

The University of Lethbridge

COURSE OUTLINE

EDUC5510A Blackfoot Pedagogy

SS I & II, 2010

Date: April 24th, May 8th, July 6th & 8th, 12th, 13th & 16th

Class Times: 9:00-15:50

Classroom: April 24 & July 8: AH175; May 8: TH277; July 6, 8, 12, 13: AH 177

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Calendar Description

This is one of a series of graduate seminars in the practice of teaching. This seminar series provides an in-depth study of specific topics in and approaches to teaching practice.

Rationale

This seminar aims to introduce graduate students in the FNMI M.Ed. cohort to Indigenous, specifically Blackfoot, pedagogy. This includes the practical activities of teaching and learning in the Blackfoot way, as well as the epistemology, worldview and philosophical premises, which inform and underpin an indigenous framework for teaching, learning and inquiry.

Pedagogy is more than teaching and learning. While in Western education, curriculum and instruction are separated (as in C&I), pedagogy seeks to unite what is to be learned with how it is learned. Rather than an “instructional method” or “cultural perspective,” we propose that Blackfoot pedagogy is about a way of living, being, and learning. Developed over thousands of years in this place (southern Alberta) Blackfoot pedagogy is a profound necessity for survival in *kitaowahsinnoon* or “the sphere of nurture” where we live and what is referred to in English as “Blackfoot territory.” Blackfoot pedagogy is about learning where we live and with

whom, and what is appropriate to do in this place and what is necessary to know, and to know how to do, to sustain life here.

As “coming to be human” is considered one of the aims of Western humanist education, *becoming Blackfoot* maybe the central aim of Blackfoot pedagogy. Just as Western derived curriculum is about “what knowledge is of most worth,” Blackfoot pedagogy is about what knowledge matters (both in Blackfoot territory and more globally). It is about what the young need know to become Blackfoot, to become human and to fulfill their responsibilities, living in this place, at this time.

Below are some tentative ideas about Blackfoot pedagogy:

1. **Relational model:** Knowledge and skills are acquired within a set of complex kinship relations that include humans as well as the other-than-human world.
2. **Learning and teaching is situational:** Blackfoot knowledge is learned where (within the spatial context in which) it will be applied.
3. **Learning/teaching/knowing is dynamic:** These are part of the flux; they are dynamic processes rather than static rules or content.
4. **Localities of practice:** There is a relationship between place and knowledge, and thus what we must be cautious about extending the truth and value of Blackfoot pedagogy beyond the boundaries of *kitaowahsinnoon*.
5. **Learning is participatory and learners are engaged:** The participatory mode of consciousness necessary for Blackfoot pedagogy.
6. **Education of attention:** Blackfoot pedagogy is about the education of attention. More experienced practitioners show learners what to pay attention to and how.
7. **Scaffolding:** Mentors provide scaffolds for apprentices to learn and practice necessary skills. This is one way people come to know.
8. **Skilled practice and mastery:** The development of skilled practice in a supportive context leads to mastery.
9. **Becoming Blackfoot:** *Becoming* Blackfoot (vs. *being* Blackfoot) occurs within the context of Blackfoot pedagogy, for children as well as adults. One continues to *become* Blackfoot throughout life.
10. **Authenticity and assessment:** There are protocols and practices for assessing learning. People are tested and expected to perform.
11. **Ethics:** Learners have responsibilities to the contexts in which they are learning, to the communities in which they are situated and related, as well as to their teachers. Conversely, teachers have responsibilities to the learners, to the knowledge and to future generations, as well as to the broader community and *kitaowahsinnoon*.
12. **Re-imagining education:** What does Blackfoot pedagogy offer—to Blackfoot? To everyone? How can Blackfoot pedagogy inform how teaching and learning in schools?

While the above are characteristic of Blackfoot pedagogy there are other dimensions and characteristics not listed here that we aim to explore in this class.

Instead of asking you to memorize, prove or agree (or disagree) with this list, we ask the question: *what is Blackfoot pedagogy?* Embedded in this question are other, equally important questions:

- Is there such a thing as Blackfoot pedagogy?
- If so, what is it like?
- How do we experience it?
- What do we learn? How do we learn?
- Where does it happen?
- With whom?
- Why does it matter?
- Can educational institutions (schools, colleges, universities) adapt to Blackfoot pedagogy?
- Can Blackfoot pedagogy adapt to these institutions?
- What is at stake, if Blackfoot pedagogy is lost?
- What is our (individual and collective) responsibility to Blackfoot pedagogy?
- What do we *imagine* Blackfoot pedagogy might be, now and in the future?

In this seminar we will pursue these questions together: we will collaborate (co-labour—or labour together) in a joint project of experiencing and exploring what Blackfoot pedagogy is and why it matters (or not). Each of us will be engaged in an inquiry and we will record our inquiry and share it with others—in this way, each of us—instructors and students—will be students /teachers/researchers. We will inquire together but each from our own circumstances. This is what is called *emergent curriculum*. In this curriculum, the primary activities are designed to *occasion learning* (to make learning possible). These activities engage the student/researcher/teacher in a process where the ends arrive from within the activity (rather than being set in advance). *Emergent curriculum* (much like *emergent design* in research) invites the student/researcher/teacher to *self-organize* and to *participate* in *producing* knowledge rather than simply *consuming* it. We aim for a balance in this seminar where student/researcher/teachers work together on a joint project each from their own circumstances. (This is different than “everyone doing *their own thing*” or “everyone doing the *same thing*.”)

Objectives

The course offers participants opportunities to:

1. Participate in the experience of Blackfoot pedagogy and to explore collaboratively the question: what is Blackfoot pedagogy?
2. Understand the significance of Blackfoot pedagogy for curriculum, teaching and learning in contemporary public school and post-secondary educational contexts.
3. Integrate their experiences in the course, and what they have learned, into their practice.
4. Increase familiarity with, and competence in, using Blackfoot protocols and practices (such as listening, visiting, and paying attention) for learning and knowledge transfer.

Participants' Responsibilities and Exercises

Central Aim of Course: to experience (and explore) Blackfoot pedagogy in an effort to articulate what it is and why it matters.

Participants are expected to:

- ✓ Arrive promptly for each class
- ✓ Attend all classes and scheduled events
- ✓ Be actively engaged in learning/teaching/researching *with others*
- ✓ Commit fully to learning from assigned activities as well as from learning occasions that arise inside and outside of class
- ✓ Read regularly—both assigned readings and materials of choice—and make every effort to understand what the readings are mainly about
- ✓ Be prepared to discuss what they have been reading in class
- ✓ Experience Blackfoot pedagogy
- ✓ Document systematically their experiences and share their inquiry regularly using text and images
- ✓ Consolidate their learning/inquiry in a final project/essay

Blackfoot lifeways depend on the young (or inexperienced) learning skills from those who are accomplished, in other words, masters. Through the process of learning and mastering skills, more than the skill is learned. As people learn these skilled practices, they become human and they become Niitsitapi. The idea of Blackfoot knowledge (and pedagogy) can be mistaken for esoteric knowledge (i.e. understood by a small circle of the initiated). But the focus of this course is on Blackfoot pedagogy generally—and what it looks and feels like, how it operates in a wide variety of contexts—from the everyday and the practical to the more esoteric.

Alone or in a pair (or a group of no more than three), undertake to learn a new skill, a skilled practice, something you have always wanted to learn. While you are learning, pay attention to, and document, the pedagogy (methods of teaching, knowledge, wisdom) you are participating in. Document what you are learning with the aim to explore the question: *What is Blackfoot pedagogy? Why does it matter in the “modern” world?*

A: Proposal **10%**

Choose a skilled practice or art that you really want to learn and a possible teacher. Write a brief proposal (approx. 500 words) for your idea. Include the 5 Ws and one H: what, why, who, where, when, and how. Describe the skill, a rationale for your choice (why this skill), and a plan for how you will proceed (who might teach you, where and when will it happen, etc.). Include a proposed timeline. Submit for permission. Once we have approved your topic, begin the learning following the instructions of the teacher. Due: Anytime before midnight May 5th

B: Research Journal **20% x 2 = 40%**

Document your learning process. Keep a diary, research journal or learning log, either on paper or on the discussion forum in Blackboard. Research

journals posted on Blackboard will be available to all of your peers—which may be very helpful. Document the times, duration, places of the teaching/learning. Document *incidental* learning as well as planned learning. That is, record those unplanned times when you “accidentally” or “incidentally” observe the skill being taught or learned and/or thru serendipity where you have opportunities for hands-on practice. Track conversations with others about what you are learning and how. Use digital still or video photography to assist in your documentation. Keep track of the reading you do and how it informs your inquiry. Submit a progress report on your research to date (approximately 1500-2000 words) to date on May 24th (20%) and June 24th (20%). You can submit via Blackboard or hand in.

C: Mini-presentation and leading a dialogue 25%

Give a **short (10 minutes max) presentation** in class on the skilled practice you undertook, what happened and what you learned. (You can use presentation software if you want ☺. Times are doubled for pairs, or tripled for groups of three). Use objects and images to illustrate. If your learning resulted in a final product please bring that. Include short anecdotes from your experience (using what you learned in EDUC5210 about the power of stories to teach and illustrate.)

Following the brief introduction, **host a short (20 minutes maximum) dialogue**/discussion with your peers on your experience. Open the conversation with one or two significant questions. These questions may have guided your inquiry or they may have arisen from it. Your peers will give you written feedback (like an exit slip) and you will self-assess the presentation/dialogue. Three to 3 1/2 hours will be set aside each class in for these dialogues. (25%)

D: Culminating Project What is Blackfoot pedagogy? 25%

Write an inquiry “essay” that describes the process you underwent and that articulates what you learned about Blackfoot pedagogy s. Use Ingold, Davis and other readings, class lectures, your experiences learning your skill and/or previous to explore the questions: what is Blackfoot pedagogy? What is its value in contemporary times? What did I learn? (e.g. what challenges did I face and how did I overcome them?) Include relevant and meaningful anecdotes (as you learned to write in EDUC5210 Issues in Indigenous Education), as well as, images to illustrate your ideas. Your complete research journal, notes from readings done (VLN or other format) and other relevant evidence of your research should accompany your essay. Due: no later than July 22. Evidence to be handed in an organized “container” of some kind. “Essay” can be included with binder or posted on Blackboard.

Grading Schedule for M.Ed. Program

A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	F
100%	96%	92%	89%	86%	82%	79%	76%	72%	69%	66%	<
97%	93%	90%	87%	83%	80%	77%	73%	70%	67%	63%	63%

Course Texts

Ingold, T. (2000). *The perception of the environment: Essays in livelihood, dwelling and skill*. New York: Routledge.

Davis, W. (2009). *The wayfinders: Why ancient wisdom matters in the modern world*. Toronto: Anansi Press.

NB: Both textbooks are available through the University of Lethbridge bookstore. Altho you should have Ingold from EDUC5400 Research in Fall 2010.

Companion Readings and Resources

Companion articles will be available in the library, on the Internet, through the UofL library databases or posted on Blackboard.

Basso, K. H. (1996). Wisdom sits in places: Notes on a Western Apache landscape. In S. Feld & K. H. Basso (Eds.), *Senses of place* (pp. 53-90). Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research.

Bastien, B. (2004). *Blackfoot ways of knowing: The worldview of Siksikaitsitapi*. [Jürgen W. Kremer, editor; Duane Mistaken Chief, language consultant]. Calgary, AB: University of Calgary Press.

Battiste, M. (2002). *Indigenous knowledge and pedagogy in First Nations Education: A literature review with recommendation*. Report prepared for the National Working Group on Education and the Minister of Indian Affairs, Indian Affairs and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), Ottawa, ON.

Binnema, T. (2001). How does a map mean? Old Swan's map of 1801 and the Blackfoot world. In T. Binnema, G. Ens, & R. Macleod (Eds.), *From Rupert's Land to Canada* (pp. 201-224). Edmonton, AB: The University of Alberta Press.

Blackfoot Gallery Committee. (2001). *Nitsitapiisinni: The story of the Blackfoot people*. Toronto: Key Porter.

Blood, N. & Chambers, C. (Producers/Writers/Directors). (2006). *"Kaaáhsinnooniksi: If the land could speak..."* [Digital-video documentary]. (Produced in cooperation with Alberta Community Development Branch and the University of Lethbridge.)

Bullchild, P. (1985). *The sun came down*. San Francisco: Harper & Row.

Carbaugh, D. (1999). 'Just listen': 'Listening' and landscape among the Blackfeet. *Western Journal of Communication*, 63(3), 250-270.

Cayete, G. (2008). Seven orientations for the development of Indigenous science education. In N. Denzin, Y. Guba, & L. T. Smith (Eds.), *Handbook of critical and Indigenous methodologies* (pp. 487-496). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Chamberlin, T. (2003). Introduction and Chapt 4 "There is no place like home."

- Excerpts from *If this is your land, where are your stories? Finding common ground* (pp. 74-92). Toronto: Random House of Canada.
- Chambers, C. (1999). A topography for Canadian curriculum theory. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 24(4), 137-150.
- Chambers, C. (2006). "The land is the best teacher I ever had;" Places as pedagogy for precarious times. *JCT: Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, 22(3), 27 – 37.
- Chambers, C. (2008). Where are we? Finding common ground in a curriculum of place. *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies*, 6(2), 113-128.
- Chambers, C. & Blood, N. (2009). "Love thy neighbour": Repatriating precarious Blackfoot sites. *International Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue internationale d'études canadiennes*, (39)[Issue: Culture and Canada's Cultural Influence], pp. 253-279.
- Colorado, P. (1998). "Bridging native and western science". *Convergence*, 21(2/3), 49-68.
- Conn, R. (1990). Blackfoot clothing style. In p. H. R. Stepney & D. J. Goa (Eds.), *The Scriber Blackfoot Collection: Repatriation of Canada's Heritage* (pp. 79-101). Edmonton: Provincial Museum of Alberta.
- Crop Eared Wolf, A. (2007). *Matsyipáitapiiyssini: Káínai peacekeeping and peacemaking*. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Lethbridge, Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada. Abstract retrieved January 5, 2009 from DSpace at the University of Lethbridge <http://hdl.handle.net/10133/655>
- Cruikshank, J. (2002). Oral history, narrative strategies, and Native American historiography: Perspectives from the Yukon territory, Canada. In N. Shoemaker (Ed.), *Clearing a path: Theorizing the past in Native American studies* (pp. 3-27). New York: Routledge.
- Cruikshank, J. (2005). *Do glaciers listen? Local knowledge, colonial encounters and social imagination*. Vancouver, BC: UBC Press.
- Donald, D. (2005). *Elder, student, teacher: A Kainai curriculum métissage*. Master of Education thesis, Lethbridge, AB, University of Lethbridge.
- Ermine, W. (1995). Aboriginal epistemology. In M. Battiste & J. Barman (Eds.), *First Nations education in Canada: The circle unfolds* (pp. 101-112). Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Fox, L. (2001). Significance of places. In *Kipaitapiiwahsinnooni: Alcohol and drug abuse education program* (pp. 96). Edmonton: Duval House/Kainaiwa Board of Education.
- Grande S. (2004). *Red pedagogy*. Lanham, Maryland. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Grande S. (2008). Red pedagogy: The Un-methodology. In N. Denzin, Y. Guba, & L. T. Smith (Eds.), *Handbook of critical and Indigenous methodologies* (pp. 233-254). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Grinnell, G. B. (1962). *Blackfoot lodge tales*. Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press.
- Heavy Head, R. (2005). *Feeding sublimity: Embodiment in Blackfoot experience*. Masters of Arts, Dept. of Anthropology, University of Lethbridge.
- Hellson, J. C., & Gadd, M. (1974). *Ethnobotany of the Blackfoot Indians*. Ottawa: National Museums of Canada.
- Hernandez, Nimachia. (1999). *Mokaksinni: A Blackfoot theory of knowledge*.

- Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Harvard. [E 99 S54 H47 1999](#)
- Hungry Wolf, B. (1980). *The ways of my grandmothers*. New York: Quill. [970.48 Hun](#) Curr Lab.
- Ingold, T. (2000). *The perception of the environment: Essays on livelihood, dwelling and skill*. London: Routledge.
- Little Bear, L. (1998). Aboriginal relationships to the land and resources. In J. Oakes, R. Riewe, K. Kinew & E. Maloney (Eds.), *Sacred lands* (pp. 15, 20). Edmonton, AB.
- Little Bear, L. (2000). Jagged worldviews colliding. In M. Battiste (Ed.), *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision* (pp. 77-85). Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia.
- Little Bear, L. (2004). *Land: The Blackfoot source of identity*. Paper presented at the Conference Beyond Race and Citizenship: Indigeneity in the 21st Century, Berkeley, University of California.
- Little Bear, L. (2009). *Naturalizing Indigenous knowledge: Synthesis paper*. Aboriginal Knowledge Learning Centre, Canadian Council on Learning. Available from <http://www.ccl-cca.ca/CCL/AboutCCL/KnowledgeCentres/AboriginalLearning/OurWork/NaturalizingIndigenous.htm>
- Little Bear, L, & Heavy Head, R. (2004). A conceptual anatomy of the Blackfoot word. *ReVision*, 26(3), 31-38.
- Meyer, M. A. (2008). Indigenous and authentic: Hawaiian epistemology and the triangulation of meaning. In N. Denzin, Y. Guba, & L. T. Smith (Eds.), *Handbook of critical and Indigenous methodologies* (pp. 217-232). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Nichol, R. (2003). Factors contributing to resilience in Aboriginal persons who attended residential schools. In J. Oakes, R. Riewe, K. Wilde, A. Edmunds & A. Dubois (Eds.), *Native voices in research* (pp. 64-70). Faculty of the Environment, University of Manitoba. Aboriginal Issues Press.
- Ostertag, J. (2008). Learning in gardens: Developing a critical pedagogy of place. Unpublished CSSE Roundtable presentation, June 2nd, 2008. Contact Julia_ostertag@yahoo.ca
- Pepion, D. (1999). *Blackfoot ceremony: A qualitative study of learning*. [E 99 S54 P4 1999](#)
- Reese, D. (2007). Proceed with caution: Using Native American folktales in the classroom. *Language Arts*, 84(3), 245-256.
- Schultz, J. (1973/1907). *My life as an Indian: The story of a red woman and a white man in the lodges of the Blackfeet*. Williamstown, PA: Corner House. [E 99 S54 S3 1973](#)
- Sissons, J. (2005). *First peoples: Indigenous cultures and their futures*. London, UK: Reaktion Books.
- Smith, J. (1978). Let us not be bribed. *Kainai News*, March 2nd, p. 7.
- Stanner, W. E. H. (1979/1953). The Dreaming. In W. E. H. Stanner, *White man got no dreaming*, Australian National University Press.
- Still Smoking, D. (1997). *Tribal education: A case study of Blackfeet elders*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Montana State University, Bozeman, MT. [E](#)

[99 S54 S735 1997](#)

- Taylor, F. (1989). *Standing Alone, A contemporary Blackfoot Indian*. Halfmoon Bay, BC: Arbutus Bay Publications.
- Tilley, C. (1994). *A phenomenology of landscape: Places, paths, and monuments*. Oxford: Berg.
- Thompson, B. (Producer), & Todd, L. S. (Writer & Director). (2003). *Kainayssini imanistaisiwa: The people go on*. Montreal, QC: National Film Board of Canada.
- Tombroski, A. (2010, March-April). A lesson in critical thinking. *Westword: Writers Guild of Alberta*, pp. 7-9.
- Vest, J. H. C. (2005). The Oldman River and the sacred: A meditation upon Aputosi Pii'kani tradition and environmental ethics. *Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, XXV(2), 571-607.
- Wilde, K. (2003). Storytelling as methodology. In J. Oakes, R. Riewe, K. Wilde, A. Edmunds & A. Dubois (Eds), *Native voices in research* (pp. 64-70). Faculty of the Environment, University of Manitoba. Aboriginal Issues Press.