

# First Nations Performing Arts Decolonization Track

Winter - Summer 2022

Syllabus created by Emily Johnson  
in partnership with Ronee Penoi

*Quyana Jane Anderson and your Decolonizing and Reassembling the Museum syllabus; LaTanya Autry and your Temporary Spaces of Joy and Freedom syllabus*

## Course Description

The Decolonization Track is an eight-month learning/unlearning cohort facilitated by Emily Johnson and Ronee Penoi. This effort is for individuals who represent and work in presenting organizations across what is called the United States. Participants engage in a rigorous syllabus, specific tasks, and sessions focused on Kinship Budgets (thank you Joseph M. Pierce for this term) and backing institutional moves with funding and priority timelines; Institutional Land Acknowledgement Assessments; Supporting Local Land Back and Land and Water Protection Efforts and knowing what is being asked of allies and accomplices; Liberation, Sovereignty and the Politics of Indigenous Resistance; Settler Colonial Violence and Decolonization is Not a Metaphor (Eve Tuck); The Harms of Appropriation; Decolonization and Systems Change, Time and Radical Care; Intellectual Property and Indigenous Data Sovereignty.

## Learning Outcomes

All participants engage in a post-Decolonization Track assessment survey, guided by Emily Johnson / Catalyst's Decolonization Rider (<https://www.catalystdance.com/decolonization-rider>) and Assessment, which offers data and helps identify perceived challenges and successes toward decolonization. As decolonization work is ongoing, the decolonization assessment is annual.

## Syllabus

### Session 1 - January 5, 2022

#### Begin, Introductions, Community Care Agreement

#### Readings:

Decolonial Action Coalition statement, starting on page 17 of [Phase 2 of Creating New Futures](#)

Johnson, Emily. "Decolonization Rider," n.d. <http://www.catalystdance.com/decolonization-rider>.

Harjo, Joy. "Conflict Resolution for Holy Beings by Joy Harjo." Poetry Foundation. Poetry Foundation, n.d. <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/141847/conflict-resolution-for-holy-beings>.

Excerpts in session. Recommend full text:

Pauline Gumbs, Alexis. *M Archive: After the End of the World*. Duke University Press, 2018.

Betasamosake Simpson, Leanne. *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom through Radical Resistance*. *Indigenous Americas*. 2020. Reprint, University of Minnesota Press, 2021.

### Homework:

Be prepared to assess your institution's land acknowledgement during the next session. If your institution does not have a land acknowledgement, this is part of your assessment, but please be prepared with another land acknowledgement to fully assess.

## **Session 2 - February 3, 2022**

### **Land Acknowledgement / Land Back**

### Readings:

Tuck, Eve, and K. Wayne Yang. "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor." *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1, no. 1 (2012): 1–40. <https://www.latrobe.edu.au/staff-profiles/data/docs/fjcollins.pdf>.

Amirsoleymani, Roya, Erin Boberg Doughton, and Emily Johnson. "Instigating Institutional Change Towards Decolonization." HowlRound Theatre Commons at Emerson College, April 13, 2020. <https://howlround.com/instigating-institutional-change-towards-decolonization>.

### Watch:

"Towards Accountability: Art and Institutions on Indigenous Territories | Session 3: Contemporary Art Institutions" from Independent Curators with Jordan Wilson, Jackson Polys, Emily Johnson : <https://vimeo.com/664325993>

### In session:

Land Acknowledgment Assessment: [www.landacknowledgements.org](http://www.landacknowledgements.org)

*WHAT IF What if? A Conversation on Institutional Fear, Cultural Safety & Collective Healing*

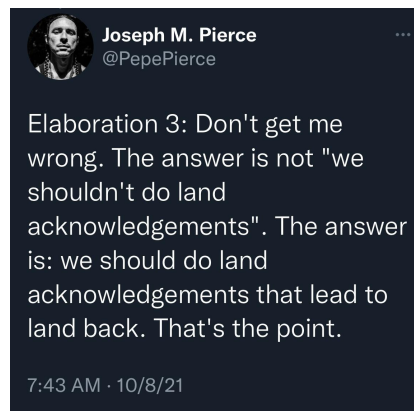
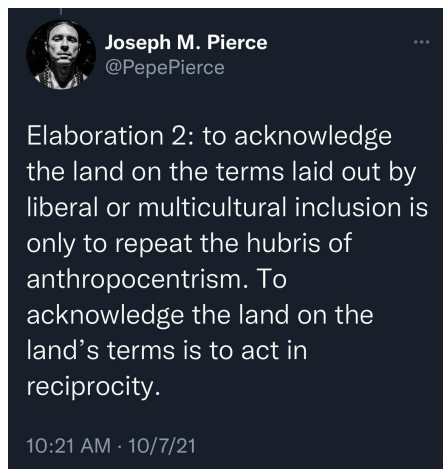
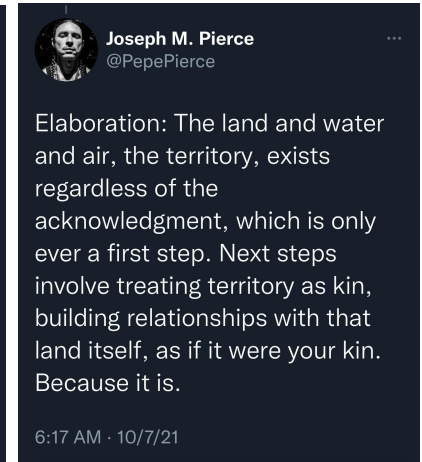
Sozo produced, featuring Marc Bamuthi Joseph, Joseph M. Pierce, Emily Johnson and Daniel Bernard Roumain : <https://www.sozoartists.com/whatif>

Knowledge of Wounds. "Knowledge of Wounds," n.d. <https://www.knowledgeofwounds.com>.

In session excerpts, recommend full text:

“The work of an accomplice in anti-colonial struggle is to attack colonial structures and ideas” -  
Indigenous Action :

Indigenous Action. “Accomplices Not Allies: Abolishing the Ally Industrial Complex,” May 4, 2014.  
<https://www.indigenousaction.org/accomplices-not-allies-abolishing-the-ally-industrial-complex/>.



## Homework:

### **Institutional Next Steps / Kinship Budget**

In your institution, what are you going to do regarding next steps and your Kinship Budgets? Bring a minimum of 3 ideas for your Kinship Budget/Institutional Next Steps that are:

- Beyond the many Indigenous people in leadership positions that need to be hired
- Beyond the ongoing curation and commission of Indigenous artists that is ongoing
- Beyond your land acknowledgement assessment per year; who is resourced to do this work, what is the archive process and how does that resist extractivism;
- Regarding hospitality, are you speaking with funders as to what needs to change in budget flexibility, transparency to allow for real hospitality budget lines?
- How are you resourcing displaced Indigenous individuals and communities coming to their homelands to do what they want, when they want?
- Query what you demand out of these relationships - maybe it should be nothing.
- Can you pay people in cash / venmo. Can you untether your systems from 1099's and requesting invoices?
- Do you know local Land and Water protective efforts, resistance camps, Land Back efforts and how are you amplifying this urgent front line work? How can you support Indigenous land protective leadership even if this is not your organization's mission, even if it threatens your board, funders..(because of course it does). How can you do so in a way that does not apply pressure onto the effort or the ones on the frontlines?
- How will you assure that the knowledge gained here is shared structurally and in acknowledgement that this work is on a continuum (and does not end). Ie - if you leave your position, who is keeping this work up in your organization so if/when you go you don't leave behind a harmful institution who will reroute itself back to what it was previously?
- Coming back to accomplicing - as you are bringing Indigenous leadership in, listening to needs, building those relationships - your job is to chip away at the structural level from within
- How about a new position? An Indigenous person/s who is investigating issues, fractures and tending to relationships (ie go beyond forming a council or having one person on your board. Gear yourself toward becoming an organization that is at least 51% Indigenous.
- Institutional field share; if you've done x, how to share that knowledge (which itself is a decolonial process).
  - Think of [PICA's Howlround post](#)

**Land and Water protective efforts** are Indigenous-led land / water / resource repatriation and protection efforts, most usually but not exclusively against extractive oil, gas, real estate industries and values (examples include the NO DAPL fight at Standing Rock, Stop LINE 3, Save East River Park, and many more).

Bring a minimum of 3 examples of Land and Water protective efforts happening where you live. Please gather and share a base of understanding of

- what/who the fight is protecting
- who is on the ground
- what support is being requested

### **Session 3 - March 1, 2022**

Settler Memory / Settler Colonial Violence

## Listen:

Chacon, Raven, John Dieterich, and Marshall Trammell. *White People Killed Them*. Album. SIGE Records, 2021.  
<https://sigerecords.bandcamp.com/album/white-people-killed-them>.

Listen Notes. "Kevin Bruyneel, 'Settler Memory: The Disavowal of Indigeneity and the Politics of Race in the United States' (UNC Press, 2021)," November 29, 2021.  
[https://www.listennotes.com/podcasts/new-books-in/kevin-bruyneel-settler-WPhG\\_Nmf3Cr/](https://www.listennotes.com/podcasts/new-books-in/kevin-bruyneel-settler-WPhG_Nmf3Cr/).

## Readings:

Okun, Tema. "White Supremacy Culture." *Dismantling Racism Works*, n.d.  
[https://www.dismantlingracism.org/uploads/4/3/5/7/43579015/okun\\_-\\_white\\_sup\\_culture.pdf](https://www.dismantlingracism.org/uploads/4/3/5/7/43579015/okun_-_white_sup_culture.pdf).

Campbell, Tara. "A Copy Editor's Education in Indigenous Style." *The Tyee*, January 17, 2020.  
<https://thetyee.ca/News/2020/01/17/Copy-Editor-Indigenous-Style/>.

## In session. Recommend full text:

Indigenous Action. "Accomplices Not Allies: Abolishing the Ally Industrial Complex," May 4, 2014.  
<https://www.indigenousaction.org/accomplices-not-allies-abolishing-the-ally-industrial-complex/>.

"At the level of individuals and communities, harm is actively perpetuated by colonialism and other forms of oppression through a denial of rights and denial of safety. As articulated by the Canadian Human Rights Commission through the Calls for Justice of the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (NIMMIWG, 2019), a human-rights based approach (HRBA) helps frame impacted individuals and communities as rights-holders (human rights and Indigenous rights) rather than as victims. The Commission argues that "such an approach would reframe issues of importance related to Indigenous women and girls as a "denial of rights" instead of "unfulfilled needs"" (NIMMIWG, 2019, p. 169). HRBA also allows us to understand harm as active through oppression and colonialism, rather than as passive barriers that need to be removed as is often framed in EDI and antiracism narratives. When harm is eliminated through their reclamation of power, BIPOC individuals and communities can move towards self-actualization and liberation. This process centres, values, and honours their voices, values, philosophies, knowledge systems and cultures (MIMMIWG, 2019) (Deranger, Sinclair, & Gobby, 2021)."

## **Session 4 - April 20, 2022**

### **Access and Leadership, Representation/Appropriation**

## Readings:

Dunbar-Ortiz, Roxanne. "Chapters 1 and 2." In *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*, 320. Beacon Press, 2014.

Keene, Adrienne. "Settler Colonialism 101." In *Notable Native People: 50 Indigenous Leaders, Dreamers, and Changemakers from Past and Present*, 144. Ten Speed Press, 2021.

Listen:

Wilbur, Matika, and Adrienne Keene. "Native Appropriations." All My Relations Podcast, 2019.  
<https://www.allmyrelationspodcast.com/podcast/episode/46e6ef0d/native-appropriations>.

In session. Full text recommended:

"Brightening the Spotlight: The Practices and Needs of Native American, Native Hawaiian, and Alaska Native Creators in the Performing Arts." First Peoples Fund, n.d.

Homework:

**Deepened sharing/reflection on kinship budget/ land & water protection efforts.**

1) share and 2) offer an original question to someone else in the group. Here are two examples:

- "I struggle with how to dedicate unrestricted landback funds to local Indigenous activists given all the other people and contingencies we're accountable to. How did you handle that?"
- "It's been hard to actively employ Indigenous folx on our staff and board because there's been harm in the past, and we're still building trust. How can we show our continued commitment in the interim?"
- "I really struggled with this, did you encounter it too?" "I got really excited about X, did you?"

**Session 5 - May 5, 2022**

**Sovereignty, Liberation, and Missing Murdered and Indigenous Women Girls Trans and Two-Spirited Relatives**

Watch:

*What Is Tribal Sovereignty?*, 2020. <https://nativegov.org/resources/what-is-tribal-sovereignty/>.

Listen:

Sanchez, Bobby. *Quechua 101 Land Back Please*, 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XT-Dm7LQpfg>.

In session. Full text recommended:

Newland, Bryan. "Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative Investigative Report." Bureau of Indian Affairs, 2022.  
[https://www.bia.gov/sites/default/files/dup/inline-files/bsi\\_investigative\\_report\\_may\\_2022\\_508.pdf](https://www.bia.gov/sites/default/files/dup/inline-files/bsi_investigative_report_may_2022_508.pdf).

In session, discussion of these artists' work and these Land Protection efforts

Demian DinéYazhi' + <https://www.instagram.com/riseindigenous/>

Amber Webb + <https://www.instagram.com/imarpikink/>

Black Mesa Resistance Camp + @blackmesasheepherders

1000 People 1000 tTees + @1000people1000trees

Natalie Ball + @natalie\_m\_ball #klamathlandback

Wetsuweten + [https://www.instagram.com/wetsuweten\\_checkpoint/](https://www.instagram.com/wetsuweten_checkpoint/)

## **Session 6 - June 7, 2022**

### **Decolonization and Systems Change, Time, and Radical Care**

#### Watch:

*Good Relations*. UConn Reads, 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aC-iHLbesbs>.

#### Listen:

Black Belt Eagle Scout, <https://www.blackbelteaglescout.com/>

#### Readings:

Estes, Nick. "You Can't Vote Harder: Between American Indian Citizenship and Decolonization." In *Socialist Strategy and Electoral Politics: A Report*, 240. Haymarket Books, Jacobin, and Verso Books, 2019.

Brand, Dionne, and Leanne Betasamosake Simpson. "'Temporary Spaces of Joy and Freedom': Leanne Betasamosake Simpson in Conversation with Dionne Brand." *Literary Review of Canada* (blog), 2018. <https://reviewcanada.ca/magazine/2018/06/temporary-spaces-of-joy-and-freedom/>.

#### In session. Full text recommended:

Wolfe, Patrick. "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native." *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (December 21, 2006): 387–409. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/14623520601056240>.

## **Session 7 - July 7, 2022**

### **Intellectual Property and Knowledge**

#### Watch:

Local Contexts, 2021. <https://vimeo.com/622861354>.

### Listen:

"Jean O'Brien Interviewed by J Kēhaulani Kauanui." *Indigenous Politics*. Wesleyan University, 2010.  
<http://www.indigenouspolitics.org/audiofiles/2010/O'Brien%202010.mp3>.

### Readings:

Australia Council for the Arts . "Protocols for Using First Nations Cultural and Intellectual Property in the Arts."  
Australia Council for the Arts , 2019.  
<https://australiacouncil.gov.au/investment-and-development/protocols-and-resources/protocols-for-using-first-nations-cultural-and-intellectual-property-in-the-arts/>.

\*Read pages 1-26 **and** 3 *Protocols in Practice* (your choice) **and** one Case Study (your choice)

Gregory, Alice. "How Did a Self-Taught Linguist Come to Own an Indigenous Language?" *The New Yorker*, April 12, 2021.  
<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2021/04/19/how-did-a-self-taught-linguist-come-to-own-an-indigenous-language>.

Tuhiwai Smith, Linda. "Introduction and Chapter 3." In *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, 220. 1999. Reprint, Zed Books Ltd and University of Otago Press , 2008.

## **Session 8 - August 2, 2022**

Assessment - Self and small groups

### Watch:

Sara Ahmed: *On Complaint*, 2018. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4j\\_BwPJoPTE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4j_BwPJoPTE).

### Readings:

Grande, Sandy. "Refusing the University." In *Toward What Justice? Describing Diverse Dreams of Justice in Education*, 1st ed., 1. New York: Routledge, 2018.

### Homework:

Before our session, write your responses to these three questions:

1. When we began this series, Ronee and Emily noted that as a cohort, we don't know exactly WHERE we will be in 8 months, but as an iterative experience, we will be expecting MOVEMENT and action over the course of this time. What has been your decolonial ACTION and what has been your institutional MOVEMENT toward systems change over the past 8 months?



2. We also asked, in our first session, "What is the decolonial action you are not yet prepared to take?" Reflecting back on your answer - What was that action you were not yet prepared to take? Are you ready now to take the action you were not ready to 8 months ago? If yes, what are your steps to take that action? If not, what are your steps to be ready?

3. In our first session, Catalyst's Decolonization Rider was shared as a starting guide. Please list where your institution is in relation to each item in this Decolonization Rider.

<http://www.catalystdance.com/decolonization-rider>

**Prompt 1:** Why is Indigenous leadership critical in environmental justice efforts?

**Prompt 2:** In relation specifically to the work of Sandy Grande and Sara Ahmed, how do you receive complaints? How does your institution receive calls to action? Are there things about how you and your institution receive complaints and calls to action that need to change? What are they?