

Indigenous Nations and the Problems of Sovereignty

POLS 776

Prof. Noelani Goodyear-Ka'ōpua
Wednesdays, 1:30 – 4pm, Saunders

Course overview

“Sovereignty” has been mobilized variously to suppress, to contain, to transform and to represent the autonomy of nations who self-identify as Indigenous. This course explores the complex engagements between sovereignty and indigeneity. As such, we begin from the foundational assumption that understandings and practices of sovereignty and indigeneity change across time and place. They are historically contingent political categories. Joanne Barker historicizes indigenous sovereignty in this way:

“Following World War II, sovereignty emerged not as a new but as a particularly valued term within indigenous discourses to signify a multiplicity of legal and social rights to political, economic, and cultural self-determination. It was a term around which social movements formed and political agendas for decolonization and social justice were articulated. It has come to mark the complexities of global indigenous efforts to reverse ongoing experiences of colonialism as well as to signify local efforts at the reclamation of specific territories, resources, governments, and cultural knowledge practices.”¹

This course gives participants the opportunity to delve deeply into critical, Indigenous examinations of sovereignty, particularly the concept’s ability to (re)initiate meaningful self-determination and healing from the legacies of colonial and imperial violence.

Student learning outcomes

- Learn to historicize and critically analyze Indigenous mobilizations of the concept and practices of sovereignty.
- Push beyond sovereignty’s imaginary by exploring other ways of theorizing and practicing Indigenous autonomy, nationhood and territoriality.
- Frame their own questions and lines of research in relation to Indigenous theory and the topics raised during the course.
- Practice writing theoretically-informed commentaries for broad audiences.
- Deepen the ability to produce quality scholarship by writing a substantial research paper that draws on a set of texts discussed during this seminar.

Required Texts

All books are available for purchase from the UH bookstore and many of them can be purchased used online. Additional articles accessible through Laulima.

Barker, Joanne, ed. *Sovereignty Matters: Locations of Contestation and Possibility in Indigenous Struggles for Self-Determination*. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2005.

¹ Joanne Barker, ed., *Sovereignty Matters: Locations of Contestation and Possibility in Indigenous Struggles for Self-Determination* (University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 1.

- Coulthard, Glen Sean. *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*. First Edition edition. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014.
- Doerfler, Jill. *Those Who Belong: Identity, Family, Blood, and Citizenship among the White Earth Anishinaabeg*. Michigan State University Press, 2015.
- Hanlon, David. *Making Micronesia: A Political Biography of Tosiwo Nakayama*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014.
- Klopotek, Brian. *Recognition Odysseys: Indigeneity, Race, and Federal Tribal Recognition Policy in Three Louisiana Indian Communities*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2011.
- Miranda, Deborah A. *Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir*. Berkeley: Heyday, 2013.
- Simpson, Audra. *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2014.
- Teaiwa, Katerina Martina. *Consuming Ocean Island: Stories of People and Phosphate from Banaba*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014.
- Waddell, Eric. *Jean-Marie Tjibaou, Kanak Witness to the World: An Intellectual Biography*. 1 edition. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008.
- Wilkins, David E., and K. Tsianina Lomawaima. *Uneven Ground: American Indian Sovereignty and Federal Law*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002.
- Wilkins, Thurman. *Cherokee Tragedy: The Ridge Family and the Decimation of a People*. Second Edition edition. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989.

Course Requirements and Assessments

1. Attendance & Participation (10%)

A seminar is based upon conversation, not lectures and passive learning. Prepare for and participate in seminar accordingly. This includes: reading all the assigned material and actively contributing to class discussion. Your A&P grade will be based upon:

- Facilitating discussion for one week. With your partner, you will be responsible for offering three things: background, mind map of main argument, and suggestion for public blog post.
- Your challenging and collaborating with others in useful and respectful ways. This includes being a good listener, encouraging others, offering helpful follow-up remarks, building on what others have offered.
- *An occasional absence is understandable. However, if you miss three or more class sessions, you will get a zero for A&P.*

2. Weekly blog drafts: 35%

This semester, we will be creating a group blog that is publicly accessible. This gives you practice “sharing knowledge,” by taking the ideas we are engaging in class and deploying them in ways that others beyond our course can access. This process will include two phases:

- A. Each week, everyone will share a draft blog post with our seminar participants through Laulima. These posts should take the text we are reading that week and discuss how it is useful for a broader audience. For instance, use it to help readers think about something else (a pop cultural text, a current or historical event, an academic problem, a political struggle, etc). Select a video, song, poem, image or something else with which you can put it in conversation. You must complete your initial post by the day before class meets (11:-pm on Tues night), so that people have the opportunity to read and comment on each other’s postings. For examples, see:

- <http://www.firstpeoplesnewdirections.org/blog/>
- <http://tequilasovereign.blogspot.com/>
- <http://decolonization.wordpress.com/>
- <http://thedisorderofthings.com/>

Your blog draft will be evaluated on a +, √, or - basis, irrespective of whether or not your draft gets selected for public posting in phase two. You may “opt out” of up to three weeks, which means that you should complete ten posts for the semester.

- B. During our class meeting we will choose, by consensus, one or more posts that represent the thinking and writing that we would like to have represent our

How do I read for a seminar?

Plan to read the assigned texts more than once, with a series of goals in mind:

- Isolate the main argument of the text and paraphrase it in your own words in a few short sentences.
- Figure out how the author is situating the work within a larger field. What interventions or insights are made?
- Determine how the author uses evidence. Assess whether you think s/he is successful.
- Take note of how the text speaks to your own work and concerns.
- Articulate ways the text relates to other works we are reading.

After a first reading, you can go back and pinpoint parts of the reading that surprised, intrigued or raised questions for you. These can be points for discussion. Write down at least 2-3 things you want to talk about together in seminar. Now you are prepared!

collective for the week. This may or may not include suggested revisions, or ways of bringing multiple submissions together. The selected piece(s) will be posted on the public blog for the week by a designated blogger. (Thus, the public blog will actually be a week or so behind our seminar schedule.) The authors who are selected each week will receive extra credit points.

3. **Engaged learning game play and reflection (25%)**

One of the unique and experimental features of this seminar will be our participation in a “Reacting to the Past” game that will comprise four sessions—one prep, two actual play, and one debrief. At the start of the semester, we will decide which game we will be playing: Cherokee sovereignty or Hawaiian Kingdom, 1892. During the game, you will be preparing and giving speeches. You will also prepare a written reflection for our debrief day. These sessions may be used as material for a blog posting.

4. **Term Paper (30%)**

You will write a 20 – 25 page paper on a topic of your choosing that relates to the themes we have covered. This paper can be a chapter for your thesis, a paper you would like to present at a conference, an article you would like published in an academic journal, or the theoretical portion of a research proposal. Plan to share an early draft of the paper and exchange feedback with your peers. Time is built into the course schedule for this.

Policies

Late Work: If students have special circumstances that prevent them from turning an assignment in on time **PRIOR** arrangements must be made. Otherwise, late work will not be accepted.

Academic Dishonesty: It is the student’s responsibility to be aware of and in compliance with the university’s policies regarding academic dishonesty. (See: <http://www.catalog.hawaii.edu/about-uh/campus-policies1.htm>). Any academic dishonesty will result in failure of the course. You will be referred to the department chair and dealt with according to university policy.

Reasonable Accommodation Policy: If you feel you need reasonable accommodations because of the impact of a disability, please contact the KOKUA Program at 956-7511, and/or speak with me privately to discuss your specific needs. I will be happy to work with you to meet your access needs.

What is considered plagiarism?

- Taking another person’s words or ideas without crediting them.
- Anything cut and pasted from a website without quotation marks and proper citation.
- Copying anything from a book or journal without quotation marks and proper citation is plagiarism.

Consult any of the numerous online sources that provide tips on academic writing.

Plagiarism is academic theft, and there is no excuse for it. Plagiarism usually occurs when students feel overwhelmed (by school, finances, illness, relationship problems, etc.) If you are dealing with a situation like this, please let me know and we can work something out that will be much more positive than cheating.

Schedule

Date	Topic	Reading
Jan 13	What is Indigenous?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corntassel, “Who is indigenous?” • Deloria, V. “Self-Determination and the Concept of Sovereignty”
Jan 20	Sovereignty, recognition and their problems How and why do they matter?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barker, <i>Sovereignty Matters</i>, select chapters • Intro to <i>Recognition, Sovereignty Struggles, and Indigenous Rights in the United States</i> by Ouden and O'Brien • Holm, et al. “Peoplehood: A Model for the Extension of Sovereignty in American Indian Studies.”
Jan 27	Sovereignty, recognition and their problems How and why do they matter?	<i>Red Skin, White Masks</i>
Feb 3	Stories as methods: Sovereignty, affect and genealogy	<i>Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir</i>
Feb 10	Historical case study and <i>Reacting to the Past</i> game <i>Red Clay, 1835: Cherokee Removal and the Meaning of Sovereignty</i>	<i>Cherokee Tragedy</i> , up to ch. 10.
Feb 17	<i>Red Clay, 1835</i> , game play cont.	<i>Red Clay: Reacting to the Past</i> gamebook
Feb 24	<i>Red Clay, 1835</i> , game play cont.	<i>Red Clay: Reacting to the Past</i> gamebook
Mar 2	U.S. Federal law and Indian country	Wilkins and Lomawaima, <i>Uneven Ground</i>
Mar 9	Three studies in recognition and race	Klopotek, <i>Recognition Odysseys</i>
Mar 16	Contemporary Constitution-building	Doerflor, <i>Those Who Belong</i>
Mar 30	Sovereignty and Indigenous Refusal	Simpson, <i>Mohawk Interruptus</i>
Apr 6	Case studies in Oceania: Federated	Hanlon, <i>Making Micronesia</i> .

	States of Micronesia	
Apr 13	Case studies in Oceania: Kanaky	<i>Jean-Marie Tjibaou, Kanak Witness to the World.</i> Possibly selections from: <i>The Kanak Awakening: The Rise of Nationalism in New Caledonia</i> by D. Chappell
Apr 20	Case studies in Oceania: Banaba Capitalist extraction, Indigenous Ecologies and Migration	<i>Consuming Ocean Island: Stories of People and Phosphate from Banaba</i>
Apr 27	Writing workshops	Read and give feedback on peers' papers
May 4	Writing workshops	Read and give feedback on peers' papers Last day of class
May 11	Final paper due	