

Being Métis

with Roy Pogorzelski

Keywords: Anti-indigenous racism, anti-racism, Inequities, COVID pandemic, diversity, inclusion Training and education, the legacies of colonial systems in Canadian Society, activism through listening.

Related Course Subjects: Law, sociology, education, anthropology, sociology, political science, communications.

In this video

Pogorzelski talks about his personal experiences growing up Métis, the experiences of his family members, and how these led to his work in social and restorative justice. In addition, Pogorzelski offers listening as a way to embark on meaningful anti-racist action.

Video URL

<https://youtu.be/VI37x3IPFkw>

Goals/Objectives

After watching the video, students will be able to:

- Reflect on the ways anti-racist work has and continues to be solicited by institutions in problematic ways
 - Reflect on the lived experience of the Métis speaker
 - Analyze the government and media's response to a recent Indigenous crisis
 - Reflect on how the content of the video aligns with their own understanding and preconceptions of doing restorative justice work
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About The Decolonial Perspectives & Practices Hub

The Decolonial Perspectives & Practices Hub is a student-led initiative to provide a platform for the community to collaborate and develop meaningful solutions to the systemic issues faced by underserved groups in academia. Our mission is to advance knowledge and understanding of these issues and provide a space to engage in research and learning that is open to all experiences each individual brings.

About the Anti-Racist Pedagogy Project

The Anti-Racist Pedagogy Project is a video library that showcases pre-recorded talks by local community activists, students and educators in Montreal and Canada and transforms them into anti-racist educational resources for the classroom. Undergraduate and graduate students from Concordia and McGill University created the content for these course packages. These resources exemplify the power of student leadership and their contribution to advancing antiracist education.

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Pre-Class Self-Reflection Exercise (Educators)

Fully engaging with antiracist pedagogy starts with self-reflection and accountability. **If you are familiar with antiracist education, you know that the best way to teach antiracist pedagogy is to model antiracist praxis and thought.** As such, we have developed a series of self-reflection questions for you to consider before integrating anti-racist educational materials into your classroom. The night before class or at least a few hours before class, give yourself time, without distractions, to reflect on the questions below - you can write them down or reflect on them with yourself paper free!

Be reflexive

- What does antiracist pedagogy or education mean to you?
- What is the relationship between your identity and antiracist work? How would you describe your role in antiracist work?
- How do you view the mutualistic exchange between yourself and your students? Do you adjust your teaching style accordingly?
- What is the difference between engaging with our repository as a knowledge exchange versus a knowledge extraction?

Be accountable

- To what extent have you engaged with antiracist or anti-oppressive education or philosophies within your life/work? Why or why not?
- What has the silencing or exclusion of another person or group looked like in the environments that you frequent? What have you done, or what could you have done to remedy it?
- Reflect on how you have engaged with literature, presentations and other forms of knowledge led by Queer, Trans, Indigenous, Black, Asian, and other POC in your academic, personal, or professional lives.
- What has been your role in disrupting and mobilizing against racism and oppression interpersonally or in the environments that you frequent?

Guiding Questions

Before watching the video

Pre-Video Questions -Students

- What knowledge do you have on Métis people within Canada?
- What treaties do you know about that Canada has made with Indigenous peoples?
- What are colorism and white-passing?



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- How has technology changed activism?
- When was the last time you listened to another point of view/someone who has a completely different background than yours?

After watching the video

Post-video Questions

- What systems oppress or perpetuate inequalities for Indigenous people (black and people of colour) in Canada?
- How are Indigenous voices received in your field?
- How can we eliminate, mitigate or prevent future “historical amnesia”?
- How can institutions ensure that anti-racist and diversity training affects their structural systems (rather than just being a “one-off” with little impact)?
- Can you think of examples of the importance of diverse voices in your field? In your future practice?
- How can new technologies help break barriers or fight stereotypes? Give examples.
- What is active listening? Why is it important in your field?
- Why do you need to include diverse voices in your work? How can they be included?

Assignments / Writing topics

Assignment: Practicing “listening”

Select a brief article or video narrated by an Indigenous person who describes their experiences in the Canadian context.

Answer the following questions in a short reflection:

- What surprised you most about this piece?
- What systemic inequalities are confronted in this piece?
- What stereotypes are confronted in this piece?
- What has the narrator discussed that taught you something new about Indigenous peoples and experiences?
- What is your biggest takeaway from this piece?

Assignment: Examining an Indigenous Crisis in Canada

Select a challenge experienced by Indigenous communities in Canada within the past 40 years (examples: Mi’kmaq fishermen, Oka, MMIW, Suicide State of Emergencies (Shamattawa, Attawapiskat), abuse in the medical system). Write a brief paper on the topic, answering the following questions:

- How did the government and other agencies (e.g., law enforcement) respond to the issue? Was their reaction/inaction appropriate?
- Does this issue relate to Indigenous Treaty rights? If so, describe how the treaty relates to the issue.
- How have Indigenous peoples mobilized to combat this challenge?
- How did the media respond to the crisis? How did they portray Indigenous people?
- What aspects of this challenge are consistent throughout history? What are the colonial roots of this challenge?
- How could the crisis have been avoided?



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- What are the structures in place that can prevent this kind of crisis from happening in the future?

[Note about this assignment: depending on your course, you may want to limit the crises to those related to treaties]

Student Group Reflection

1. What is something new that your group learned or began to consider from watching the video?
 2. What type of educational videos on systemic racism would you like to see more of?
 3. How can you combat systems of oppression and exclusion in your individual lives?
 4. Why is having an anti-racist approach to your work/studies important?
 5. After today's exercise, write down two suggestions for your professor on making your class more inclusive.
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Thank you for implementing our resources and supporting anti-racism efforts in education. If you have any questions or feedback, please email us!

