



Writing inspired by Human Library Pedagogy:

Reflections on Representations of Indigeneity

Tiara Anderson, University of Winnipeg

Shylah Chartrand, University of Winnipeg

Emmanuela Ejiogu, University of Winnipeg

Jessica Hrymack, University of Winnipeg

Juliana Thiessen, University of Winnipeg and Red River College

Jerohm Villanueva, University of Winnipeg

Myrna Cook, Manitoba Justice

Helen Lepp Friesen, University of Winnipeg

Volume 1, Number 1, 2023, pp. 1-40

Abstract

This article features student responses and interactions with the guest speakers, the fieldtrips, and the class discussions we had in a course called Representations of Indigeneity at the University of Winnipeg in 2022. The course was designed using a human library method where, people, as human books, were invited to have open and honest conversations about their life experiences. All the students represented here offered their authentic writing and artwork as an invitation to you, as the reader, to be part of our collective learning journey. The article is organized in chapters based on the themes we covered in our classes, including Indigenous representation in politics, business, education, journalism, music, and art.

Keyword: *Human library, Indigeneity, Indigenous course requirement (ICR), representation*

Meet the Authors

Tiara Anderson: I am an Anishinaabe and Métis woman living in Winnipeg's inner city. I am a member of Little Saskatchewan First Nation with family ties to Duck Bay, Manitoba. I am also a first-generation university student; I completed my four-year Bachelor of Arts Degree with a major in Indigenous Studies in February 2023. Miigwech.

Shylah Chartrand: I am originally from Pine Creek First Nation, but I was raised in Dauphin, Manitoba with my two sisters by a single mother. We moved to Winnipeg in 2013, and I have been working towards a career since. I currently attend the University of Winnipeg as a second-year student to obtain a degree in Psychology with a minor in Indigenous Studies. I plan to work in the mental health field once I finish university, primarily with Indigenous Peoples.

Emmanuela Ejiogu: I am an international student from Nigeria, studying Rhetoric, Writing and Communications at the University of Winnipeg. I am currently in my final semester and looking forward to graduating in the summer. In the past four years that I have lived in Canada, I continue to learn more about this place that I now call home. I hope to stay after I graduate and build a life here. I enjoy a lot of things, but there is nothing that I enjoy more than putting an outfit together, going out with friends and seeing what the city has to offer. In my down time I enjoy reading a good book in bed or rewatching *Smallville*. I love adventures, and I have been travelling by myself since I was fourteen. Some of my best and most terrifying experiences have happened while I was travelling. In the future, I look forward to travelling even more, and perhaps writing a book about my experiences, both the good and bad. My motto that I live by and say to everyone around me is "I love to experience life." I hope to inspire the people around me to want to experience life, as well.

Jessica Hrymack: I am a settler who was born, raised, and continues to live on Treaty 1 territory. I am currently an undergrad student attending the University of Winnipeg, and my major is in Rhetoric and Communication. My career goals continue to change, but I know I want to spend my life helping others, taking care of animals, and editing textbooks.

Juliana Thiessen (she/her): I am nearing the last year of university, pursuing the Creative Communications joint program with the University of Winnipeg and Red River College. I like to bring my personal experiences into the work I create within my rhetoric courses.

It was a joy and a privilege to be involved in the Representations of Indigeneity class. Within this collaborative article, my favourite reflection is titled “2SLGBTQ+ Indigenous Culture at the INUA Art exhibit.” The display moved me emotionally and I believe the way I view and interpret the world holds value as a queer woman and should be shared openly.

Jerohm Villanueva: I am a third-year Finance and Economics student, and I am taking this class as a part of my Indigenous and Writing class requirement. I am Filipino, was born in the Philippines but moved to Canada when I was 12 years old. I am very passionate about cooking, and I would say that it’s the skill that I am most proud of, and I dream of having my own restaurant one day. I’m not sure what type of food I would serve but I know it’ll have the essence of my mom’s cooking.

Myrna Cook: I am of Métis descent and grew up in Northern Manitoba. My husband Simon, our two children, and I moved to Winnipeg in 1999. I attended the University of Manitoba and completed my Bachelor of Arts degree in 2006. I have been employed with Manitoba Justice since 2006. My husband, Simon, is of Cree descent and is also from Northern Manitoba. During Simon’s early years, he lived a traditional life on the land. Simon shares his personal story with others, to foster understanding and reconciliation as a means of healing from his difficult past.

Helen Lepp Friesen: I teach in the Department in Rhetoric, Writing, and Communications at the University of Winnipeg. I am privileged to work with engaging, brilliant, creative, and thoughtful students that continue to teach me many valuable things about life and being human. My parents came to Canada as first and second-generation refugees from Ukraine. I identify as settler that is on a journey of unlearning some of the education of the past. It was an honour working with Myrna as consultant for the course and with all the students that contributed with their honest reflections.

Introduction

In 2016, the University of Winnipeg implemented an Indigenous course requirement (ICR) that all students need to fulfill to be able to graduate. During their degree program, they can choose any approved ICR course to fulfill this requirement. Most departments offer at least one course that has the ICR designation. I (Friesen) proposed a course called Representations of Indigeneity in the department of Rhetoric, Writing, and Communications in 2015, and have developed and facilitated this course since then. It may seem ironic that a person who identifies as settler would develop a course called Representations of Indigeneity, and I constantly reflect on the value or weakness of my positioning. I acknowledge that I do not represent an Indigenous experience, but, as an ally, I can facilitate and invite voices to the table to have the conversations that students are interested in having. The academy otherwise relies heavily on Indigenous faculty to not only provide the education, but also the emotional labour of sharing sometimes difficult knowledge. Therefore, it is important for non-Indigenous faculty to join the work in a fair, just, and sensitive way, which is my goal.

At the beginning, when I just started facilitating the course, I was anxious about being able to navigate uncomfortable topics or questions that could arise that I would not know how to manage, as well resistance to the course requirement, but the students have always been kind and generous. If discomfort happened, it was usually because someone did not know how to articulate a delicate

concept in a sensitive way. Students that sign up for this course come from a wide variety of backgrounds and from different departments. Some students who identify as Indigenous know a lot about the history of Indigenous peoples and others know less and are in the process of rediscovering their culture. Some international students who just arrived in Canada are learning the story for the first time. Some settler students come with an open mind and others with prejudices in place. The community of students that come together in a required course such as this is always diverse, lively, and it provides the space for rich dialogue between the different people groups that cross paths in society but do not necessarily engage in conversation.

If the ICR was not a requirement, many students would not choose to take an ICR course, and because it is required some students come with a disgruntled attitude about the requirement aspect of it. Of course, it would be ideal if students signed up for the course because they want to learn and can hardly wait to take it. Even though the course is required, I have had very few students evidence a contrary attitude towards the content.

After the first year of the implementation of the ICR, we conducted research on the experience of students, faculty, and staff with the ICR. Our findings indicated that “racism and lack of knowledge exist, and that education and relationships are key to changing stereotypes” (Friesen, 2018, p. 189), but the negative reflections deserved attention. Some students expressed their resistance to the requirement saying they felt forced to take a course they saw as unnecessary and a waste of money. On the other hand, the students that started out with a negative attitude but then found the course to be eye opening, may not have taken the course had it not been required. Many students expressed their support for a mandatory ICR because dangerous stereotypes still exist. Reconciliation is difficult but necessary and possible through an ICR. Students that have appreciated the course have gone on to sign up for other Indigenous content courses because they authentically want to learn more. Research shows that students want to have discussions and learn from lived experience, which is one of the reasons for designing the course with plenty of room for student interactions and exposure to many lived experiences. As a non-Indigenous facilitator, the goal is to provide students an experiential course that exposes them to many different representations of Indigenous experiences because Indigenous peoples are not one monolithic group.

Human library and experiential learning

I designed and facilitate Representations of Indigeneity using a human library method. The *Human Library*, also the name of a formal, nonprofit international organization that has grown into a global experiential learning platform, was started in 2000 by two brothers, Ronni and Dany Abergel, and colleagues, Asma Mouna and Christoffer Erichsen, at Roskilde Festival, in Copenhagen, Denmark. They came up with the idea after one of their friends was killed, and they wanted to do something to stop violence. The organization’s goal is to “promote inclusion and diversity by challenging stereotypes and discrimination” (Human Library, 2022). With the motto, “unjudge someone,” its aim is to encourage people not to judge a book by its cover, which it hopes to achieve by people, as human books, having open and honest conversations about their life experiences. Ronni Abergel says, “There are great books hidden in most of us” (Human Library, 2022).

Our “safe framework for personal conversations” (Human Library, 2022) for the Repre-sentations of Indigeneity course works in a similar fashion since we learn from real live humans who are knowledgeable about the topic. Hence, the course is designed based on a variety of themes, such as Indigenous representations in politics, business, music, art, media, land-based learning, food, and research methods. To address these various topics, speakers came into the classroom, we went on fieldtrips in the area, and students chose their own experiential learning opportunity (ELO) to learn more about a topic they were interested in. Students also chose their own textbook from a list of books I provided. After choosing their textbook (purchasing or checking out a book at the library, if they could not afford a purchase) and reading a book by an Indigenous author or Indigenous content, they wrote a book review about the book they chose and shared their learning with the class. Choosing their own Indigenous authored book and reporting their learning to the course gave students a wide spectrum of Indigenous representations.

Course structure

Structuring the course using the human library method not only provides a rich experiential learning opportunity for all of us, but it also serves to support and promote local Indigenous owned businesses and authors. This past fall, Myrna Cook, Indigenous consultant and facilitator, joined me in facilitating this course. Myrna Cook works for Restorative Justice where she develops programming and runs groups for justice-impacted individuals. With her dynamic speaking and engaging communication style, Myrna also provides the lived experience aspect to the course. Our goal of working together to deliver the course was our attempt at modeling reconciliation.

One of the assignments that provides insight into the students' learning process and journey they have embarked on throughout the semester is a reflection journal. In their reflection journals, students respond to the speakers and fieldtrips. They are encouraged to be creative using a list of possible reflection-response options that we provide. This article is a collection of student responses and interactions with the guest speakers, the fieldtrips we went on, and the class discussions we had. All the students represented here offered their authentic writing and artwork as an invitation to you, as the reader, to be part of our collective learning journey. The article is organized in chapters based on the themes we covered in our classes.

Chapter 1

Can you cross the street? by Consultant Myrna Cook

September 7, 2022

On the first day of class, consultant Myrna Cook introduced herself and talked about her experiences when she moved from a northern reserve to Winnipeg. Learning to use the transit system and basic things, like crossing the street, sometimes seemed like insurmountable obstacles. Here is part of Myrna's story:

We moved from Northern Manitoba to Winnipeg in the fall of 1999 and I enrolled at the University of Manitoba for the winter term in 2000. My partner drove me to the University on the first day of class and then created a hand-drawn map of the route I was to take to get back home.

As he drove, he asked me, "Are you going to be able to get home? Do you know what bus to take and where you need to get off the bus and where to change buses?"

I nodded affirmatively, as cars and buildings flashed by in a blur. That first day of classes was out of focus; I found myself rushing from class to class and building to building. My map of the University was of little use because the University campus was a vast foreign landscape. I remember feeling such anxiety, not wanting to be late for class but not knowing where to go and being afraid to ask. At the end of the day, I headed over to the main bus stop and quickly found the bus I needed to take to get downtown for my transfer. As I sank gratefully into a seat, I thought about how overwhelming the day had been. Nothing at all like the quiet little northern town where I am from. In a short while, I arrived downtown where I exited the bus, and looked for Bus 15 that I was to

take home. Standing at the corner shiver-ing with cold, I watched the many transit buses go by. I saw the number 15 bus I needed and thought it would stop at my corner soon. Only it never did. I watched it go by over and over on the other side of the street. In my mind, I thought that the bus stopped at every single stop in the city and didn't understand why it never arriv-ed on the side of the street where I was waiting. After about fifteen minutes, I was so cold. I looked around me warily, then spotted an older lady who I thought I could ask.

I walked up to her and said, "Excuse me, can you tell me how to get to the number 15 bus?"

The lady looked at me and her eyes widened in surprise. "Well, you have to cross the street, dear."

I remember the feeling of humiliation as I thanked her hurriedly and turned around to walk up the street to wait at the light before I crossed. I just had such an overwhelming feeling of: I don't belong here; goodness, I don't even know that I have to cross the street. I should just leave, go back home, back to the bush, and my little community where I knew what was expected of me. I felt I would never fit in and never belong living in the city.

I am so grateful that I persevered and completed my education. I always en-courage my group participants by asking them, "Can you cross the street?" I get a lot of perplexed stares at first. I ask again, "Can you cross the street?" Then a mur-mur of voices, answering yes. I share with the participants, "Then you're ahead of me, because when I first came to the city, I didn't know how to cross the street. If I can learn, overcome, and persevere, then I have no doubt that you can as well."

About Myrna's story, by Tiara Anderson

I related to Myrna's story about struggling to even get around the city when she attended university after coming from a northern community. When I first applied for school, my mother had to call the University, so I could speak to an advisor because I was too overwhelmed to do it myself. I remember sitting in the academic advisor's office, nervous and feeling out of place. The meeting ended in tears, with the advisor questioning whether I was sure I was ready for university. At the time, I did consider why I wanted to attend.

As an Indigenous, first-generation university student, attending university has not been easy. I am the child and grandchild of residential school and day school survivors, and the edu-cation system experience for my family has not been positive. Most of my family have little to no educational background, and many are illiterate.

I think of other Indigenous students who are struggling with attending school and who want to attend but do not see themselves represented or who also struggle with the thought of attending a Western education system after everything Indigenous peoples have experienced in that very system. The education I have valued the most in university has been having the opportunity to learn Ojibwe. I have taken several courses to learn the language that was taken from my mother when she entered school.

Chapter 2

Fieldtrip to the Legislative Building and a Conversation with

Honourable Wab Kinew

September 14, 2022

Our first field trip for this course was to the Manitoba Legislative building (Figure 1) where Chishimba Ngulube, Assistant to Honourable Wab Kinew, the then Leader of the Manitoba's New Democratic Party, met us. Once we had checked in and gone through security, Chishimba took us to Honourable Wab Kinew's office where we all got to sit around the board room table and have a casual conversation with Wab. After our dialogue, he took us on a tour of the inside and outside of Legislative building. Below is what the students had to say about the tour.

Wab Kinew, the term 'Indigenous', and badass bison, by Jessica Hrymack

The word 'Indigenous' obviously came up in our discussion with Wab Kinew. Wab mentioned that the word 'Indigenous' is effective in erasing Indigenous people's culture, in the sense that there is no monolithic 'Indigenous culture.' Indigenous people have lived across Turtle Island (which is now known as 'Canada' and the 'United States of America'), and both the areas and the communities in which they inhabited contributed to distinct cultural differences. A great example of this includes the Anishinaabe and the Cree, two Indigenous groups whose ancestral land is (at least in part) now known as 'Manitoba.' While Anishinaabe and Cree people lived in communities adjacent to each other, their languages are entirely different. Manitoba is also the ancestral land of the Dene Peoples and the Red River Métis, and while they are both 'Indigenous' communities, their cultures, their languages, and their ways of knowing are incredibly different from each other, much like the regions in which they historically resided.

This was an important and interesting lesson in rhetoric and the use of language. While the word 'Indigenous' is politically correct, this word does no justice to the multitude of communities and mosaic of cultures it intends to represent. People ought not to seek reconciliation with a single entity, but with the various communities residing on Turtle Island. It is also important to consider that one Indigenous person does not, and should not need to, represent all Indigenous people.

On our class field trip, I also noticed that bison became a reoccurring theme in our discussion on our tour. Wab discussed the statues that stand guard in front of the grand staircase in the Legislature; rather than 'sacred bull' statues, these were 'sacred bison' statues. He also pointed out the bison skulls that decorate the ceiling above the staircase; this is a subtle detail that may not be readily noticed, but a detail that is significant in its symbolism. A taxidermized bison head decorated the wall directly across from Wab's office. Inside his office, a bison skull sat on a table in front of the window and served as a memorial to his friends and coworkers who had passed on. Finally, Wab suggested that a bison skull should stand in place of Queen Victoria's (fallen) statue. His reasoning:

- a) Bison skulls are badass;
- b) Bison are an important symbol for Indigenous people; and
- c) Bison is an important symbol for Manitoba.

Historically, bison were an important part of many Indigenous lives; bison meat was a source of food and their fur a source of warmth. Unfortunately, bison were hunted to near extinction by colonizers; because they are not extinct, however, they are a great

symbol of resilience and strength. According to Government of Manitoba's website, bison have been included in Manitoban symbolism since 1870, and represent the Indigenous people residing in Manitoba (Official Emblems of Manitoba, n. d.). All in all, I agree with Wab. A bison skull is already badass on its own and would certainly make for a badass statue on the Legislative grounds.



Figure 1: Featured at the Legislative Building left to right: Myrna Cook, Helen Lepp Friesen, Shylah Chartrand, Jessica Hrymack, September 14, 2022. (Photo used with permission of Daniel Lepp Friesen, 2022.)

The People's building, by Emmanuela Ejiogu

I am not very active in Canadian politics and before today, I had never met an Indigenous politician. I thought that most Indigenous people involved in leadership roles did so as Elders to their communities. I was mesmerised by the aura that Wab Kinew's presence commanded since he was an eloquent speaker and easy to listen to. The tour of the legislative building was for me an experience that I never thought

I would have. I saw it instead as an imposing building where only government workers were welcome. Hence the reason that Kinew's comments resonated with me when he said something along the lines of, "the legislative building is supposed to be the people's building, but it was instead surrounded by barricades." This comment made me understand why I had always felt that the building had such an unwelcoming feel from the outside. If a government is afraid of the very people that it is supposed to represent, then it must mean that the government has along the line somewhere failed in its duty to the people.

Reconciliation, by Shylah Chartrand

Wab explained to us what he thought *Truth and Reconciliation* meant. In his words “There was something there before, then it fell apart, and now we’re trying to put it back together,” and that is probably the simplest way to explain what Truth and Reconciliation is to those who don’t know what the term means.

Wab also mentioned that positive representations of Indigenous people have increased in the last decade. I could not agree more with him. The most recent attention was the movie *Prey*, produced by 20th Century Studios, that was released on Disney+. The lead role was an Indigenous female which says a lot about how much the film industry is changing. I don’t think I’ve ever seen a positive movie that starred an Indigenous actress as the main character in any Hollywood movies.

Before the fieldtrip was over, Wab himself gave us a tour of the Legislature. I thought that was really kind of him. Wab showed us the Indigenous art that was in various areas of the building. Some were engraved when the building was being made and others were added more recently.

That was my first time meeting Wab and my first time being in the Legislative. Overall, it was a great experience. Wab was extremely kind throughout the entire trip.

Tattoo artist, by Juliana Thiessen

Wab Kinew at the Manitoba Legislature building inspired my journal entry. This experience was very visual, and there were many moments and images of symbolism throughout our time with Mr. Kinew. He spoke multiple times about the bison, the bison skull, and how when the legislature building was first built, they incorporated these culturally significant animals to Indigenous people into the structure and foundation of the building. For this journal entry I wanted to create some-thing visual, in order to convey the images that we saw on that field trip, and these were the symbols that spoke to me the most (Figure 2).



Figure 2: Tattoo artist. (Figure used with permission of Juliana Thiessen, 2022.)

Chapter 3

A Musical Journey: Guest speakers Lisa Muswagon and Karmen Omeasoo

September 21, 2022

On September 21, musicians Karmen Omeasoo and Lisa Muswagon inspired the class with their lived experience in the music industry. Karmen, also known as Hellnback, is from Samson Cree Nation in Alberta and is a veteran of the Indigenous hip hop scene. In the early 2000s, he moved to Winnipeg where he continued his music career. His first solo album, “Family over Everything,” earned Indigenous Music Award nominations. In 2019, Hellnback was nominated as Indigenous artist of the year (Story Hive, 2015).

Lisa Muswagon, artist and musician from Pimicikamak Cree Nation, Manitoba, tells stories about her culture using a traditional hand drum. In 2017, she was nominated as best new artist at the Indigenous Music Awards for her solo album project “Buffalo and Rabbit.” The same project earned her a nomination as Aboriginal Songwriter of the Year at the Canadian Folk Music Award (Music, Manitoba, 2022). Lisa and Karmen (Figure 3) also produce and perform music together and recently started sharing the story about Karmen’s health challenges.

Karmen and Lisa ended the class with a powerful presentation of their composition “My Native People.” You can access their song, “My Native People,” [here](#).



Figure 3: “First Nation Couple Shares Their Musical Journey to Inspire People” (U-channel.ca, 2021.)

Indigenous representation in

music, by Shylah Chartrand

When Lisa and Karmen introduced themselves, I thought it was very respectful of them to acknowledge that they are on Treaty 1 Territory. They both shared their life story about how they grew up and how they got into music. I was really surprised to learn that they both attended day school; especially because they look young. They are a prime example that the history of residential schools and day schools was not that long ago.

As Lisa was speaking, she mentioned how her parents never provided that emotional nurturing when she was growing up which reminded me of my life. My grandparents went to residential schools and my mom went to day school. When I was a child, I didn't learn how to express my emotions either, so I was really able to connect with Lisa on that level.

A couple of things I learned during their presentation was that Karmen was the first Indigenous artist ever to be on Much Music television. I thought that was neat that he was on the same music channel that showcased rappers, such as Snoop Dogg and Dr. Dre. Another thing I never knew about was the music industry categorizes Indigenous singers/rappers into one category. I always wondered why Indigenous music artists never got the recognition they should have and now I know.

One last thing I wanted to reflect on was their musical performance at the end. While Karmen rapped about the challenges Indigenous people go through daily, Lisa sang an accompaniment of traditional singing. I cannot explain how beautiful it was. There was so much emotion in the performance, it actually gave me goosebumps. That's how intense it was. It was amazing. I never heard of Lisa and Karmen until today and I am glad I got to meet them.

Chapter 4

Fieldtrip to the INUA exhibit at the Qaumajuq museum in the Winnipeg Art Gallery

September 28, 2022

On September 28, we all met at the Qaumajuq museum in the Winnipeg Art Gallery [WAG] that houses the INUA exhibit, the largest public collection of contemporary Inuit art in the world (Winnipeg Art Gallery, 2023). The exhibition gives visitors a taste of what Arctic life is like from an Inuit perspective. INUA means life force. INUA is also an acronym which means Inuit moving forward together (Barske, 2021). The gallery space is called Qilak, which means sky in Inuktitut. Light streams into the space through the skylights on the ceiling. The photos presented below (Figures 4-8) in this chapter were taken by students.

Indigenous representation at the WAG, by Jessica Hrymack

Q
a
u
m
a
j
u
q

This part of the Winnipeg Art Gallery has been designed to look like a Northern community. The walls and ceiling are painted white, and the exhibit in its entirety is incredibly bright, much like the arctic in winter months.

Figure 4: Qaumajuq installation description: *INUA: Inuit Nunangat Ungammuaktut Atautikkut / Inuit Moving Forward Together*, 2022 WAG-Qaumajuq, Winnipeg, MB. (Illustration by Jessica Hrymack, 2022.)



Figure 5: Qaumajuq installation description: *INUA: Inuit Nunangat Ungammuaktut Atautikkut / Inuit Moving Forward Together*, 2022 WAG-Qaumajuq, Winnipeg, MB. (Photo used by permission of Jessica Hrymack, 2022.)

Amongst the art created by incredibly talented Indigenous artists are two large structures, both exhibits in themselves.

The red structure is a storage container, and the grey structure is a fishing hut.

Both structures are a common sight in Northern communities.



Figure 6: Qaumajuq installation description: *INUA: Inuit Nunangat Ungammuaktut Atautikkut / Inuit Moving Forward Together*, 2022 WAG-Qaumajuq, Winnipeg, MB. (Photo used by permission of Jessica Hrymack, 2022.)



The lights in the ceiling represent ice fishing holes.

Figure 7: Qaumajuq installation description: *INUA: Inuit Nunangat Ungammuaktut Atautikkut / Inuit Moving Forward Together*, 2022 WAG-Qaumajuq, Winnipeg, MB. (Photo used by permission of Jessica Hrymack, 2022.)

This poem, which is draped on the wall, is reminiscent of an ice sheet.

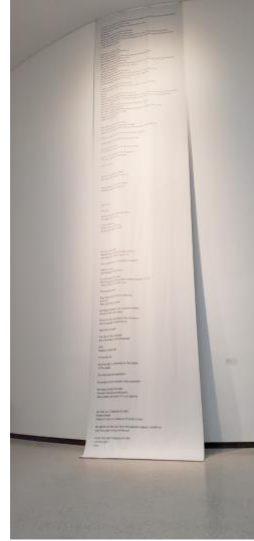


Figure 8: Qaumajuq installation description: *Arkhticos is Dreaming*, by Jessie Kleeman. Part of *INUA: Inuit Nunangat Ungammuaqtut Atautikkut | Inuit Moving Forward Together*, 2022. WAG-Qaumajuq, Winnipeg, MB. (Photos used by permission of Jessica Hrymack, 2022.)

A celebration of Indigenous Culture through Art, by Emmanuela Ejiogu

The sense and feeling that INUA inspires is for me indescribable. The magnificent display of generations of Inuit sculptures does not intimidate; rather, it stirred my curiosity to want to know and learn more about Indigenous art in Canada. Particularly the sculptures and the materials that they are made from, how these materials are sourced, and the methods involved in shaping them. I was awed by this exhibit, even though I work at the Winnipeg Art Gallery. The difference for me was in experiencing it with others who had not been to the gallery since Qaumajuq was built. I understand INUA as both a celebration of Indigenous culture through art, as well as Indigenous subversions of colonial ideals with resistance through various art forms and pieces. The pieces that I felt the most connected to were on the fourth floor of the INUA exhibition, where different Inuit people reflected on their Inuit and LGBTQIA identities. They made me reflect how often our cultural identities can be hesitant to accept the other aspects of who a person is or could be. I found it brave that they were able to speak up for themselves and find ways to reconcile both of their identities.

2SLGBTQ+ Indigenous culture at the INUA Art exhibit, by Juliana Thiessen



Figures 10-12: Continuous Series: Andrew Miller, Moriah Sallaffie, Bethany Horton, Bonnie Maroni, Tuiġana, by Jenny Irene Miller. Part of *INUA: Inuit Nunangat Ungammuaqtut Atautikkut / Inuit Moving Forward Together*, 2022. WAG-Qaumajuq, Winnipeg, MB. (Photos used by permission of Juliana Thiessen, 2022.)

I took these three images (Figures 10-12) while on our field trip to the INUA exhibit at the Qaumajuq Art Gallery. This specific display within the exhibit at the last stop of the tour stood out to me the most. I wish we had more time to sit with the feelings that these stories evoked. Each of these portraits along the wall is a photo of an Indigenous person who is also a member of the Queer community and their own specific struggle, journey, or perspective. As a queer person myself, this display was very moving to read and take in these thoughts and feelings, that have become my own feelings throughout my life. I felt particularly emotional and saddened by one of the stories in particular (photographed on the far left). The one quote that stood out to me the most was:

When a man or woman—no matter what their sexual orientation—found a partner and brought them home, their family was happy and welcoming. ‘That is how it used to be,’ he said. Homophobia was not traditionally practiced in Alaska Native communities. ‘The colonial mindset has been imposed upon us and forced unto us to adopt lifeways, ideas, and understandings that are so backwards that we reject our-selves and other community members.’

(INUA WAG, 2023)

This was really impactful for me to read and experience. It is so sad that bigotry, racism, and specifically homophobia is taught; people are not born homophobic; they learn the fear of people who are different. Reading that the Indigenous community in Alaska were traditionally never homophobic made me feel joy, to hear that some communities are welcoming and accepting, and it is also devastating that colonialism brought that discrimination into their loving community.

Rocks as stories, by Jerohm Villanueva

Today we had a tour of the INUA, Qaumajuq's inaugural exhibition. We had a great tour of all the artworks and learned a lot about the history of each piece in the exhibitions. It was my first time going to an all-Indigenous art exhibition and it was very eye-opening. The artworks are very unique, and you can tell that there's a sense of nature behind every artwork. One of my favourite pieces from the INUA exhibition is a miniature sculpture of a group of Indigenous people fishing (Figure 13) and everything is made out of rocks and other things found in nature.

It's crazy to me that things that I never considered to be worth anything are used to create something so detailed and so beautiful. They took rocks and created a story with them; it was simply amazing! Another piece that I gravitated toward was the embroidered sheets that represent the four seasons (Figure 14).

Without even being given information about the artwork, you could immediately tell what it was, and that was the magic of it. Each piece by itself was a mystery but having all of them together completed the puzzle. Summer made sense of Winter and Spring made us realize Fall. The beauty of reliance of each piece to one another had an in-depth meaning behind it, and I was awe-struck. If there was something I learned from this experience, then it would definitely be that things are more connected than we thought they were.



Figure 13: Fishing at the Weir, by Olajuk Kigutikakjuk. Part of *INUA: Inuit Nunangat Ungammuaqtut Atautikkut / Inuit Moving Forward Together*, 2022. WAG-Qaumajuq, Winnipeg, MB. (Photo used by permission of Jerohm Villanueva, 2022.)



Figure 14:

Wall Art

Qaulluaryak, Ruth. Four Seasons of the Tundra: Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer. Part of *INUA: Inuit Nunangat Ungammuaktut Atautikkut / Inuit Moving Forward Together*, 2022. WAG-Qaumajuq, Winnipeg, MB.

Mannequin

Kyak, Martha. Our Flourishing Culture. Part of *INUA: Inuit Nunangat Ungam-muaktut Atautikkut / Inuit Moving Forward Together*, 2022. WAG-Qaumajuq, Winnipeg, MB. (Photo used by Permission of Jerohm Villanueva, 2022.)

Chapter 5

On the Indian Act: Guest speaker Robert-Falcon Ouellette

October 3, 2022

Politician and Winnipeg mayoral candidate, Robert-Falcon Ouellette, joined the class to talk about the Indian Act. Originally from Red Pheasant Cree Nation in Saskatchewan, Ouellette grew up in Calgary, represented Winnipeg South Centre in the House of Commons and was twice a mayoral candidate for the city of Winnipeg.

What about The Indian Act, by Jerohm Villanueva

I had no idea what a status Indian was and that Indigenous people who hold an Indian status are not seen as Canadian citizen. I don't completely understand that logic but at the same time I've learned that discrimination does not take logic into account. I also learned that reserves that Indigenous people live in are owned by the Royal Family and not those people living on them. Another thing is that the Indian Act restricted the Indigenous people to leave the reserve without permission from the Indian agents. This reminds me of middle school when I couldn't go to the washroom without permission and for adult human beings to be treated this way is childish. What I know now is that I am lucky to have grown up the way I did. As a person of colour myself, I have faced inequality and racism, but I could never relate to the level of bigotry and discrimination that Indigenous people have suffered, and for that I am lucky.

Inner conflicts with the Indian Act, by Tiara Anderson

Our class with Dr. Robert Falcon-Ouellette mainly focused on the Indian Act. I enjoyed this class, and I found Robert to be very insightful. I did learn some new things about the signing of the treaties. Discussing and learning about the Indian Act in classes with non-Indigenous people is always interesting. I find it interesting how little most non-Indigenous people know about the Indian Act, and it is amusing to hear their reactions to previous versions of the Act and its amendments.

I have always had conflicting views on the Indian Act. On the one hand, I recognize its importance due to being the only Canadian legislation that oversees the treaties and our rights as status First Nations. But, on the other hand, I also think it serves as an undeniable reminder of Canada's racist actions towards Indigenous peoples.

I also have a lot of inner conflicts about being status. No amount of misperceived 'benefits' can ever replace what was taken, and even suggesting that is insulting. Carrying a card that states that I am an Indian is demeaning. And the concept of blood quantum and being categorized as a 6(1) or 6(2) Indian is dehumanizing. I hate that I am made to feel like I am compromising my values, my identity, and my people in order to hold Canada accountable for their treaty obligations.

Recognize the tactics, by Emmanuela Ejiogu

When it comes to colonization, there is not a lot that should surprise me anymore, yet still, I am left speechless at the tactics employed by settlers of colonized lands. Considering that I myself come from a colonized country in Western Africa, I should perhaps be able to recognize these tactics. However, ever so often, I encounter one more colonial method used to dehumanize Indigenous people of whatever colonised land in a bid to establish power, and I am again wowed by the effrontery, the callousness as regards to human

life and the disregard to community and to culture. Listening to Robert-Falcon talk about the intricacies of the Indian Act, there was so much that I was only beginning to come to terms with as regard to settler politics in Canada, as well as the issues surrounding Indigenous identity. I still do not have a complete understanding; what I do have is a background understanding to guide any further research.

As a newcomer, I understood that there were tensions that existed, but then I began to learn about residential schools, the reason for the existence of reserves and the missing and murdered women who are often Indigenous and Inuit and recently, the provisions of the Indian Act. The Indian Act entirely disregarded the autonomy of Indigenous people as well as sought to take away identity from Indigenous people. The politics of who could claim Indian identity and who could not identify as Indian was put in place by settlers to control Indigenous peoples.

Living in Canada, I never understood how identity for Indigenous people worked. As someone with Igbo parents from Nigeria, that identity was simply passed down to me. However, I have had Indigenous friends here explain to me that it did not work quite the same way. A friend once explained to me that she was Indian; however, she was not status Indian so she could not claim the benefits of being an Indian person in Canada. I find that withholding identity from people is one way to control them, especially own their narratives. The existence of Bands and registering identity with the government seems to me like something from an apocalyptic society, where to control one marginalized group every aspect of their existence must be scrutinized right down to how they identify.

I only ever saw his face on political campaigning posters (lol), by Shylah Chartrand

Robert-Falcon Ouellette was our guest speaker today. I heard of him before but never actually met him or listened to him speak. As Robert introduced himself, he told the class he was and is still part of the military and that he has two degrees, one in anthropology and one in education. That was interesting to learn those facts about him as I did not know any of that. I only ever saw his face on political campaigning posters (lol).

He delivered an informative presentation on the Indian Act. One thing I learned about the Indian Act was the goal of it, which was to reduce the number of First Nations people and get them off the status Indian list. It makes me wonder why the Indian Act still exists today. I mean I understand there is a whole bunch of politics behind it and eliminating such things is not that simple but still.

Another neat fact I learned from the presentation was that there are 634 First Nation re-serves around Canada. I think I only know of like 10 reserves max. Obviously, I wouldn't be able to learn about every single community, but I sure would like to familiarize myself with more reserves outside of Manitoba.

Chapter 6

Beacon of Hope: Guest Speaker Michelle Cameron

October 5, 2022

On October 5, Indigenous entrepreneur Michelle Cameron (Figure 15) inspired the class with her story about how she started a promotional company called Dreamcatcher Promotions, and 1 ½ years ago launched a retail store in Polo Park Mall in Winnipeg, the first Indigenous-operated store selling Indigenous-designed apparel.



Figure 15: Owner and CEO, Michelle Cameron, in front of Indigenous Nations Apparel Company (INAC) at Polo Park Mall in Winnipeg. (Photo used by permission of Helen Lepp Friesen, 2022.)

Importance of self-worth, by Jerohm Villanueva

Today we had another amazing visitor in class. Her name was Michelle Cameron, a female, Indigenous entrepreneur who owns a multimillion-dollar embroidery company called *Dreamcatcher Promotions*. Hearing all her stories made me light up and inspired as she talked about her passion and all the things she did to achieve her personal and career goals.

She mentioned that when she was a kid, she went to a bank and saw an Indigenous bank teller; her eyes lit up and was amazed that an Indigenous person like her could have a job like that. This stuck out to me because I realized

that for her to think that an Indigenous person being a bank teller is astonishing means that she might have had very poor representations shown to her of her people and the jobs they usually carry growing up. Despite all of this, she aimed high and became her own boss, and I believe she strives to be an inspiration to all the young Indigenous kids like the Indigenous bank teller was to her. Overall, Michelle taught me the importance of self-worth and that hard work pays off.

Success takes time, by Emmanuela Ejiogu

During her presentation to the class, Michelle Cameron made a statement that really stuck with me. That statement was, and to paraphrase her words, “I never take on anything more than I can handle at a time.” These words stuck with me because I am constantly berating myself and struggling in my desire to do more, sometimes more than I can realistically handle at a time. Michelle, as successful as her business is, made me realize that success takes time to happen. In the meantime, ensure to deliver on those aspects of your business that will set you apart from the competition. Michelle Cameron’s success is inspiring because in terms of her business endeavours, she exists in a space not previously occupied by any Indigenous person. Her accomplishments for me say that as People of Colour, we can make rooms for ourselves in places where we might perceive we do not belong. It might be harder and take longer, but it is ultimately not impossible. Michelle Cameron was so inspiring.

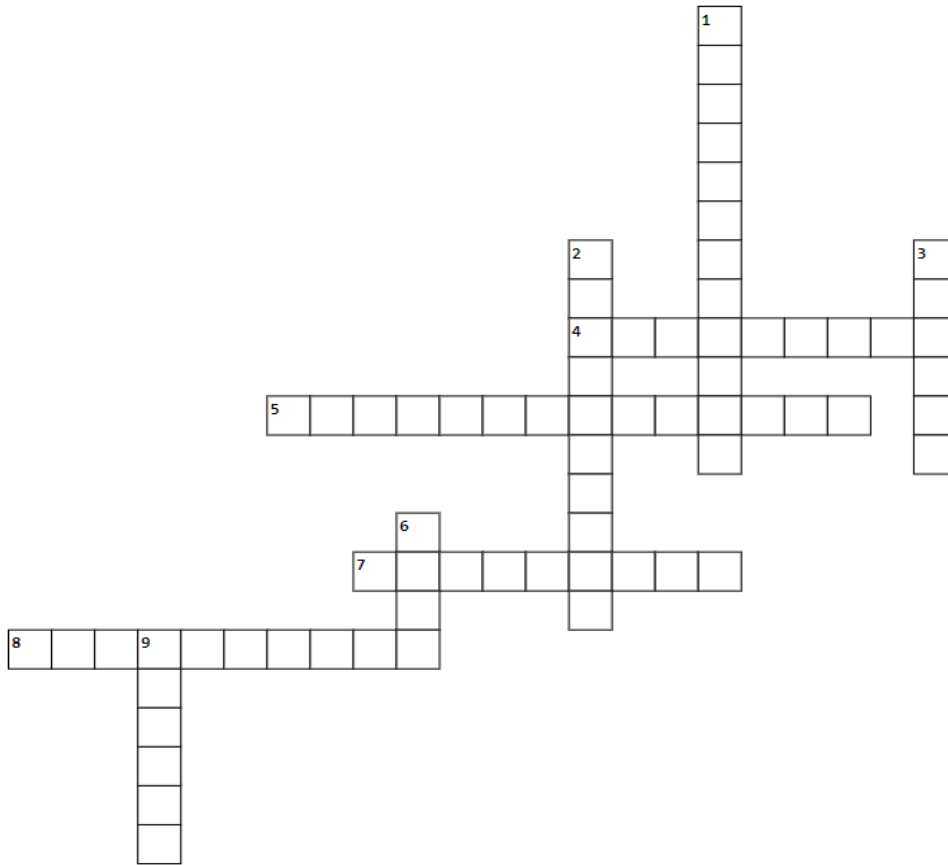
Meaningful reconciliation, by Tiara Anderson

Listening to Michelle Cameron was incredibly inspiring. Hearing her speak about starting her company after many years of thinking about what she wanted to do and how she could do it reminded me of my sisters and me.

Both my sisters are stay-at-home moms. One of my sisters utilizes her bannock-making abilities frequently to make extra money or to fundraise for unexpected costs. Over the years, she has built connections at the University, at different schools, and with Indigenous organizations to cater her bannock. Although these small bannock catering gigs are helpful in paying her bills, one thing she does struggle with is expanding. Not knowing anyone she could ask regarding running a business is an issue for her. Michelle mentioned not having any representation growing up and that continuing as she built her business. I found her struggle with building connections relatable. I can imagine it must be difficult to develop and grow a business when you do not have any connections to others who already have established businesses.

I was surprised to hear the connections Michelle has made with various government agencies. I think it is incredible that she made those connections and gained those contracts with agencies. I think government organizations and groups working with Indigenous businesses is an excellent example of meaningful reconciliation.

Indigenous women in business crossword, by Juliana Thiessen



Across

- 4. An adjective to describe Indigenous Women
- 5. A negative experience that women of colour face
- 7. A word to describe a group that is an important part of your life
- 8. You face these as you start a business

Down

- 1. She bought these items of clothing off of another company because she was upset
- 2. What you are when you don't give up
- 3. You become this when you have children
- 6. Four letter word for the head of a business
- 9. An adjective used to describe someone who guides people

ANSWER KEY

Across

- 4. Resilient
- 5. Discrimination
- 7. Community
- 8. Challenges
- 9. Leader

Down

- 1. OrangeShirts
- 2. Persistent
- 3. Mother
- 6. Boss

This journal entry was inspired by our conversation and presentation with Michelle Cam-eron, the owner of Dreamcatcher Promotions Inc., Canada’s largest Indigenous-owned promotional company. There were so many words that stood out to me from her presentation that I thought were very important, and I wanted to showcase them in the form of a crossword puzzle (above). I chose a crossword puzzle specifically because it is a challenge to figure out the answers, and unless you have the right tools or understanding,

it will take a while to complete; you may even need to ask for help. Michelle Cameron did not accomplish everything alone; she had the help of her family, specifically her mother. She faced a lot of challenges, and it took her many years to get to the place where she is today.

Chapter 7

Learning despite Education: Guest Speaker, Elder Dan Thomas

October 24, 2022

On October 24, Elder Dan Thomas, who descends from Sagkeeng Anishinaabe Nation and Traverse Bay Metis Community, Zoomed in to the class to talk about his experience in education as a student and later as an educator. He is Elder in Residence at the Aboriginal Student Services Centre at the University of Winnipeg and also instructor for the University of Winnipeg's Masters in Indigenous Governance program.

Indigenous representations in the education system: Elder Dan Thomas, by Shylah Chartrand

I just wanted to start off by sharing my opinion about Indigenous representations in the education system. I think that the number of Indigenous people who became and are becoming teachers/educators has substantially increased over time, especially since the purpose of education is so different now and obviously a good different. Considering the initial time in history when Indigenous children were forced to attend residential schools.

Now back to the Zoom session. Elder Dan introduced himself in Ojibway. At least I think it was Ojibway. Even though I didn't understand him, I felt like I was getting a sense of cultural be-longing. I only know a few words in Ojibway, and it always excites me to hear my people speak in our language. I always wanted to become fluent in my language, and I believe that one day I will.

Elder Dan was extremely hilarious. His storytelling made me laugh hysterically. The amount of sarcasm he included made it much more interesting to listen to. Two stories that made me laugh so hard were when he said the priest asked him where his soul was, and he said, "it's at the bottom of your shoe, stupid." Man, did I have a good laugh at that one. The next story was when the nun put soap in his mouth for saying Jesus Christ after he fell. Then she slapped him, and he slapped her back and said, "You don't slap people for nothing." Honestly, he is an amazing storyteller.

I think that it is very inspirational that Elder Dan Thomas pursued a career in education, even though he had many negative experiences as a child/teenager in school. I am sure he was an amazing educator based on his storytelling and humour and I would've loved to have him as teacher. I'm glad that I attended class via Zoom because I would've never met such a lovely elder.

On hair, by Emmanuela Ejiogu

The value that hair represents to so many cultures is often taken for granted. Comments such as, "It is just hair"; therefore, what possible significance could it hold is one comment that I have heard not once or twice in my lifetime. There are many conversations that my community has concerning the value that hair holds for us. For some cultures, it is a way to bond between generations. Growing

up in Nigeria, one of the times I felt closest to my mother was when she braided or oiled my hair. From there we would have conversations, all of which were deeply life affirming for me in my formative years. Hair in its many forms for Black women is a symbol of more than just beauty; for us it is certainly more than just hair. Many Western African ethnic groups have hairstyles by which you can differentiate one group from the other. This is important for cultural identity.

I have also come to see that it is a similar tradition for certain Indigenous groups in Canada to have this same value as regards to their hair. Elder Dan Thomas made a comment in today's class about how he was made to cut his hair while in school and how he felt that this singular action was an affront to his identity. He swore not to cut his hair ever again and he never did. This comment struck a familiar chord with me because, while I prefer to cut my hair today, I remember making similar comments as a child going to a school in Nigeria, where all students, male and female were required to cut their hair very short. As a result, I grew up never having hair because I would shave it every few weeks to comply. I grew up to realize that that requirement was a remnant of those colonial ideals that defined what was professional and acceptable regarding African hair. The predominant idea is that African hair is unruly and messy, and, as a result, the settlers sought to humble us with these requirements. Making us comply was the goal. They employed similar tactics in Canada with Indigenous populations despite knowing that hair was an important aspect of the culture. It is why today hair can stand as a symbol during protests.

Chapter 8

Indigenous Representation in the Media:

Guest Speakers and CBC Reporters and Journalists,

Lenard Monkman and Francine Compton

October 19 and 31, 2022

CBC reporters, Lenard Monkman and Francine Compton, joined the class on Zoom to talk about their experiences as Indigenous reporters and journalists in the media. Francine's father, Jim Compton, was one of the first Indigenous journalists at CBC in Winnipeg and one of the founders of Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN). Francine Compton is the first Canadian president of the Native American Journalist Association (NAJA) (Kozroski, 2023).

Indigenous representation in the media, by Tiara Anderson

Monkman's story of becoming a journalist for CBC Manitoba was inspiring. I had known of Lenard Monkman's work since 2016 when I wrote a piece for Red Rising Magazine. At the time, I was still in high school, and I was amazed by all the talented Indigenous artists, writers, and creators who were working together to publish their own magazines to showcase Indigenous stories.

Growing up, I had a limited idea of what Indigenous people could do. The lack of Indigenous representation around me convinced me that Indigenous people simply did not write, act, or model. Meeting Lenard and reading his work back then was the first time I really thought about writing as a career.

I think there has been a positive shift in the portrayal of Indigenous people in the media. I would say this change happened within the last decade. I think a pivotal moment was the portrayal of Tina Fontaine after her death. There were several articles published that the victim blamed Tina. These articles sparked a lot of outrage even outside of the Indigenous community. As a result, the conversation surrounding how Indigenous people are portrayed in the media, especially regarding MMIW, started to take off, and I think news outlets started to be more conscious of their writing.

A question for Lenard, by Juliana Thiessen

I really enjoyed the presentations of the representations of Indigenous people in the media with Lenard Monkman and Francine Compton from CBC. This past summer I started a new job working in the tourism sector in Manitoba, specifically eastern Manitoba. One aspect of my work entails entering different towns and communities in rural eastern Manitoba to create tourism content, photographing the places to stay, eat, and visit historic places, events and fairs. I had one experience entering a town where it was clear that I was now the minority within the community, because the people who lived there were mostly Indigenous. I felt uncomfortable because I felt like an outsider, and that I was being intrusive while photographing their community events.

I asked Lenard Monkman a question during Zoom, and I asked him what is the best way to enter an Indigenous community to photograph, while being respectful and noninvasive. I really appreciated his remark, that I should call ahead of time and confirm what I could and should not photograph. That was not something I had thought of before.

I also enjoyed Francine Compton's perspective of building relationships with people first, before trying to get the story you came for. Applying her experience with journalism, I can see how my intention should not solely be just to do my job and leave, but to build relationships, get to know the people whose community I am entering, and I will have a much more fulfilling outcome.

Duncan McCue and the Four Ds as discussed by Lenard Monkman, by Jessica Hrymack

I have the CBC news app on my phone. I scan headlines daily, and I read articles often. Perhaps it is the app itself, or perhaps it is my own personal bias, but only occasionally do I see Indigenous people represented in the news dancing and drumming. And, while the stereotype is alive and well, I cannot remember the last time I saw an Indigenous person represented in the news as/while drunk. I do, however, see coverage of Indigenous deaths in the news.

More often than Indigenous people represented as dead, drunk, dancing, or drumming, I see Indigenous people represented in the news as missing. I would argue, then, that Indigenous people are represented in the news under the umbrella of not four, but five Ds:

- Disappeared
- Dead
- Drunk
- Dancing
- Drumming

I understand that Indigenous representation in the news is changing, and that it is changing for the better. Maybe I should be proud of the progress Canada has made; after all, missing Indigenous people are *finally* making headlines.

But I am not proud, nor am I satisfied with Canada's 'progress.' Canada, and Manitoba, continue to do the bare minimum. In my opinion, there is no longer time nor any reasonable excuse for the bare minimum. The bare minimum should have been surpassed long before I was born.

Why do Indigenous people most often make news when they are missing? And why do Indigenous people only make news under the four—nay, five—Ds? I ask this even though I understand that the news only covers issues; however, issues are never surface level.

Chapter 9

Class Discussions on Topics Covered

October 26, 2022

During some classes, we took time to discuss the learnings of the semester so far.

Questions, by Jerohm Villanueva

I really thought today was a great day to write about in my reflection journal. We didn't have a guest speaker today, so we had a class discussion. We all wrote questions we had regarding the class or anything that we may be wondering about, and we discussed it as a class and gave our personal thoughts and opinions on the matter. What stood out to me was the willingness of every-body to speak up and share their thoughts. Some were even passionate about the topics that they felt the need to swear. I got to experience and hear what each person thought of each topic and how they approached each question. Both Helen and Myrna also provided great feedback and added on to the discussions.

I spoke up about how I related to each topic and how it affected me being a person of colour. Before taking this class, I never really thought of Indigenous people's problems and I always thought that they weren't any of my problem to deal with, so I always disregarded them. After learning everything I have learned from this course and hearing different perspectives from my peers, I have learned that if I only pay attention to the things that involve me then everyone else will do the same, and if that happens there will be no progress and everyone will act selfishly.



Figure 16: Thiessen's word map of class learning and experi-ences. (Figure used by permis-sion of Juliana Thiessen, 2022.)

Visual class discussion word map, by

Juliana Thiessen

This journal entry comes from our class discussion that took place on Wednesday, Oct-ober 26th. I loved being able to listen to everyone in the class, hear their thoughts, opinions, and their most memorable take-aways from the previous week. For this word map (Figure 16), I included the names of everyone in the class from the class list because we have all been together for this journey, learning new

things, no matter what our previous background is, or what we are studying in university. Every one of us is here to learn and learn things that were not taught to us in our previous high school experiences. These words in the word map were words that were said or discussed within that one class, such as the four Ds, voting, the Indian Act, residential schools, representation in media, and the need for legislature to change to see true reconciliation.

Chapter 10

A Day in the Life of a Trapper, Hunter, and Fisher: Guest Speaker Simon Cook

November 9, 2022

On November 9, Myrna Cook's husband, Simon, came to class to talk about what it was like for him to grow up relying on a land-based existence for survival.

Nicknames, by Jerohm Villanueva

We had a great guest today. Ms. Myrna brought her husband Mr. Simon Cook. I learned a lot today, but I really wish I wasn't afraid to ask all the questions I wanted to ask. Maybe it was because I was afraid of sounding ignorant or risk offending him in any way. His story was really fascinating and opened my eyes as to how people could have a very different, difficult, and trauma-tizing childhood. Listening to his stories and hearing him laugh at the adversities he faced made my heart feel light; I just found him so strong-willed and simplistic (in a good way of course).

There was also one thing that he mentioned that made me realize that there are some connections between his culture and my Filipino culture. He mentioned that they receive nicknames and they're very often used, and it just shows how happy and how much fun they have. His cousins' nicknames were Lemon, Shyboy, Moneyman and his nickname was Nasiz.

This reminded me of my nickname growing up and my cousin's nickname. My nickname was Rohmba; it was a mixture of the word "Baboy" (which means pig), and my name to show that I was really fat as a kid. My brother's nickname was Tinla to show that he was very feminine, and one of my younger cousin's nickname was Poorboy because he would always ask for food but my older cousins would tease him because he couldn't buy his own food. I had a great time listening to Mr. Cook's stories today and I wish I could hear more from him and Ms. Myrna.

Conclusion: And Some Final Thoughts

What if colonization never ended, by Jessica Hrymack

Canada has acknowledged the sixties scoop. Canada has admitted to genocide. Canada has conceded to, and apologized for, residential schools. Because Canada has acknowledged, admitted, conceded, and apologized, it seems these issues are in the past. These issues remain a part of Canada's "dark history."

But... What if the Sixties Scoop never ended? What if genocide never ended? What if colonization never ended?

We talk about the sixties scoop as though it is history, as though Canada is doing better, as though Canada is actively working hard at reconciliation. Outside of a textbook, however, I have never heard any talk of the millennium scoop. Indigenous children continue to make up the majority of foster children in Canada and in Manitoba. Indigenous people are overrepresented in homeless communities across Manitoba, and Indigenous people are overrepresented in the criminal justice system.

Colonization never ended.

The sixties scoop never ended.

Genocide never ended.

None of this is *history*.

It is an ongoing horror story.

We must start talking about the millennium scoop, which is ongoing. We must start talking about the child welfare system, which, in Manitoba, consists mostly of Indigenous children. We must start talking about the prison system, the homelessness, and the neverending list of missing and murdered Indigenous people.

Indigenous people are doing the work. Indigenous people have always done the work. Myrna Cook is doing the work, as she leads and facilitates restorative justice programs. Wab Kinew is doing the work, as he strives for change in provincial politics. Michelle Cameron is doing the work, as she leads an incredibly successful promotional business and keeps her Polo Park store, INAC, open—not just for money—but because she knows it has become a beacon of hope for Indigenous people. Karmen Omeasoo and Lisa Muswagon are doing the work, as they represent Indigenous people in their music, style, and beaded creations.

It is settlers who must take—and who should have taken long ago—the baton. Let's go.

My last two entries sound cynical. I *am* cynical, but I am also hopeful. I do see progress. I do see changes in society. I see changes in the news and in music and in art and in literature. I also recognize that the changes I have witnessed may be, at least in part, related to the changes in my-self, related to that which I tend to notice. I am not trying to undermine progress, nor am I trying to undermine the effort of the settlers who are genuinely making an effort to unlearn and learn and use their privilege to speak up against systemic racism and colonialism. In fact, I am (trying to be) one of them.

As I write my thoughts, I know that peace and communication and understanding are key to reconciliation. My own anger does not necessarily have a place in the fight for Indigenous sovereignty. This course has helped me acknowledge and appreciate Indigenous people as resilient, as strong, as independent, as a force that cannot be reckoned with (in a good way). As we have seen in this course, Indigenous people are kicking ass and taking names. They are doing so in the face of adversity, and it is powerful and awe-worthy and inspirational.

The very fact that this course is available, and that it is required, is proof of progress. And, while I have already completed my 'Indigenous course requirement,' I am so thankful that I have taken this course. I have learned from Indigenous people who are building and inspiring and staying connected to their culture while doing that which they are passionate about.

Final words, by Myrna Cook

I was happy to serve as consultant for this course. I looked forward to exploring how main-stream media and society portray Indigenous peoples in Canada. Also, I was excited to learn about the contemporary experiences of Indigenous people, through a variety of mediums such as media, music, art, books, business, politics, guest speakers, and field trips.

Throughout the course, I felt that Representations in Indigeneity provides students an opportunity to share, learn, and grow in a constructive encouraging environment. I appreciated the diverse variety of topics covered, in which students were able to personally engage with Indigenous entrepreneurs, leaders in politics, music, art, education, and media. Students were able to hear personal stories of adversity, achievement, and success and take responsibility for their own learning. I was very inspired by the students, as they were incredible learners, passionate, eager, and open minded.

References

- Barske, K. (2021, December 27). Virtual Tour of INUA» WAG. *Winnipeg Art Gallery*. <https://www.wag.ca/art/stories/virtual-tour-of-inua/>
- Cameron, M., Peguis First Nation. Lives in Winnipeg, Manitoba. (2022, October 5). Beacon of Hope: Indigenous Representation in Business. Guest Speaker.
- Compton, F., Sandy Bay Ojibway First Nation in Manitoba. Lives in Winnipeg, Manitoba. (2022, October 31). Long History of Family Journalism: Indigenous Representation in the Media Part 2. Guest Speaker on Zoom.
- Cook, M., Wanless in Northern Manitoba. Lives in Winnipeg, Manitoba. (2022, September 7). What it was like moving to the city from the north. Class Presentation.
- Cook, S., Wanless in Northern Manitoba. Lives in Winnipeg, Manitoba. (2022, November 9). A Day in the Life of a Hunter, Trapper, and Fisher. Guest Speaker.
- Friesen, H. L. (2018). "We are all relations": An indigenous course requirement (ICR) experience. *International Journal for Talent Development and Creativity*, 6(1-2), 189–202.
- Human Library. (2022). *Human Library Organization*. <https://humanlibrary.org/about/>
- INUA WAG. (2023). *Winnipeg Art Gallery*. www.wag.ca/exhibitions/inua/
- Kigutikakjuk, Olajuk. (2022). Fishing at the Weir. Part of INUA: Inuit Nunangat Ungammuaktut Atautikku | Inuit Moving Forward Together. *WAG-Qaumajuq, Winnipeg Art Gallery*. Winnipeg, MB.
- Kinew, W., Onigaming First Nation in Northwestern Ontario. Lives in Winnipeg, Manitoba. (2022, September 14). A Tour of the Legislative Building: Indigenous Representation in Politics. Legislative Building Visit and Tour.
- Kleeman, J. (2022). Arkhticos is Dreaming. Part of INUA: Inuit Nunangat Ungammuaktut Atautikku | Inuit Moving Forward Together. *WAG-Qaumajuq, Winnipeg Art Gallery*. Winnipeg, MB.
- Kozroski, A. (2023, January 26). For one journalist, telling Indigenous stories the right way is in her blood. www.eaglefeathernews.com. <https://www.eaglefeathernews.com/arts/for-one-journalist-telling-indigenous-stories-the-right-way-is-in-her-blood>
- Kyak, M. (2022). Our Flourishing Culture. Part of INUA: Inuit Nunangat Ungammuaktut Atautikku | Inuit Moving Forward Together. *WAG-Qaumajuq, Winnipeg Art Gallery*. Winnipeg, MB.
- Manitoba Music. (2022, June 10). "Lisa Muswagon." *Manitoba Music*. www.manitobamusic.com/lisamuswagon#:~:text=Lisa%20Muswagon%20is%20an%20artist
- Miller, J. I. (2022). Continuous Series: Andrew Miller, Moriah Sallaffie, Bethany Horton, Bonnie Maroni, Tui gana. Part of INUA: Inuit Nunangat Ungammuaktut Atautikku | Inuit Moving Forward Together, 2022. *WAG-Qaumajuq, Winnipeg Art Gallery*. Winnipeg, MB.

Monkman, L., Anishinaabe from Lake Manitoba First Nation, Treaty 2 territory. Lives in Winnipeg, Manitoba. (2022, October 19). Indigenous Representation in the Media. Guest Speaker on Zoom.

Muswagon, L., Pimicikamak Cree Nation in Manitoba & Omeasoo, K., Samson Cree Nation in Alberta. Live in Winnipeg, Manitoba. (2022, September 21). A Musical Journey. Guest Speakers.

Official Emblems of Manitoba: The Coat of Arms, Emblems and the Manitoba Tartan Act Coat of Arms. (n.d.). *Government of Manitoba*. <https://www.gov.mb.ca/legislature/visiting/docs/symbolsofmanitoba.pdf>

Ouellette, R.-F., Red Pheasant Cree Nation in Saskatchewan. Lives in Winnipeg, Manitoba. (2022, October 3). On the Indian Act. Guest Speaker.

Qaulluaryak, R. (2022). Four Seasons of the Tundra: Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer. Part of INUA: Inuit Nunangat Ungammuktut Atautikkut | Inuit Moving Forward Together. *WAG-Qaumajuq, Winnipeg Art Gallery*. Winnipeg, MB.

Story Hive. (2015). "Karmen Omeasoo." *Storyhive.com, 2015*. www.storyhive.com/creators/79495.

Thomas, D., Elder. Sagkeeng Anishinaabe Nation. Lives on an acreage between Gull Lake and Thalberg, Manitoba. (2022, October 24). Learning despite Education. Guest Speaker on Zoom.

U-channel.ca. (2021, August 9). *First Nation couple shares their musical journey to inspire people. U Multicultural*. <https://u-channel.ca/first-nation-couple-shares-their-musical-journey-to-inspire-people/>

Winnipeg Art Gallery. (2023). *Qaumajuq: WAG*. <https://www.wag.ca/about/qaumajuq/>