

Econ 244: Economics of Indigenous Communities

Winter 2021

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In this course we will explore the economies of peoples indigenous to present-day Canada in their natural, cultural, historical, and political contexts.

Intended Learning Outcomes

- We will:
1. Characterize the cultures and summarize the histories of the major Indigenous groups in Canada, identifying those aspects of culture and history which have relevance for production and trade today.
 2. Describe necessary conditions for prosperity and economic growth, distinguishing between the responsibilities of government, markets, communities, and individuals.
 3. Identify the economic incentives implicit in various governance, fiscal, ownership, and resource management arrangements.
 4. Interpret economic growth or economic stagnation in particular situations.
 5. Discuss culturally sensitive strategies for economic growth in Indigenous communities.
 6. Articulate and communicate economic perspectives in extended written, oral or illustrative form.

Approximate Course Outline

The Standard of Living and Demographics before European Settlement
Traditional Indigenous Values
The Early Years of Contact, Trade, and Settlement
Economics of the Fur Trade
Métis and First Nations suffering on the Plains
The Indian Act and the Status Indian
Exploring Discrimination Using Economics and Statistics
The Twentieth Century and the Modern Treaties
How the Federal Government Funds Reserves
Governance on Reserves
Infrastructure and Housing
Education and Employment
Property Rights and Aboriginal Title
Using Natural and Environmental Resources
Promoting Business on Reserve
Options for Small and Remote Communities
Urban Indigenous Communities

Resources

We will make use of “Economic Aspects of the Indigenous Experience in Canada,” an Open Text available on our course webpage and online from Queen’s University Library.

Each student should read the core chapters 1-19; 24-25; 29-30. They should also choose one of the 4 concentrations:

- Housing and Infrastructure (ch. 20- 21)
- Employment and Education (ch. 22- 23)
- Environment and Natural Resources (ch. 26)
- Business Development (ch. 27- 28)

Optional Readings/Viewings

- *From Treaty Peoples to Treaty Nation: a road map for all Canadians* by Greg Poelzer and Ken Coates (2015). Great survey of history and present realities. RATED: USEFUL IF INDIGENOUS ISSUES ARE MORE THAN A PASSING INTEREST FOR YOU
- *Clearing the Plains: disease, politics of starvation, and the loss of aboriginal life* by James Daschuk (2013). Exposé of federal government’s priorities in the first decades after Confederation. RATED: THIS WILL MAKE YOU ANGRY
- *Peace Pipe Dreams: the truth about lies about Indians* by Darrell Dennis (2014). A chatty pushback against stereotypes. RATED: FUN
- *The Reason You Walk* by Wab Kinew (2015). A heartfelt and intelligent memoir and discussion of reconciliation by the son of a residential school survivor. RATED: DISTURBING, ALSO AMAZING
- *Hochelaga: Land of Souls*. A movie that traces Montreal’s history through fictional Indigenous and non-Indigenous family trees. Available for free, but interrupted by ads, at <https://www.cbc.ca/films/more/hochelaga-land-of-souls>
RATED: INTRIGUING, ESPECIALLY FOR PEOPLE WHO GREW UP IN ONTARIO OR EASTERN CANADA
- *Scottish Highlanders and Native Americans: Indigenous education in the eighteenth-century Atlantic world* by Margaret Szasz (2007). Author makes intriguing comparisons between the cultures of Scottish Highlanders, Mohawks, and Algonquin peoples who were recruited into boarding schools run by Protestant Scots. RATED: FOR NERDS INTERESTED IN SCOTLAND, HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY

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Assessment

Activity	Description	Weight
Participation in Weekly Talking Circles	Remote learning is not an Indigenous way of learning. Consequently, students must be prepared to speak once a week in one of the Talking Circles. In the Talking Circles we will discuss material which has been assigned for reading and/or viewing. Each week, participation will be rated 0 (absent), 1 (“meh”), or 2 (a thoughtful contribution demonstrating knowledge of assigned material).	30%
Project	Each individual or self-chosen pair of students builds a socioeconomic profile of a particular First Nation in British Columbia and a similar-sized municipality in British Columbia. Data from the 2016 Census and from March 31, 2017 financial documents are summarized for each community. Similarities and differences between the two communities are explored. Students also review a peer’s project.	40%
Final Assessment	As an individual, create a video lecture on the subject of your chosen concentration, giving historic and other background information.	40%