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Reflective Group Writing Project for ENG 3140

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English 3140 American Indian and Indigenous Literatures (Fall 2021)
Professor Carlson

End of Term Group Project: Mock GE Course Assessment (200 points/20% of course grade).
Due Date TBD

Overview:

One of the concepts that underpins the design of this class (and that we have also regularly discussed throughout the term) is *decolonization*. To help remind you of a few of its key facets (both as theoretical construct and as a method of scholarly inquiry), here are a pair of quotes from Linda Tuhiwai Smith's *Decolonizing Methodologies* (from which we read excerpts at the start of the semester).

“Research for social justice expands and improves the conditions for justice; it is an intellectual, cognitive and moral project, often fraught, never complete, but worthwhile.” **Linda Tuhiwai Smith.**

“The intellectual project of decolonizing has to set out ways to proceed through a colonizing world. It needs a radical compassion that reaches out, that seeks collaboration, and that is open to possibilities that can only be imagined as other things fall into place. Decolonizing Methodologies is not a method for revolution in a political sense but *provokes some revolutionary thinking about the roles that knowledge, knowledge production, knowledge hierarchies and knowledge institutions play in decolonization and social transformation.*” [emphasis added] **Linda Tuhiwai Smith.**

Elsewhere in her book, of course, you will also recall that Smith expresses concern that “Western education precludes us [indigenous peoples] from writing or speaking from a ‘real’ and authentic indigenous position.” As this remark highlights, Smith is worried that the structure of the modern university undermines the possibility of effective, decolonizing intellectual work, because it prevents indigenous knowledges from being expressed and considered in unmediated ways. In other words, she worries that in teaching courses on indigenous literatures and cultures in a university context, we may end up reinforcing colonial structures instead of critiquing them in meaningful ways. In making this point, Smith challenges us to engage in deep reflection regarding the kind of intellectual work we do in the university classroom in the field of indigenous studies, particularly when the courses we take and teach are implicated in particular ways in various curricular structures in the university. In this final group project, I want you to engage in precisely that kind of reflection.

Assignment:

You will be working in groups of 4 for this project.

I want you to imagine that you have been recruited by the General Education Committee of CSUSB to help assess whether ENG 3140 American Indian Literature is designed/taught in a way that meets the learning objectives of our university's GE program. Specifically, you have been asked to consider how well ENG 3140 satisfies the requirements for the following two "designations" that it carries.

Diversity and Inclusiveness Designation (DI)

Courses with a DI designation comprehensively explore multiple perspectives in order to develop student understanding to collaborate respectfully and effectively with others across a variety of cultures and contexts.

Global Perspectives Designation (G)

Courses with a G designation comprehensively develop the student ability to understand global contexts and to contribute to an ever changing and pluralistic world.

Your project will be a group presentation that evaluates the course design (content, assignments, etc.) and pedagogy (how it was taught) of this course, considering whether ENG 3140 should carry the DI and G designations. As you reflect on this question, I would also like you to keep in mind the course's stated goal of creating an atmosphere with the intellectual work of "decolonization" can take place. Is "decolonization" as a pedagogical (i.e. teaching and learning) framework compatible with "diversity and inclusiveness" and "global perspectives" as defined by CSUSB?

Each group will turn in a 1800-2000 word (5-6 page) collaboratively written report of its findings. Each group should also prepare a 15-20-minute oral presentation that summarizes those findings. Each group member is expected to participate in the oral presentation, which should be scaffolded/supplemented with either a physical poster (I will provide formatting suggestions for this) or a PowerPoint presentation (or Prezi, or similar platform).

In preparing your written report and presentation, imagine you are sharing your findings with a group of CSUSB faculty who are not from the English department whose job it is to make decisions about whether courses belong in our General Education program or not. You should assume that this audience will be unfamiliar with the course (probably knowing only its name and the brief description of it that can be found the University Bulletin of Courses). Clear explanations and fully developed examples to illustrate your points will be important.

Grading:

The specific grading criteria for this project will be developed collaboratively between the instructor (Professor Carlson) and the class. After this (in class) discussion has been completed, Professor Carlson will prepare a grading rubric that will be employed both for peer review of the written reports and in the final assignment of grades for the overall project.