# Prospectus—ICA Summer Intensive 2020

Dina Gilio-Whitaker, M.A.

**What is Your Relationship to Place: Examining Colonial Privilege and Accountability**

# Context for the Course

The United States is said to be a nation of immigrants. The melting pot narrative constructs the U.S. as an “imagined community” of people bound by little more than a shared language and homogenizing consumerist culture. Meanwhile, vastly different histories across ethnic and racial divides are celebrated in the interest of creating the liberal multicultural state, which always begins with the arrival of Europeans to the continent’s shores. Indigenous histories and cultures are deemed “pre-historic” or “pre-Columbian” as the homogenizing settler state works to subsume them into the multicultural social landscape, effectively erasing them.

Yet, the 500 year old American experiment is in its infancy compared to Indigenous land tenures documented to be at least 15,000 years old. The land cradles ancient memories of people both gone and still present despite ongoing efforts of the state to eradicate them. The technologically-intensive colonial state has brought us to the brink of existence via environmental degradation and climate change with no end in sight, while Indigenous knowledges still hold important keys to sustainability. Although Americans are not encouraged to critically examine how they benefit from centuries of profound violence, accountability does not have to be a foreign concept in a country that still systematically denies what it has done and calls it progress.

# Course Description

This course links issues of colonialism, race, environmental justice, and Indigenous knowledge in ways that bring them “home” and make it personal. It will be taught from an unapologetically American Indian perspective, based on American Indian studies methods, and is an adapted version of a university course the instructor teaches annually. The central question this course will engage is: What is your relationship to place and to Indigenous peoples? Our work is to unsettle the master narratives that maintain American settler colonialism and work toward developing an ethic of accountability and responsibility. Because Miami is such an ethnically diverse place, it is an ideal location to generate these complex and sometimes fraught discussions. You will work in small groups over the course of a year gathering data showing how society marks the land in ways that erases Indigenous existence and exalts colonialism through examining monuments and other kinds of cultural landmarks throughout the region. This will culminate in a digitally-based storymap project in which you will collectively share what you have learned and leave an internet based public record.

Learning goals and outcomes will be:

* the ability to think critically about multiculturalism, privilege, and complicate racial binary discourses
* the ability to articulate an ethic of settler/colonial accountability
* identify principles of Indigenous knowledge and sustainability

# Course Structure

Ideally, we will learn together over the course of a year. The structure of this course is contingent upon the COVID crisis. If circumstances allow, the course will proceed in 3 sections. Participants will have assigned readings and other media to build their knowledge base which will be spread out through the year.

**Section 1**: meet virtually over Zoom for four consecutive days for 2 hours each day. The purpose of these sessions is to lay a foundation, introduce concepts, define terms, etc. This is how everyone will get to know each other initially. The sessions will be structure in lecture and discussion format, so please be prepared by doing the assigned readings/film viewings and engage in the group discussion.

**Section 2**: Participants will convene together in person in the fall for a short session, perhaps one or two days. This will be an opportunity to discuss readings and study material and hone concepts. Groups will be set up as well as the research design/mapping project.

**Section 3**: We will meet again in the summer of 2021for approximately four days (details to be determined). In this intensive session participants will be trained on the Arc/GIS storymap app and complete storymaps together. In the interim months groups will meet to gather data by exploring the city and outlying region for monuments and land markers of various sorts. We likely will have one or two virtual check-sessions with each other before meeting again in person.

# Pre-Reading

Prior to attending first session, please read:

* [*An Indigenous Peoples’ History of the United States*: Introduction](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1DsMC71QE-ZEmAbGtEp0RFDlw0Owshpipaos-UFVxbbM/edit?usp=sharing)
* View [*The Doctrine of Discovery*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JvM4SJN76Yg)

# Section 1

Day 1 **Settler Colonialism**

* Introductions
* Understanding settler colonialism; relationship of domination; the multicultural state
  + **Homework (read for tomorrow):**
  + [*Environmental Justice Theory and Its Limitations for Indigenous Peoples;*](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1krIbaD8ifSIPZSdA69gS5CYNkcYSMPdj/view?usp=sharing)[*(Not So) Strange Bedfellows: Indian Country’s Ambivalent Relationship with the Environmental Movement*](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1fVnPgz2uAQPubGYE-9togXH_G014Re3Z/view?usp=sharing)*,* Dina Gilio-Whitkaker

Day 2 **Environmental Justice**

* Lecture topic: what EJ means for American Indians
  + **Homework (read/view for tomorrow):**
  + [John Mohawk: Survive and Thrive](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t6kOA-KtPxw) (video, 21 minutes)
  + [*Mishkos Kenomagwen, the Lessons of Grass: Restoring Reciprocity with the Good Green Earth*](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1yR4WKKKV7bcEYw2ajfPLXLRLlRkFAIIq/view?usp=sharing)*,* Robin Wall Kimmerer

Day 3 **Worldview/Epistemology**

* Lecture topic: Western philosophy, Indigenous philosophy, religion, connection to land
  + Homework:
  + Read: “[Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack of Settler Privilege,](https://www.beaconbroadside.com/broadside/2018/11/unpacking-the-invisible-knapsack-of-settler-privilege.html)” and
  + “[Settler Fragility: Why it’s So Hard to Talk About Settler Privilege](https://www.beaconbroadside.com/broadside/2018/11/settler-fragility-why-settler-privilege-is-so-hard-to-talk-about.html)”
  + Write: What is your relationship to land, place, and Indigenous peoples?

Day 4 **Accountability**

* Lecture/discussion: settler privilege/fragility; unsettling the racial lens; discuss relationship to land and place