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## GRAND CHALLENGE No. 1: TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION Archaeological Pedagogy, Indigenous Histories, and Reconciliation in Canada

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## Abstract

In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) released 94 Calls to Action, many of which pertain to education. Archaeological educators are called to find ways to integrate Indigenous knowledge into our classrooms, our teaching methods, and our curriculum at all levels of education. Across Canada, discussions are happening about how to decolonize and Indigenize curriculum, a process which will have significant implications for archaeological pedagogy. Drawing on both the specific text and the overall ethic of the TRC Calls to Action, I explore who teaches archaeology, what is taught, and what that means for archaeological pedagogy in post-secondary contexts. When we all gain knowledge based on Indigenous perspectives, we start to build healthy understandings of Indigenous peoples and cultures and begin the work of addressing the legacy of impacts by colonizing practices and policies outlined in the TRC report.

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## Introduction

Archaeology is a discipline founded in Western ways of knowing and has been a tool of nationalism, colonialism, and imperialism throughout its history (Trigger 1984). Over the past forty years, new archaeologies have emerged that seek to transform the practice, whether through engaging with the public (Trigger 1984; see also Kristensen et al., this issue), incorporating other voices and narratives (Atalay 2008a; Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2006; Habu et al. 2008; Wylie 2008), or expanding the scope of archaeology into the present and future (Harrison 2010; Harrison and Schofield 2009). In nations such as Canada, the United States, and Australia, where settlers continue to occupy Indigenous lands, the practices of archaeology have come under critique from the descendants of the people whose pasts are studied by archaeologists (Atalay 2006; Atalay et al. 2014; Deloria 1969; Watkins 2005). Calls for the decolonization of the discipline have led to the rise of Indigenous archaeology, where Indigenous ways of knowing are integrated into archaeological research (Atalay 2006; Gonzalez et al. 2006).

In the Canadian context, there has been recent recognition of the harm inflicted on Indigenous peoples through a series of Christian-run residential schools that took young Indigenous children from their families and lands to attempt to assimilate them into settler Canadian society (TRC of Canada 2015a). A Truth and Reconciliation Commission was struck in 2008 to witness testimony from survivors of these schools, many of whom were psychologically, physically, and sexually abused. Out of this

process came a set of Calls to Action, where the TRC commissioners called upon all Canadians to take action toward reconciliation. These Calls to Action have implications for archaeological practice, including archaeological education, and many post-secondary institutions in Canada have already begun the process of responding. Here, I evaluate the current state of archaeological teaching in Canadian post-secondary institutions, including who teaches archaeology, how Indigenous histories are represented in the classroom, and what courses are taught at institutions across Canada. I provide two case studies from courses I have taught that illustrate some approaches to teaching that can support Indigenous ways of knowing in archaeological pedagogy. I conclude by presenting some ways in which archaeological educators working in nations with histories of colonization can shift their pedagogy to not only be more inclusive of Indigenous voices, but also to expose the foundations of the discipline and call for change.

### **Truth, Reconciliation, and Indigenous Histories in Canada**

The lands currently called Canada have been home to Indigenous peoples and nations since time immemorial. The recent history of colonial incursion, settlement, and nation-building by newcomers, originally from Europe, has significantly disrupted and negatively impacted Indigenous<sup>1</sup> nations. One of the most damaging institutions of oppression was the residential school system, which has deep roots back to the 17th century. Soon after Confederation in 1876, the newly formed Government of Canada worked to regulate the lives of Indigenous peoples, passing the Indian Act that year (Government of Canada 1985). This piece of legislation determined who qualified as an “Indian,” what they could own, where they could go, and what they could practice of their culture (Bartlett 1977). Not long after, the government supported the expansion of a Canada-wide program of Christian-run residential boarding schools, where young Indigenous children would be taken from their families to be educated and taught the ways of white settler Canadians (Green 2013; TRC of Canada 2015b). Similar programs were undertaken in other nations with Indigenous communities; for example, the Federal Indian Boarding Schools in the United States were created from similar reasons (Surface-Evans 2016). The goal of the official residential school program, run from the 1880s to 1996, was assimilation of Indigenous people into Canadian society, removing all traces of their culture, language, traditions, and beliefs (TRC of Canada 2015b). Over the course of the program, thousands of Indigenous students went through these schools, many of whom were subject to physical and sexual abuse, and many of whom went missing without explanation.

These residential schools were created for separating Aboriginal children from their families, to minimize and weaken family ties and cultural linkages, and to indoctrinate children into a new culture—the

culture of the legally dominant Euro-Christian Canadian society, led by Canada's first Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald. The schools were in existence for well over 100 years, and many successive generations of children from the same communities and families endured the experience of them (TRC of Canada 2015b:v).

The lasting intergenerational trauma of the residential school experience has significant and ongoing impacts on Indigenous communities in Canada today (Bombay et al. 2014). After several major class-action lawsuits, Canada established a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), whose purpose was to witness and record testimony from survivors, share those stories, and learn the truth about their experiences (TRC Canada 2015b). From this, the Commission also considered what would be necessary for reconciliation. After six years of traveling the country listening to testimonies, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada released 94 Calls to Action in 2015, aimed at child welfare, education, health, justice, and reconciliation (TRC Canada 2015c). These Calls to Action emerged out of those many years of listening to witness testimony and hearing from communities about what meaningful, sustained reconciliation must look like in Canada in the future.

In the wake of the TRC Calls to Action and the release of the accompanying report, many universities in Canada are considering how they can best respond. The TRC Calls to Action are diverse and wide-ranging, covering many sectors of society, but from the perspective of pedagogy, there are several on which teachers and educators can take direct action. For archaeological educators, several calls to action can be directly acted upon in the classroom; for example, some (e.g., 45.i, 46.ii, 47) are aimed at the issue of how European sovereignty is exerted on Indigenous lands through concepts such as the Doctrine of Discovery and terra nullius (Miller et al. 2010). Archaeological educators, regardless of their contexts (e.g., university classroom, field training, museum education) can teach students and the broader public about how concepts of empty and untamed lands created justification for colonization (Reid 2010). Archaeological research provides additional evidence to dispel the idea that these lands and territories were not home to sovereign nations prior to European arrival by supporting Indigenous communities in asserting the depth and breadth of Indigenous histories. As educators, we can also learn how to appropriately integrate Indigenous knowledge systems and teaching methods into our teaching contexts, especially those of us who teach the history and archaeology of Indigenous peoples (Atalay 2019; Silliman 2008a).

Some of the Calls to Action are aimed specifically at museums and archives (no. 66-70), calling upon governments and museums to review their policies and ensure they are in line with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP; UN General Assembly 2007). Adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2007, endorsed by Canada in 2010, and mandated for implementation by Canada in

2015, UNDRIP is an important document for archaeological practice that engages with Indigenous lands and histories. Article 11, for example, states:

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to practise and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs. This includes the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archaeological and historical sites, artefacts, designs, ceremonies, technologies and visual and performing arts and literature.
2. States shall provide redress through effective mechanisms, which may include restitution, developed in conjunction with indigenous peoples, with respect to their cultural, intellectual, religious and spiritual property taken without their free, prior and informed consent or in violation of their laws, traditions and customs (UN General Assembly 2007:6).

Article 12, section 2 also addresses the question of repatriation of ceremonial objects and human remains to Indigenous communities (UN General Assembly 2007: 6), whereas Article 15 states the right of Indigenous peoples to have their cultures and traditions accurately represented in education and public information (UN General Assembly 2007:7). The Calls to Action call upon museums to evaluate whether they are compliant with UNDRIP, which requires a careful and thorough review of how museums collect, curate, display, and communicate information about Indigenous peoples (e.g., Lyons et al. 2016; Onciul 2015; Trofanenko and Segall 2012). UNDRIP and its implications for archaeology should be part of our classroom teaching.

One area where archaeologists have a very clear contribution to make toward reconciliation is in the use of our knowledge and techniques to help find the burial locations of students who died in residential school; for example, our methods of non-invasive near-surface remote sensing can be used to help communities find and mark the locations of the missing children. The TRC Calls to Action 75 and 76 specifically call upon different sectors of society to identify possible burial locations near residential school sites and develop ways to commemorate and maintain those locations.

Many of the issues identified through the work of the TRC speak to how we educate Canadians about the truth of the past. This education can happen throughout different stages of education, whether K-12, post-secondary, or ongoing adult educational programs and public communication. In the remainder of this article, I evaluate who is teaching archaeology in Canadian post-secondary institutions, explore how archaeologists teaching in these contexts can address some of the underlying issues of colonization, and provide examples of how Indigenous knowledge systems might be integrated into archaeological pedagogy in response to the TRC Calls to Action.

## Teaching Indigenous History through Archaeology in the University Classroom

The TRC asks us to first tell the truth before we can do the work of reconciliation. In the TRC's work, truth involved listening and witnessing the stories of people's experiences of residential schools that counter the dominant narratives about these institutions. What would this "truth" look like for archaeology, if the history of the discipline, especially in North America, was recounted from the perspectives of those whose pasts archaeologist's study? What do we need to face about our discipline before we can begin to engage with reconciliation? Every person who becomes a professional archaeologist is trained in post-secondary education in archaeology, both in classrooms and in the field. If we want to change the practices of our discipline, we need to begin with how we teach and train the next generation of professional archaeologists in university classrooms. We need to examine our own discipline more closely to address how archaeology upholds the structures in our society that contribute to the ongoing oppression and dispossession of Indigenous peoples, before imagining a decolonial future for archaeology where reconciliation is possible. One way to look at the underpinnings of how archaeology upholds settler colonialism in the classroom is by looking at the people who constitute the teachers in archaeological classrooms, labs, and field schools.

### *Who teaches archaeology?*

Archaeological education happens in many contexts in Canada, often beginning through different courses and activities for K-12 students, either in the classroom or through museum programming. These may spark an interest in the field, but formal training in archaeology typically begins at the post-secondary level. Becoming a practicing professional archaeologist requires the minimum of a bachelor's degree with field experience and often a master's degree. Research indicates that the success of underrepresented students is related to whether they see people like themselves in the classroom, whether they are given opportunities to speak, and whether instructors have unconscious biases present barriers to marginalized students (Smith et al. 2017).

Who teaches archaeology to Canadian students and what do they teach? It is difficult to get data about the number of archaeological teachers in Canada, since there is not a centralized place that collects such information. While not a Canadian association, the Society for American Archaeology (SAA) regularly conducts a survey of its membership. While only a small percentage of the SAA membership is Canadian (n=110, 4.3%), it provides the best comparison, as no similar demographic data yet exists in Canada (but see Hodgetts et al. 2020; Jalbert 2019). The SAA collects "ethnic" categories for their membership and breaks it down by context. Below is Table 1 that shows the percent by ethnicity within academic contexts, including with a graduate program (GP) and without a graduate program (NGP). This represents a sample of the

academics who teach archaeology in North American classrooms.

**Table 1: Demographic breakdown of SAA membership (2015).**

<b>Ethnicity/Context</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>
<b>White (GP)</b>	89.3%	82.5%	74.6%
<b>White (NGP)</b>	87.9%	80.0%	76.6%
<b>Hispanic (GP)</b>	2.9%	4.8%	7.0%
<b>Hispanic (NGP)</b>	1.5%	8.7%	9.9%
<b>Native American (GP)</b>	0.7%	1.1%	0.9%
<b>Native American (NGP)</b>	0.8%	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Asian (GP)</b>	2.0%	3.3%	2.0%
<b>Asian (NGP)</b>	2.3%	1.9%	3.0%
<b>African American (GP)</b>	0.0%	0.4%	0.4%
<b>African American (NGP)</b>	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%

There was also a “mixed” and an “other” category collected in 2010 and 2015 that are not shown here, which collectively account for about 5-6% of the responses. Archaeological educators within academic contexts in North America are overwhelmingly white. Some inroads are being made in terms of Latinx representation, with almost triple the representation in membership in the academic context since 2003. The Native American representation remains around 1-1.5% and African American under 1%. That last statistic is astonishingly low, considering Black people make up 14% of the population of the US.<sup>2</sup>

The 2003 survey asked members the culture area in which they conducted research, although this question appears to have been eliminated from subsequent surveys. In total, 69% of SAA members worked in North America, with another 11% in Mesoamerica, and 6% in South America. That totals 85% of the membership who does research in areas where most of the archaeology done is on Indigenous pasts. In 2003, 90% of academic archaeologists identified as white. This demonstrates that most people conducting research on the material remains of Indigenous pasts in the Americas are not Indigenous people. Considering the placement of these SAA members in academic programs, it seems likely that most archaeology classes on Indigenous histories in North America are also taught by non-Indigenous peoples.

In a review of academic institutions that employ tenure-track and tenured archaeologists in Canada, colleagues and I were able to identify expressed gender of academic archaeologists in these positions, as well as use personal networks to identify Indigenous scholars (Lyons et al. 2018). While these individuals only represent a portion of who teaches archaeology in post-secondary institutions, due to the rise of adjunct and contract teaching positions (Fagan-Wilen et al. 2006; Halcrow and Olson 2011), they still provide a sense of the makeup of post-secondary instructors. In total, 121 archaeologists were identified across 23 Canadian universities. The archaeologists,

across all levels, are 66% men (n=80) and 34% women (n=41). At the full professor level, 84% are men (n=41) and 16% are women (n=8). Across all levels, only 4% of the archaeologists identify as Indigenous (n=5). This distribution suggests that a lot of teaching archaeology in post-secondary institutions is still done by non-Indigenous people, and by more men than women.

Archaeologists are looked to as experts on the past. Archaeologists often are the ones who tell the story of the history of Indigenous peoples prior to the arrival of Europeans, whether in media stories, in books, or in museums. Archaeological data, based on scientific analysis, still is used in a variety of ways to prove or disprove Indigenous connections to their own history. The best example of this is the famous case of the Ancient One (Kennewick Man), where he was able to finally go home after his connection to the Colville Tribe was proven with genetic analysis, after years and years of conflict (Rasmussen et al. 2015). It took scientific evidence, rather than the knowledge of the Indigenous communities who were descended from him, to bring him home, even though the tribes had been saying he was their relative from the beginning.

Archaeological analyses of the objects, sites, and landscapes of ancient peoples on Indigenous lands become the narratives that are given legitimacy as the true histories of Indigenous places. Many archaeologists have recognized the issues with how archaeology is centered (Martindale and Nicholas 2014; Supernant and Warrick 2014) and there is an increasing number of archaeologists who now work with and for Indigenous communities (Atalay 2006b, 2008a, 2012; Colwell-Chanthaphonh et al. 2010; Gonzalez et al. 2006; McKechnie 2015; Nicholas 2010; Nicholas and Watkins 2014; Piccini and Schaepe 2014; Schaepe et al. 2017; Silliman 2008a, 2010; Smith and Jackson 2006; Watkins and Nicholas 2014; Wilcox 2010). The rise of collaborative, community-oriented archaeology is encouraging and has laid the groundwork for change (Atalay 2012; Martindale and Lyons 2014). The integration of Indigenous perspectives into archaeological teaching, however, tends to occur in the field more often than in the classroom (e.g., Silliman 2008a). If we want to move archaeology forward toward reconciliation, more instructors need to change how and what we teach post-secondary students in archaeology classes across all levels, beginning with introductory classes (Atalay 2008b).

### *What do we teach in archaeological classrooms?*

Many archaeologists would agree that archaeology has colonial roots, especially those working in contexts such as North America with a history of colonization, but in my experience, this is something to be noted as a section of a course, rather than embedded throughout. Introductory courses in archaeological method may frame the discipline in terms of antiquities collecting and European fascination with the Other, but also in relation to the rise of scientific thinking. Previous archaeological misinterpretations, such as the famous Myth of the Moundbuilders, are refuted using

scientific evidence and analysis; archaeologists used data to prove that the mounds of eastern North America were built by Indigenous peoples (e.g., Fagan and Durrani 2016). Introductory courses may also include a lecture or two on collaborative or Indigenous archaeology, postcolonial archaeology, ethics, and the importance of the past for the future; however, archaeologists often remain positioned as the experts on and stewards of the past, even if they work by, for, and with Indigenous communities.

One need only look to codes of ethics of professional societies, such as the Canadian Archaeological Association (CAA) and the SAA, to see that stewardship is a major way in which archaeology continues to be positioned—archaeologists protect the past, writ large, against those forces who seek its destruction. This has only become further crystalized in North America with increasing threats to heritage. Some of the fundamental ethics of archaeology outlined in these codes include the following: 1) archaeologists have a responsibility to study all human history for the good of all; 2) archaeology is the best way to know the human past; and 3) archaeologists are the rightful stewards of the material past (CAA 1996; SAA 1996). Even with specific codes that related to Indigenous communities, such as with the CAA Statement of Principles for Ethical Conduct Pertaining to Aboriginal Peoples, the focus is on the involvement of and consultation with Indigenous communities, rather than interrogation of archaeologists as the stewards of the past. Other ethics codes, such as that of the World Archaeological Congress, are more expansive and attentive to Indigenous issues, but the CAA and SAA codes reflect practices common in North American archaeology. These ethics are often what we teach to our students in archaeological classrooms, in part to undermine pseudoscientific perceptions and to discourage the destruction of cultural heritage. However, the ways we teach archaeology can also, perhaps unwittingly, reinforce colonial ideas about the material culture of the past (Atalay et al. 2014).

To further explore what is taught in archaeological classrooms in Canada, I reviewed courses from universities in Canada with undergraduate programs where archaeology is an option, either as a stand-alone program or as part of an anthropology or classics program, collecting syllabi for introduction to archaeology courses that were available on university websites (n=26). This is not a comprehensive or complete survey, since I targeted universities that had at least one archaeologist on full-time staff. Due to the different availabilities of syllabi online, there is variability in the level of data I was able to collect, but it does provide a broad overview of what is taught in introductory classrooms.

In general, introductory courses in archaeology in Canada tend to fall into two types: 1) a survey of world archaeology, from human origins to the rise of state-level societies (n=10); and 2) an introduction to the methods of archaeology, beginning with the history of the discipline (n=16). Many schools offer both types; for the purposes of this article, I focused on courses that were offered either at the first-year level



Based on what we know from the demographics of the discipline (Hodgetts et al. 2020), we can infer that most of these courses are not taught by Indigenous people. While I am not arguing that non-Indigenous people cannot teach the archaeological history of Indigenous lands, there are consequences when most professional archaeologists move through classrooms where they are taught to study Indigenous pasts without ever learning from Indigenous people about those pasts. This is even more acute for Indigenous students who enter archaeological classrooms, a point I return to below in the case studies.

The preliminary data collected from available course syllabi and course descriptions provides a snapshot of how archaeological courses are described to prospective students. However, there are limitations to this form of analysis, as the available data do not show how instructors teach in their classrooms, nor does it get at how students experience the class. Future work in this area could incorporate data from surveys and interviews of both instructors and students to explore a more nuanced perspective on archaeological pedagogy in Canada.

### *How do we teach the archaeology of Indigenous people?*

So how do we teach archaeology in a way that responds to the TRC Calls to Action and the broader calls to Indigenize the academy? Throughout the past few years, universities across Canada have begun to consider ways they can respond to the Calls to Action, including increasing Indigenous enrollments, increasing the number of Indigenous faculty, building stronger relationships with local Indigenous communities, acknowledging their place on Indigenous lands, and requiring their students to take an Indigenous studies course or a certain number of courses with Indigenous content (Gaudry and Lorenz 2018). These discussions have been widespread, with several institutions, including the University of Winnipeg, Lakehead University, and Laurentian University, moving to institute mandated Indigenous content requirements for all their students. However, this has also sparked some critique from Indigenous scholars, in part because content itself does not necessarily require students to address the underlying structures of settler colonialism or require them to unlearn harmful stereotypes. As scholars such as Daniel Heath Justice and Adam Gaudry note, it is very important that “indigenization” be led by Indigenous peoples both within and beyond the academy, supported by settler scholars (Gaudry and Lorenz 2018). Many archaeologists, particularly in North America, teach courses with what could be termed “Indigenous content.” Content itself is not necessarily the issue; rather, it is how those courses are taught, how archaeological knowledge is presented, and who is teaching those courses. Archaeologists have been teaching “Indigenous content” in their courses for a very long time. What needs to change now?

## Archaeological Pedagogy and the TRC Calls to Action

First, we need to spend more time centering alternative narratives about our discipline. Every introductory archaeology course taught on Indigenous lands should begin by discussing how archaeology has situated non-Indigenous peoples as the rightful stewards of Indigenous pasts and the authors of Indigenous histories. We need to teach students how archaeology has contributed to Indigenous erasure by dividing up “prehistory” and “history,” how archaeologists have a history of taking sacred objects and disturbing burials, and how the structures of archaeology and heritage in Canada mean that the belongings of Indigenous ancestors end up in institutions such as museums by default. This will require us to decenter science as the right way of knowing the past and acknowledge that while we might tell history from an archaeological perspective, there are other perspectives on history that are valid. We need to have the hard conversations about how archaeology upholds white supremacy. I have encountered a certain degree of trepidation from other archaeologists about decentering science in a time when scientific analysis is under political threat by people who do not want to address issues such as climate change. My response is that to question science considering the rights of Indigenous peoples to tell their own stories about the past is not the same as allowing pseudoscientific claims to stand in archaeology. Pseudoscientific claims rely on the same Western worldviews that underpin archaeological practice; therefore, they can be meaningfully refuted within that same system of knowledge. Indigenous ways of knowing about their own pasts often diverge from archaeology and should be respected, not refuted. Indigenous histories also do not need to be proven using archaeology, although there are times where Indigenous and archaeological accountings of history intersect (Edinborough et al. 2017).

We also need to, where appropriate, invite Indigenous scholars and community members into our classrooms. We all live on Indigenous lands in North America, and it is important to acknowledge the continuity of Indigenous peoples on those lands, as well as their right to tell their own histories. Part of this is also recruiting and supporting Indigenous archaeologists, although we have work to do to demonstrate to Indigenous communities that archaeology does not have to be extractive and that we are willing to explore the possibilities of archaeology for their futures (Supernant 2018). The growing field of Indigenous archaeology provides some frameworks for how to engage with the archaeological histories of Indigenous peoples in respectful ways (Atalay 2019), echoing some of the calls in science education for “two-eyed seeing” (Bartlett et al. 2012; Hatcher et al. 2009) and storywork (Archibald 2008).

An important resource about teaching with Indigenous collaborators and communities is the *Collaborating at the Trowel’s Edge* volume (Silliman 2008a). While many of the chapter focus on field schools and community training programs, the values

that are centered in these collaborations provide important insights about classroom teaching as well (Silliman 2000b; Nicholas 2008; Two Bears 2008). Sonya Atalay, in her contribution (Atalay 2008b), provides some guidance for archaeological educators who are seeking to integrate Indigenous knowledge into their teaching, both in public and post-secondary contexts. She points to the work of Indigenous education scholars such as Cajete (1994), noting how they provide frameworks that bring Indigenous knowledge and ways of learning into mainstream education. She draws on the Ojibwe concept of *gikinawaabi* that “describes the passing or reproduction of knowledge through experience, from an elder to younger generations” (Atalay 2008b:135), in her own research and teaching work. Her more recent work provides clear practical examples for how to implement these practices (Atalay 2019) While this might not be appropriate in all situations, she encourages archaeologists to engage collaboratively with Indigenous communities where they work, which can help to identify which local concepts might be appropriate in archaeological teaching and research.

Finally, educators need to engage in processes of learning and un-learning. Many non-Indigenous scholars may have good intentions but do not know where to start, so they default to the way they were taught. I know that even as an Indigenous archaeologist, I have often reproduced the pedagogy as I was taught. These difficult conversations require some learning by the educators; there are many good resources to support teachers who want to do this work, including online courses (e.g., *Indigenous Canada*, a MOOC offered by the University of Alberta), unconscious-bias training, and courses through campus teaching and learning centers that are beginning to be offered on how to meaningfully integrate Indigenous content in the classroom.

### *Teaching Indigenous Archaeologies: Two Case Studies*

I taught my first class, Introduction to Archaeology, in 2006. It was a typical class that ran through the ancient history of the world as understood through archaeology and was not engaged with Indigenous ways of knowing, even though the course was offered on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Musqueam people. Now the courses I teach are designed to engage students in how archaeological and Indigenous knowledges intersect and diverge, as well as unsettle notions of archaeology as the right and only way to tell stories of the past. Here, I provide two examples of courses where I explored new forms of archaeological pedagogy grounded in Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

First, in the winter term of 2019 at the University of Alberta, I taught Indigenous Archaeology for the first time. As I was crafting the syllabus and readings for the course, an upper level seminar, I worked to ensure most of the readings were authored by Indigenous peoples and strove for gender diversity. In future iterations of the course, I will also be working to engage with more Black and queer scholars around Indigenous archaeologies. I began the course with a deep reflection of what it meant to be learning

about archaeology on Indigenous lands. My assignments were designed to have students evaluate and explore the stories of our discipline and how Indigenous scholars are asking us to change the narrative (Atalay 2008a, 2008b; Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2006; see also Peuramaki-Brown and Kristensen et al., this issue). I had undergraduate and graduate students in the course from Canadian institutions, and many expressed deep frustration that they had never been exposed to the ideas with which we were grappling in the course. Several were deeply unsettled, and when this occurred, I encouraged students to sit with their discomfort and reflect on their experience through journaling. In their written work and in the teaching evaluations, many students spoke to the transformative power of this course where I challenged them to think beyond the limits of what they had previously been taught. I also had several Indigenous students in the class and one expressed to me that it was the first time in an archaeology classroom that they felt comfortable identifying as Indigenous to the other students, because they knew their knowledge would be valued, but also that I would not call on them to be the Indigenous representative in our discussions. These reactions from my students indicated to me that other archaeology instructors were not providing the same learning opportunities for my non-Indigenous students, nor were they creating spaces where Indigenous students felt welcome and supported.

In the winter of 2020, I taught a third-year course on the North American “Prehistory.” In this course, I emphasized that archaeologists tell stories about the past (Gibb 2000; Spector 1991) based on types of evidence, whether ancient DNA, fauna, lithics, or radiocarbon dates; we use these data as a strong foundation for a story of the past and evaluate which stories are more likely, based on the limits of our knowledge. Our stories shape the way we know and make sense of the world as archaeologists. Stories play a central role in how many Indigenous communities make sense of their own histories, so I taught the students about how we should not silence Indigenous stories through archaeological accounts of the past. In learning about archaeological accountings of the past of the lands we know as North America, I had students create narratives from their own cultural contexts about first arrivals to these lands, integrated Indigenous voices through videos and readings, and made space for both archaeological and Indigenous narratives and voices to sit together in the classroom.

One of the most effective assignments in this course was one in which I invited students to help develop a proposal to rename the course. We discussed why prehistory was a problematic term to use while discussing the deep histories of North America in the course, then I assigned them group work to create a proposal for a new name for the course that we could take to the department. The groups explored the issues with the term prehistory, looked at examples from other universities, and proposed a new name and justification for that change. I then integrated elements of their proposals into a co-created Google Document, where we collectively worked through a proposal that I presented to the Department of Anthropology. While the course was disrupted due to

the COVID-19 pandemic, the feedback I received from the students about this process was overwhelmingly positive. It provided a learning experience for the students, as well as make them feel as though they were contributing to positive change. In a similar fashion to the Indigenous Archaeology class, I also heard from my Indigenous students that they felt their voices and knowledge were valued and upheld in the course. One Indigenous student noted that this was the first time in any of their many anthropology classes that they saw Indigenous knowledge engaged and upheld, making them feel safe to express their perspectives and contribute to the class.

These two case studies provide some insight into how I create classroom environments where non-Indigenous students can work on unsettling their understanding of archaeology and where Indigenous students feel welcome and valued. I have not always been able to create these spaces, in part because I never had them modeled for me in my educational experiences. In both the courses I taught, I told the students up front that I was still in my own processes of learning and we discussed how we wanted to engage with each other in respectful ways. This approach to teaching is connected to the call for heart-centered archaeologies (see Supernant et al. 2020 for more information) and provides a positive learning environment for all students.

### **Conclusion: Teaching Indigenous Archaeologies in the Post-TRC Era**

Teaching archaeology in a time where Indigenous communities are increasingly asserting their rights to tell their own histories in their own way and to be able to make decisions about how their material culture is cared for requires that we shift our own narratives. It requires a reconceptualization of our own roles as archaeologists and stewards of the past, where we ask difficult questions about when archaeology is helpful and when it can potentially do harm, and who decides (Supernant and Warrick 2014). It requires that we teach differently by bringing in other voices and critically examining our own discipline's past, present, and future. Much of this work is already underway in research contexts and in field teaching but has yet to be fully integrated into the classroom (Atalay 2008b). As educators, we form the foundation of what students learn about our discipline and we have a great power to transform archaeological practice toward reconciliation.

## Endnotes

- 1 I use Indigenous in this article as an inclusive term for recognized Aboriginal people in Canada, including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. Indigenous is also a globally recognized term.
- 2 <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045218>
- 3 [https://umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/anthropology/courses/2100A01\\_07R.html](https://umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/anthropology/courses/2100A01_07R.html)

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