



Vancouver School of Theology
Indigenous Studies Program

INDIGENOUS THEOLOGIES/THEOLOGIANS (THX512)

Dates/Time: July 14-18, 2025, Lectures 9 am-11:45 am + Tutorial 2 pm – 4:45 pm

Course Description

Indigenous theologies and theologians inspire and challenge the Christian churches and their dominant theologies to engage in dialogue. This course will examine some of the contributions Indigenous theologians have made to decolonize the subjects of systematic and constructive theologies, pastoral formation for ministry, and concepts and theologies of mission. To accomplish said task, the course will focus on an Indigenous understanding of creation in contrast to a Eurocentric view of Creation. Providing an alternative framework for theological study, the life, faith and experience of indigenous people will allow students to critically engage the ways they define mission, church and ministry.

Course Competencies

1. Be able to give a broad description of an Indigenous theological position on creation, fall, the Incarnation, and Redemption.
2. Be able to compare and contrast the doctrine of creation from the dominant society's perspective and at least one Indigenous perspective on creation.
3. Analyse and summarize the theology of a First Nations, Metis, or Inuit theologian(s) with the goal of integrating the theologian's work with the theological traditions of the student's community.
4. Begin to develop an Indigenous-informed theological framework for local communal life and ministry of the Church expressed in worship, preaching, teaching, hymnody, art and personal testimony in the student's community.

Textbooks: We will examine excerpts from the following books and others. I list these books because you may want to pick one as the theologian you investigate.

Vine Deloria Jr. *God is Red*, (Falcon Publishing: USA, 2023).

Pui-lan Kwok. *Hope Abundant: Third World and Indigenous Women's Theology*

George Tinker, *American Indian Liberation: A Theology of Sovereignty*, (Orbis books) 2020.

Richard Twiss, *Rescuing the Gospel from the Cowboys: A Native American Expression of the Jesus Way*. (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press) 2015.

Randy Woodley, *Shalom and the community of creation*, Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 2012.

Course Requirements

Requirements	MDiv (ISP) 3 credits	MA or MDiv 1.5 Credit	Certificate	Audit
Attend Daily Morning Lectures	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Attend 3-hour afternoon Tutorial	Yes	No	No	No
Reading	Yes	Yes	Optional	Optional
10 Page final paper	Yes	Yes	No	No
Daily Journal	No	No	Yes	No

Reading Schedule

Date	Topic	Reading for morning	Reading for tutorial
July 14	Introduction/prolegomena	James Treat “Introduction: Native Christian Narrative Discourse”	Steve Charleston, “The Old Testament of Native America”
July 15	Creation: Creator/God	<i>Rainbow Spirit Theology</i> , “Land and Christ”	
July 16	Fall: Humanity		
July 17	Redemption: Jesus Christ	<i>Dismantling...</i> by Andrea Smith	“A Native American Perspective on Liberation” by Vine Deloria
July 18	The church and the future		

Daily journal

Final Paper

A ten-page paper is due on October 1, 2024 sent to instructor’s email as a Word document attachment. A bibliography is required with citations from at least ten different sources, of which no more than two are websites, excluding Wikipedia. *An equivalent requirement in the oral tradition can be negotiated with the instructor. Please inform the instructor if you would like to pursue this alternative.*

Summarize the views of a significant theologian from 20th century Christian theology and locate that theologian's work in its cultural and historical context.

Analyze that theologian's work from a First Nations perspective or discuss a model for how to integrate that theologian's work with theological traditions of student's own community.

COURSE POLICIES

1. **Attendance** Learners are required to attend all the class sessions.
2. **Reading and assignments** Students are expected to read all required assignments before class and to complete all assignments as outlined in the syllabus within the specified dates of the course and term.

3. **Submission of assignments**

Written assignments should follow the format set out by the *Society of Biblical Literature*. (A concise form of key examples may be found, free of charge, at <https://www.sbl-site.org/assets/pdfs/pubs/SBLHSupp2015-02.pdf>)

Please note the following additional criteria.

- All assignments must be submitted as a word document and uploaded to VST populi.
 - All assignments should have a title page containing all the pertinent information.
 - All assignments will be double-spaced in 12-point New Times Roman.
 - All assignments must be submitted as Microsoft Word documents.
 - The file name submitted **must** begin with the student's surname and designate the assignment. (e. g. Smith Theology Paper 1.doc)
 - The professor will return all submissions via populi.
4. **Academic honesty** Students are expected to adhere to VST's requirements for academic honesty as published in the Student Handbook.
 5. **Inclusive language** in speaking and writing, inclusive language is expected when making reference to humans and a variety of metaphors are anticipated when referring to God.
 6. **Assignment and Course Evaluation**
 - Course evaluations at VST combine a letter grade system (A+ to B-; course failure is "Not Approved") including narrative comments based on the competencies of the course. No number of grades or weights of assignments are calculated, nor are final grades given numerical equivalents.
 - Individual assignments within a course are given narrative evaluations, that is, APP (Approved) or INC (Incomplete) with narrative comments, based on the competencies and expectations set for that assignment. One re-write is allowed on any assignment that is INC. The re-written assignment is due two weeks after the work is returned. The final evaluation for an assignment can be APP or NAPP after a re-write.
 7. **Late assignments**

Submission of assignments on time is a part of academic, professional and pastoral competence and a part of every course at VST. All assignments in courses are due on the dates specified in the syllabus. Failure to submit an assignment on time will be noted in the narrative evaluation of an assignment. Repeated failure to submit assignments on time may affect the final grade for the course. All assignments must be completed in a manner that meets the expectations of the professor in order to receive a passing grade for the course.
 8. **Limitation on use of social media**

Ordinarily, the use of electronic devices in the contexts of classrooms or meetings will be to support the learning, formation, or agenda at hand.

9. VST is committed to creating a safe space and an inclusive learning environment. If you have a diagnosed or suspected learning disability, chronic condition, mental health concern, or physical requirement which you anticipate may impact your participation in this class, you are encouraged to discuss your needs with the instructor and the Dean within the first week of classes.