

 <p><b>THE CENTER FOR JUSTICE &amp; PEACEBUILDING</b></p> <p>A PROGRAM OF EASTERN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY</p>	<p><b>DECOLONIAL POSSIBILITIES: REIMAGINING PEACEBUILDING THROUGH ARTISTIC PRACTICES PAX 692</b></p> <p><b>SPI 2026</b> May 18 - 26, 2026</p> <p><i>Course meeting location and time: TBA</i></p>
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### **INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:**

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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

In this course, participants are invited to investigate ways in which colonial violence, oppression and unequal power dynamics are reproduced and perpetuated in peacebuilding, conflict transformation and justice initiatives, and to collectively explore possibilities to decolonize them. Decolonizing is approached as individual and collective creative processes through which to critically reflect and address colonial violence, to harness the potential in existing alternatives and strengthen solidarity for further creation of interdependent possibilities of transformation.

Discussion, exchange and artistic practices like movement, music, contemplation, storytelling, poetry, painting and other possibilities will provide the means to foster the decolonizing creative process. Absolutely no artistic experience is necessary. The goal is to sparkle imagination through broadening ways of knowing, being and doing that nurture the emergence of decolonial possibilities of re-imagined peacebuilding.

Some of the questions that guide this exploration are:

- How can decolonial approaches to peacebuilding address colonial violence? In what ways do these approaches facilitate a more transformative peace experience through artistic processes?
- What if arts are not only hanging on the walls of meeting rooms, but decolonization as an art practice is part of the decision-making process itself?
- What if peacebuilders, leaders and participants engage collectively in creative processes of artistic peace-making as a decolonizing strategy?
- What if the roles of leaders, artists, peacebuilders and participants are re-signified in a participatory manner and participants are seen and encouraged as creators in the processes of art-making and peacebuilding?

- How can decolonizing as art-practice by people in daily lives envision new possibilities of peace?
- Considering your own location in colonial systems, as well as in the web of relationships, what seeds or seedlings can you and your communities or organizations plant/cultivate to creatively respond to colonial violence and foster transformative peacebuilding initiatives?

### COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

- Explore and understand decolonial theories and practices in the fields of arts and peacebuilding.
- Learn to identify and address colonial violence and ways in which coloniality is perpetuated in relationships, structures and systems in peacebuilding and justice work.
- Explore self-reflection and critical analysis of one's own context and roles in coloniality and plan to sustain reflective practice throughout the process.
- Experiment with arts-based processes intent towards decolonizing peace and justice work.
- Cultivate and apply individual and collective dynamics of imagination to envision and enact decolonial futures in solidarity with other communities.

### REQUIRED TEXTS AND OTHER SOURCES:

1. Denetsosie, S. S., Drake, K., Little Badger, D., & Diaz, N. (2025). *Beyond the glittering world: An anthology of indigenous feminisms and Futurisms*. Torrey House Press.
2. Krenak, A. (2024). *Ancestral future* (A. Brostoff & J. Pinheiro-Dias, Trans., R. Carelli, Ed.). Polity Press.
3. Yoon-Ramirez, I., & Ramírez, A. I. (Eds.). (2025). *Decolonial arts praxis: Transnational pedagogies and activism*. Routledge. ISBN 9780367752842
4. Additional readings will be posted on Moodle (see list below).

#### Recommended Texts:

Butler, O. E. (2000, May). A few rules for predicting the future. *Essence*, 31(1), 165-6, 264.

Cruz, J. (2025). Decolonial peace and critical approaches to rewriting the official history of peace. In M. C. Hallward, J. E. Kim, C. Mouly, T. Seidel, Z. Wai (Eds.) *SAGE Handbook of Peace and Conflict Studies*. London: SAGE, <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781036204440.n10>

Ditzel Facci, P. (2025) Decolonial possibilities in arts and peacebuilding. In Tim Seidel, Maia Carter Hallward, Ji Eun Kim, Cécile Mouly, and Zubairu Wai. *SAGE Handbook of Peace and Conflict Studies*. London: SAGE, <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781036204440.n10>

Gamedze, T. (2015, February 12). Decolonization as art practice. *Africanah.org*. <https://africanah.org/decolonization-as-art-practice/>

Garba, T., and Sorentino, S.-M. (2020). Slavery is a metaphor: A critical commentary on Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang's "Decolonization is not a metaphor." *Antipode*, 52(3), 764–782.

Garrido Castellano, C. (2021). *Art Activism for an Anticolonial Future*. SUNY Press.

*Gesturing towards Decolonial Futures*. Gesturing Towards Decolonial Futures. (n.d.).  
<https://decolonialfutures.net/>

Gilmore, R. W. (2022). *Abolition Geography*. Haymarket Books.

Golding, D., & Fontan, V. (2025). Decolonizing peace: possibilities for pluriversality. In M. C. Hallward, J. E. Kim, C. Mouly, T. Seidel, Z. Wai (Eds.) *SAGE Handbook of Peace and Conflict Studies*. London: SAGE, <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781036204440.n10>

Laenui, P. (2000). Processes of decolonization. In BatisteM. (Ed.), *Reclaiming Indigenous voice and vision* (pp. 150–160). Vancouver: UBC Press.

Lorde, A. (1984). *Sister Outsider*. Crossing Press.

Mbembe, A. (2021). *Out of the Dark Night : Essays on Decolonization*. Columbia University Press. Epilogue: The Politics of the Future World.

Meadows, D. (2001). Dancing with systems. *Whole Earth*. Winter (106), 58-63.

Mignolo, W., and Vazquez, R. (2013). Decolonial aestheSis: Colonial wounds/decolonial healings. *Social Text: Periscope Online*. [https://socialtextjournal.org/periscope\\_article/decolonial-aesthetics-colonial-woundsdecolonial-healings/](https://socialtextjournal.org/periscope_article/decolonial-aesthetics-colonial-woundsdecolonial-healings/)

Okafor-Yarwood, I. (Host). (2023, February 28). Imagining the worlds that could be: Planting the seeds of decolonial futures [Audio podcast episode]. In *AfriCan Geopardy*. Spotify.  
<https://open.spotify.com/episode/75AO1H38rmgDr06GB08M6r>

powell, john a., & Menendian, S. (2024). *Belonging without othering: How we save ourselves and the world*. Stanford University Press.

Quijano, A. (2007). *Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality* (S. Therborn, trans.). *Cultural Studies*, 21(2–3), 168–178. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09502380601164353>

Quijano, A. (2000). Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America. *Nepantla: Views from South*, 1(3), 533.

Ribeiro de Menezes, Alison; Brandner, Vera; Mehta, Jessica; Ditzel Facci, Paula (2025). Peace Policy: Solutions to Violent Conflict, February 2025. University of Notre Dame. Report.  
<https://doi.org/10.7274/28289417.v1><https://peacepolicy.nd.edu/category/arts-and-peacebuilding/>

Ritter, L., & Zamierowski, N. (2021). Systems Sensing and Systemic Constellation for Organizational Transformation: Building Collective Capacity for Navigating Complexity. *Journal of Awareness-Based Systems Change*, 1(2), 101–115. <https://doi.org/10.47061/jabsc.v1i2.1181>

Schirch, L. (2022). Decolonising peacebuilding: A way forward out of crisis. *Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation*. Berlin: Berghof Foundation, in Collaboration with Toda Peace Institute., Online Edition. <https://berghof-foundation.org/library/decolonising-peacebuilding>

The Kroc Cast (2025) *Peace Policy Spotlight: The Power of Art in Peacebuilding*.  
[https://kroc.nd.edu/news- events/podcasts/the-kroc-cast/](https://kroc.nd.edu/news-events/podcasts/the-kroc-cast/)

Tuck, E., and Wayne Yang, K. (2012). Decolonization is not a metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education and Society*, 1(1), 1–40.

## **REQUIRED ASSIGNMENTS:**

Class participation: This class is structured as an interactive and participative seminar, combining different formats such as interactive lectures, text discussion forums, guided exercises including movement, theater, voice, drawing, contemplative practices, individual and group reflection, creation and discussion. The methodology intends to draw from multiple ways of knowing, including rational, emotional, embodied and intuitive. The activities are highly participative, with emphasis on embodied experience, so student participation is essential. The objective is to co-create a welcoming space in which these forms of knowledge can be explored and expressed, eliciting knowledge from personal experience and emerging in collective encounter and in interaction with theory and case studies. This welcoming space is cultivated through co-responsibility, consent, care, generosity and trust, where experiences can be shared and reflected, and ideas can be discussed critically and creatively.

All assignments can be submitted using arts-based approaches. Please discuss your ideas with the instructors before submission.

### **1. Reflection on positionality within colonial systems - Individual (10% self-assessed)**

Based on readings and activities developed in class, participants will write a reflective essay exploring their entanglement with colonial systems and positionality within power dynamics and systems of oppression and how this positionality influences their understanding of peacebuilding and justice. Students will also investigate their potential relationship with decolonial practices and connections with communities of solidarity. This paper will inform the mid-term Individual Project (see point 4 below).

### **2. Reading discussions throughout the summer (10%)**

Course readings including written materials, podcasts and videos will expose participants to conceptual and analytical frameworks, issues, theories, and approaches. Completing the readings and critically and creatively reflecting about them will be crucial for cultivating decolonial imagination. Participants are asked to share some of their insights and creative interpretations from the readings by posting these reading responses on at least three Discussion Forums on Moodle. **Reading responses are due at specific dates in June and July.**

### **3. Facilitation in class experimenting with decolonial artistic approaches (group) (10%)**

Participants will facilitate a forty-five-minute experience and discussion related to a topic of the class, experimenting with decolonizing as arts practice. Instructors will provide coaching and feedback.

### **4. Paper/Arts-based mid-term Project (individual) (10%)**

The guiding question for this assignment is: Considering your own location in colonial systems, as well as in the web of relationships, what seeds/sprouts can you and your communities or organizations plant/nurture to respond to colonial violence and imagine decolonial futures? Participants will identify

one to two seeds and design a plan for their unfolding, exploring potential scenarios of transformation, as well as limitations and ethics needed to be taken into account.

### **5. Imagination of a peacebuilding/justice case/process - Group - (20%)**

Participants will further develop their individual projects collaboratively in a pod, in order to gain insight from their peers, deepen their analysis and broaden their imagination. Step one will be to develop a critical and creative analysis of the chosen context of the seed/seedling using decolonial lenses, answering questions as to how colonial legacies play in the current context, what colonial structures are reproduced and whose knowledges are centered or excluded. In the second part of the assignment, participants will apply decolonial imagination using arts-based approaches to envision change that addresses colonial legacies and sustain transformative peace and justice work. Students offer and receive constructive feedback on their project assignment. Guidelines will be made available on Moodle.

### **6. Self-Assessment, reflection and grade (40% self-assessed)**

Part of the grade for this course is self-assessed. Participants will provide a reflection of their self-assessment and discuss it with instructors.

This course can be taken for 2 or 3 credits. **Students taking this course for 2 credits will submit Assignments 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6.**

*These are brief descriptions of required graded assignments for the course. More details for each assignment can be found on the "Guidance Notes" that will be provided in class.*

## **DAILY CLASS SCHEDULE: TBA**

## **SPI ATTENDANCE POLICY:**

It is expected that individuals registering for an SPI session will attend the entire course (barring unforeseen travel delays or emergencies). Please contact SPI directly at [spi@emu.edu](mailto:spi@emu.edu) before registering if you know you will have to miss any days of a course. SPI certificates are provided to participants only if they miss no more than one class day unless prior arrangements have been made with the SPI team and confirmed with the instructor. **For-credit participants are expected to attend all class sessions unless they are given permission from the instructor to miss a session.** SPI courses rely on active student participation in a learning community. If a participant misses class repeatedly and this disrupts the learning for others, they will be asked to leave the course and no money will be refunded for remaining course time.

## **GRADING CRITERIA AND OTHER POLICIES:**

SPI provides all students taking the course for graduate credit some supplemental information that will serve as a resource after SPI when students are working on course assignments. This includes information on library resources, EMU's academic integrity policy, and guidelines for writing graduate papers, information regarding the grading scale and course deadlines, and then some suggestions we have for you in order to make your experience of taking SPI courses for graduate credit as successful as possible! These [documents](#) are all available online.