

# TRIBAL POLICY

## Tribal Governance Concentration

### The Evergreen State College

**Faculty:** John P. Hopkins, Ph.D.

**Email:** John.Hopkins@evergreen.edu

**Office Hours:** By appointment

**Term:** Fall 2025

#### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

*Tribal Policy* presents an overview of the historical and developing policies that inform and impact tribal nations and Native communities. The course begins by examining the role of US federal and state Indian policies that have shaped the contours of Indigenous life, from forced removal and reservation policies in the early to mid-1800's to current government decisions that seek to limit or challenge tribal sovereignty. Several concepts and historical periods will be considered for this examination: doctrine of discovery, settler colonialism, international law, terra nullius, treaties, sovereignty, and land. It is against this historical and conceptual background that the course will be able to analyze the survivance and decolonial strategies that have been and continue to be employed by tribal nations. We consider the decision-making processes of tribal governments to build political, economic, and cultural capacity—policy decisions that are designed to confront the changing and challenging contexts of US-Indigenous relations.

The course explores several policy areas impacting contemporary Indigenous life, including environmental preservation and protections, tribal courts and criminal justice, health and social well-being, family and community welfare, and economic growth and sustainability. Specific attention will be placed on education policy, where we consider the long history of Indigenous education reform on the federal and state levels and the current efforts to acknowledge and repair the legacies of Indian boarding schools. In all these policy areas, we examine what this course will term 'policy conversations' between Native and non-Native groups. Attention will be placed on Indigenous activism in effecting tribal policy reforms.

Lastly, the course is designed to develop the skills and awareness of students to engage in policy conversations, including conflict resolution, political negotiation, policy design, and policy implementation. Informing the skills and awareness are key concepts, including decolonization, reconciliation, and what is called 'Indigenous refusal'. These concepts will help inform and

differentiate traditional and non-traditional policy approaches. This work leads to the development of a research proposal that grounds the capstone research project.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

- Describe the foundational knowledge and historical process of tribal policy development on the international, national, and state levels.
- Define the key concepts that inform the ways in which tribal policy is understood and enacted in US-Indigenous relations.
- Compare and contrast the various tribal policy historical periods and specific policies that have impacted and informed tribal governments and Indigenous life.
- Analyze different types of policy alternatives at the tribal, local, regional, state, and national levels and choose those that strengthen political institutions and capacities.
- Evaluate situations and tribal institutions to determine when traditional methods can be incorporated into policy-making processes.
- Develop and apply conflict resolution, negotiation and consensus-building skills and abilities in engaging in policy conversations with tribal and non-tribal entities.
- Design creative strategies in research and application that integrate learning, skills, and knowledge to contemporary tribal policy issues.

## **READINGS**

No texts will be assigned for this course. Instead, I will provide all the readings for both weekends. I also use documentaries as text, some of which we'll see in class, or at least part of these. See the weekend schedules for assigned readings.

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

Two assignments will be required in this course. These assignments are meant to engage you in conceptual and historical analysis informing tribal policy. They are also meant to demonstrate your ability to engage creatively with topics that impact Indigenous life.

***Assignment 1 - Tribal Policy Analysis Paper:*** This assignment requires you to select a tribal policy issue that is of interest to you, e.g., a local tribal council issue or one of the administrative agencies of tribal government. Your task will be to analyze this policy through the lens of our readings and class discussions. Papers will be 4-5 pages, written in APA format, double-spaced, Times New Romans. Submit your assignment on Canvas (Assignment details are on Canvas).

***Assignment 2 - Tribal Policy Proposal Paper and Presentation:*** The aim of this assignment is for you to propose a tribal policy that matters to you. Imagine you will write your policy proposal that will need to inform decision and policymakers and persuade them to adopt your recommendation. Your analysis should draw from the course readings. You will present the key ideas in class. Papers will be 8-10 pages, written in APA format, double-spaced, Times New Romans. Submit your assignment on Canvas (Assignment details are on Canvas).

## **COURSE POLICIES**

**Seminar Style:** This course is seminar style. Our aim is to co-construct knowledge and meaning of the texts, ideas, histories, and issues, to learn from each other on the complexities and challenges related to tribal policy. At times, I may need to 'lecture' to make sure the concepts we engage in are clear; but my aim in the course is to facilitate understanding and to hold space for complex ideas. Disagreements will emerge; this is good. Authentic learning emerges from tensions. This course can raise difficult and controversial topics. In all things, treat others respectfully and compassionately. In the event that I see our discourse devolving, I will intervene and remind us of just and proper discourse. Please refrain from attacking people personally. Using racist, homophobic, transphobic, ableist, ageist, or sexist language, or any language that demeans another person, will not be tolerated.

**Paper Format:** All papers should be typed, double spaced, 12-point font, and follow APA format and citation style. [APA Style <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>] All written work will be of high quality, grammatically correct, clear and without spelling errors. Students may request resource writing assistance from faculty and/or the Graduate Writing Assistant.

**Participation and Attendance:** Students are required to attend each class meeting in its entirety. Participation includes focusing on class content, speaking in class and seminar, listening to others, taking notes, completing class interactive exercises, avoiding distractions, and listening to and interacting with guest speakers. If an absence is unavoidable, seminar faculty should be notified prior to a class and/or seminar absence. After one 4-hour absence per quarter, make-up work will be assigned. Make up work must be completed by the end of the quarter in question for course credit. After recurring absences (being late to class; regularly missing more than one class), you may be denied credit. If you miss a class, you are expected to do the reading and turn in any assignments that were due that class date.

**Incomplete:** An incomplete is not automatic and must be requested. Before you decide to take this route, let's chat about your options. Bottom line: to even be considered for an incomplete, you must have completed 75% of the coursework at the time of the request. But I only grant an incomplete for significant circumstances (e.g. deployment, illness, family emergency, etc.). Put differently, an incomplete will not be granted if you haven't turned in the majority of your assignments and without a critical issue.

**Late Assignments:** Turning in assignments late is unacceptable. If there is an unavoidable need to turn in an assignment late, the student should contact their seminar faculty via email no later than the original assignment due date to discuss options. Late assignments must be completed by the revised due date to ensure full receipt of course credit.

**Credit:** Students will receive four graduate credits at the end of the course if all requirements have been satisfactorily completed. Students will be evaluated based upon their progress towards the learning objectives, assessed from classroom, seminar, and assignment performance. No partial credit or incompletes will be awarded. Full loss of credit decisions will be made by the faculty team. Full loss of credit for two terms of core may result in dismissal from the MPA program. Plagiarism (i.e., using other peoples' work as your own) may result in total loss of credit for the class and may result in dismissal from the MPA program. See the MPA

Handbook and College statement on academic honesty for more information. Failing to meet course requirements may constitute denial of total credit at the discretion of the faculty. Students at risk of losing credit will receive written notification prior to the end of the quarter.

**Evaluation:** A written self-evaluation and seminar faculty evaluation are required for credit. All final evaluations are to be submitted via our online evaluation system no later than one week after the last class. Evaluation conferences may occur over the phone and should be scheduled with your seminar faculty.

**Multiculturalism and Diversity:** Faculty and students will actively work towards contextually weaving multiculturalism and diversity throughout our learning as related to readings, lectures, seminar, and group projects. In a learning community, students and faculty share the responsibility for the teaching and learning environment. Multiculturalism and diversity is to be understood as aiming to promote constructive community discourse about issues of culture, power, and differences.

**Technology Use & Learning Styles:** We all have different ways of learning. Faculty will actively work towards providing information in multiple formats: tactile, auditory, visual, experiential, ect. However, we are limited to means appropriate for the classroom environment. Surfing the internet, checking social media, reading email, playing with cell phones are not appropriate behaviors in a learning community. Consult your seminar faculty to discuss technology use and learning style options.

**Reasonable Accommodations:** Accommodations will be provided for any student who qualifies for them through a working relationship with Access Services. To request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact the office of Access Services for students with Disabilities (360-867- 6348 or 6364). If the student is already working with the office of Access Services the faculty should have received a letter clearly indicating the student as a disability that requires academic accommodations. If any student has a health condition or disability that may require accommodations to effectively participate in this class, please do the following: Contact faculty before class and contact Access Services to receive a letter of accommodation. Information about a disability or health condition will be regarded as confidential. Please refer to TESC's Students with Disabilities Policy.

**Permission to Record Lecture, Workshop, and Other Similar Discussion:** If a participant in class would like to obtain an audio or video recording of another participant in class speaking, discussing, lecturing, or other related communication, and this falls beyond the scope of Reasonable Accommodations, then this participant would need written permission, and would need to give a reasonable time period in advance of the recording; usually 5 business days. Written consent would need to be given before recording takes place.

**Conduct & Conflict Resolution:** Discuss any problems involving others in the learning community directly with the individuals involved (so long as the concerned party feels safe doing so). Possessing respect for others is fundamental to an open, free, and educational dialogue. All students are expected to support and contribute to a well-functioning MPA classroom and

learning community. Behavior that disrupts the learning community may be grounds for disciplinary action, including dismissal from the MPA program. All students will be held accountable for maintaining the highest of academic standards:

- We will abide by the social contract: WAC 174-121-010 College Philosophy.
- We will abide by the student conduct code (including academic integrity and plagiarism): Chapter 174-123 WAC, Student Conduct Code & Grievance / Appeals Process.
- We will abide by the non-discrimination policies and procedures at TESC.

**Guest Policy:** Guests are welcome to visit our learning community during class time and seminar meetings with discretionary approval from course faculty in advance of the requested visit. It is the host student's responsibility to contact the faculty with details about the requested guest visit and await approval. Guests must abide by all social contract, conduct code, and nondiscrimination policy guidelines outlined in this syllabus.

**Inclement Weather:** If the event of bad weather or emergencies arises students should check announcements for campus closures. Students can call the main campus line 360-867-6000 to get the latest news regarding a campus closure or delay. Faculty may decide to cancel a class meeting even if campus is open and we will send an all-class email prior to 3:00pm the day of class. Students are responsible for checking emails and ensuring viable transportation options are available to them <http://evergreen.edu/emergencyresponse>.

**Communicating:** Email and canvas are our primary means of communication. Students are responsible for checking their Evergreen email and Canvas regularly.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

The following course schedule reflects the meeting dates, course readings, and assignment deadlines for the term. Consider this a guideline that we will follow closely; but the schedule is subject to change in light of internal and external circumstances that may arise.

### **November 14-16: Weekend Meeting One**

Friday, Nov. 14, 6  
pm - 9pm

*Readings:*

- Eve Tuck and Yang, *Decolonization is Not a Metaphor*. Available in files.

Saturday, Nov. 15,  
9 - 5pm

*Readings:*

- Katja Gocke, *Indigenous Peoples and International Law*

- S. James Anaya, *International Law and Indigenous Peoples: Historical stands and contemporary developments*

Sunday, Nov. 16, 9 - 5pm *Readings:*

- Celine Beaulieu, *The Permanent Rationalities of the Doctrine of Discovery in Canada*
- *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*

**December 5 - 7: Weekend Meeting Two**

Friday, Dec. 5, 6pm - 9 pm *Readings:*

- John P. Hopkins, TBA (I will provide excerpts of my current scholarship for class. These are draft chapters a current book)

*Assignments:* Tribal Policy Analysis Paper due Dec. 1, posted on Canvas

Saturday, Dec. 6, 9 - 5pm *Readings:*

- John P. Hopkins, TBA (I will provide excerpts of my current scholarship for class. These are draft chapters a current book)

Sunday, Dec. 7, 9 - 5pm *Readings:*

- John P. Hopkins, TBA (I will provide excerpts of my current scholarship for class. These are draft chapters a current book)

*Assignments:* Tribal Policy Proposal and Presentations (this presentation is based on your paper). Paper deadline TBA.