

# Creating an Indigenous Psychology Post-Secondary Course

Toronto Metropolitan University

## WHO WE ARE

Decolonizing and Indigenizing Psychology Committee (DIPC) consists of Indigenous and non-Indigenous faculty and graduate students in the Department of Psychology at TMU.

## OUR PURPOSE

To address calls for decolonizing and Indigenizing psychology curricula through the development of a new undergraduate course focusing on the impacts of colonialism and the inclusion of Indigenous knowledges in psychological research, teaching, and practice.

## OUR PROCESS

The DIPC conducted an environmental scan of relevant course outlines and interviewed 10 Indigenous Knowledge Holders and non-Indigenous experts from across Canada on course creation, implementation, and delivery.

## Findings from Knowledge Holders and Experts

### ABOUT THE COURSE

Variety in knowledge presentation, experiential learning, relationality, reflection, self-expression, and wholistic learning

Historical and ongoing colonialism and Indigenous ways of knowing & doing in Psychology



Smaller class sizes, and an elective, upper-level seminar format

More than standardized testing: E.g., reflective & critical thinking exercises, verbal & visual expression

Embrace diverse perspectives, engage in critical reflection, and gain scientific literacy skills, humility, and empathy

# IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

## Valuing Indigenous Knowledges



Celebrate unique cultures and histories, avoid pan-Indigenizing, and prioritize local voices

## Inclusivity



Accessible to all and relevant to Indigenous and non-Indigenous students

*"Indigenous knowledge is important. We have to view those voices as equivalent... (to) any other academic that we've deemed is an expert in a field."*

*"...taught from a position that assumes, prizes, and respects the diversity of all participants."*

## Safety in the Classroom

Instructors and students should be safe from harm and racism



## Instructor and Community Burden

This course may burden instructors and members of Indigenous communities



## Logistical Limitations

Unique logistical limitations include a lack of resources to consult for course content, limitations of the classroom environment, and financial and time constraints



*"...making sure that people feel that it is a safe place, that they can express themselves freely. And also that they're free to make mistakes..."*

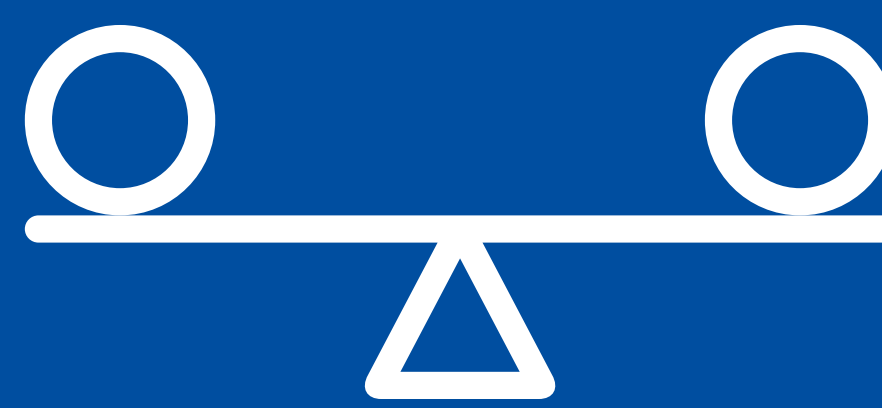
*"Classrooms... you're in this... environment where people are not hearing the wind, not feeling the sun, not seeing the birds, not touching the earth, and you're supposed to learn?"*

## Acknowledging Awareness of Students



Start with basics; don't assume Indigenous or non-Indigenous students' knowledge

## "It's a Balancing Act"



Heavy and strength-based content; flexible assessments and maintaining rigour

*"...it's important to make sure that people have the basics, and also to not make assumptions that your Indigenous students are going to know all of these things."*

*"These courses are often pretty emotionally heavy... as you're teaching this very difficult material, to make sure that you're also kind of balancing it as well with stories of hope."*

Read the full report!

<https://www.torontomu.ca/psychology/diversity-and-inclusion/decolonising-and-indigenising-psychology-committee-dipc/>



## Acknowledgements

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