examine themes of truth and reconciliation from an interdisciplinary perspective, delivered by faculty members from English, Education, History & Global Studies, Modern Languages, Philosophy, Politics & International Studies, Sociology and other departments. Guest lecturers from outside Bishop’s and field trips enrich the experience.

The course aims to respond to TRC Canada’s Calls to Action by raising awareness about truth and reconciliation issues and encouraging reflection and action.

Course coordinator

Dr. David Webster
Office: Morris 9
Hours: Tuesdays 1-2 pm, Wednesdays 11:30-12:30, or by appointment
E-mail: dwebster@ubishops.ca
Office Telephone: 819.842.9600 x 2384

Apart from office hours, I am happy to arrange to meet with students at other times. You are also welcome to send e-mails or contact me via the course web site. Questions will be responded to promptly, either with an answer or a time when I will be able to answer. If you have not heard back within 48 hours, please re-send or contact me by other means, in case the message has gone astray.
Required Readings
- TRC Canada materials
- *Truth and Reconciliation in 28 Countries*, booklet based on research articles by former Bishop’s students
- Online reading through moodle

Course Requirements and Evaluation
Check-in quizzes: 10% each x 2 = 20%
Work sheets on lectures: 2% each x 15 = 30%
Back pocket action plan and reflection paper: 20%
Final exam: 30%

At the end of September and at the end of October, there will be a quick quiz to ensure that students have understood course content to date. Each quiz is worth 10% of the final grade and tests one month’s material.

In each lecture, you will be asked to fill in a work sheet that describes the speaker’s argument and main points, and asks you to come up with questions. The work sheets will be the basis of discussion in your break-out discussion group, led by a senior student who is responsible for assessment. There are 16 lectures in total, plus one online lecture that you are asked to watch outside class time (by Pam Palmater). Therefore you may miss one or two lectures with no penalty. If you attend all lectures and hand in a work sheet each time, your 15 highest marks will be counted. Work sheets will be collected at the end of each class. They will be returned after marking and you should plan to retain them as a study aid for the reflection paper and final exam.

The last component of the course is a “kitchen table dialogue” on reconciliation. It asks participants to complete a back-pocket reconciliation action plan. You should complete this plan and also write a reflection paper drawing together relevant reflections on any aspects of the course, including the trip to Odanak. The reflection paper should offer your thoughts on the questions:
- What is reconciliation? What does it mean to me? How can it be realized in the place we now call Canada?
- Do we need truth before reconciliation? If so, how can that be achieved? If not, why not?
- Are there lessons from outside Canada for reconciliation here, and vice versa?

Supporting your Success
Your academic performance is closely tied to your personal well-being and mental health. It is understood that university students encounter setbacks from time to time that can impact their academics. If you encounter difficulties and need
assistance it is important to reach out and take advantage of the resources available to you. For help and information addressing mental or physical health concerns, including meeting with a Bishop’s counsellor or nurse, visit: www.ubishops.ca/student-services/

If you are experiencing any personal difficulties that make it hard for you to meet your course requirements, please talk with your professor(s) or academic Dean. You should also connect with our professionals in student support services for your specific physical or mental health needs.

**Academic integrity**

Plagiarism (a form of academic dishonesty in which one person submits or presents the work of another person as their own), self-plagiarism (submitting the same work in different courses) and cheating (dishonest behaviour, usually in tests or examinations) are not acceptable. For details, see the university calendar section on plagiarism.

**Submission of written work**

Written work can be submitted using moodle; there is no need for a printed copy.

Deadlines are firm and, out of fairness to other students, will not normally be extended. Late work will be penalized at 5% off per weekday. In other words, an essay worth 76% will be marked down to 71% if one day late, 66% if two days late, and so on.

**Bishop’s University is proudly located on Abenaki traditional territory.**
Course outline

(1) Concepts / the ground we are on

Reading:
- TRC Canada *Calls to Action* booklet (including UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples)
- TR28 booklet, entries on truth & reconciliation, truth-seeking

Wednesday, September 4 Course intro / truth commissions (D. Webster)
Friday, September 6 Concepts of “truth” (B. Gilbert)

Wednesday, September 11 TRC Canada (J. Manore)
Friday, September 13 Concepts of “reconciliation” (J. Dymond)

Wednesday, September 18 Colonial Systems of Justice and Control (V. Chartrand)
Friday, September 20 Odanak field trip

We will travel together to the Museum of the Abenakis in Odanak on either September 20 or 27 (final date TBA). This is a full-day event subsidized by the Faculty of Arts and Science and the Indigenous Student Liaison Office. You will pay only $5 for the bus trip. Lunch is included, along with a museum tour in English or French. If you have Friday commitments that make it impossible for you to travel on either day, please discuss this with the course coordinator for a substitute activity.

Wednesday, September 25 Guest lecturer Senator Kim Pate
Friday, September 27 Odanak field trip

(2) Truth & reconciliation globally

Reading: *Truth & Reconciliation in 28 Countries*, country case studies
Viewing: *Dalan ba Dame/The Road to Peace*, on truth-seeking in Timor-Leste

Wednesday, October 2 Discussion groups; Memory and the origins and development of truth-seeking in Latin America (D. Webster)
Friday, October 4 Check-in quiz 1; Memory and truth-seeking in Spain (J. Tronsgard)

Wednesday, October 9 Truth and reconciliation in Asia (D. Webster)
Friday, October 11 Discussion groups
Wednesday, October 16 Truth and reconciliation in Africa – guest speaker Dr. Bonny Ibhawoh, McMaster University

Friday, October 18 Discussion groups

Wednesday, October 23 Truth commissions: a local perspective – guest speaker Hugo Fernandes, director of Centro Nacional Chega, Timorese centre for truth & reconciliation

Friday, October 25 Check-in quiz; Discussion groups

(3) Truth & reconciliation in what is now Canada
Reading: TRC Canada materials
Viewing: Pam Palmater lecture on youtube “If it feels good, it’s not reconciliation”

Wednesday, October 30 MMIWG and Grassroots Justices (V. Chartrand)
Friday, November 1 Science and reconciliation (D. Wiseman)

Wednesday, November 6 The North (J. Sabin)
Friday, November 8 Treaties (J. Manore)

Wednesday, November 13 Indigenous Stories (L. Morra)
Friday, November 15 Education & reconciliation (A. Aitken / L. Taylor)

Wednesday, November 20 What you can do for reconciliation: Kitchen table dialogue & back pocket action plan (from Chief R. Joseph, Reconciliation Canada, 2 sessions)
Friday, November 22 What you can do for reconciliation: Kitchen table dialogue & back pocket action plan (from Chief R. Joseph, Reconciliation Canada, 2 sessions) & course wrap-up

Reflection paper is due on moodle by Thursday, November 28, 11:55 pm.

Final exam date TBA (exam period December 2-13)
Lecture work sheet (use back of page if you need more space)

Student name

Name of your discussion group leader

Name of lecturer and date

Major topic of lecture:

What was the main argument of the speaker?

What evidence did they use?

What conclusions or recommendations did they make?

What unanswered questions do you have? What would you like to talk more about?