

DECOLONIZATION BOOK & ACTIVISM CLUB

Offered through the Teacher Institute of Western Colorado University

The Basics

- *Faculty:* Molly Murfee
- *Dates:* Thursdays, January 9 – May 1, 2025
- *Credits:* 2
- *Format:* hybrid
- *Cost:* \$380 total (\$190 / credit)
- *Eligibility:* Available for any educator (i.e. elementary, middle school, high school, etc.), in any subject (i.e. history, English, social studies, etc.) seeking continuing education credits

About the Course

Having conversations about racism or taking direct action can be intimidating. What if you say or do the wrong thing? What if you have a gap in your knowledge on the subject? The Decolonization Book & Activism Club is a welcoming learning community designed to collectively unearth the foundations of our colonial history giving rise to the racism, inequities, and abuse we experience today both in our societies and in our environment. Emphasis is placed on open conversations and inquiry, active listening, and creative expression. As a supportive study group, we'll grow, learn, and engage together through books, literature, exploratory writing, and personal activism selected on your own challenge by choice.

This particular session focuses on indigenous cultures and history. Monthly activities include: reading books exploring our past and informing our present and future; bi-weekly Class Discussions (available in person or on Zoom); contemplative Journaling Prompts; and Activism Activities. A private, Online Forum facilitates sharing beneficial resources and chatting between Group Discussions. Through these activities, participants become educated and informed; identify personal habits; make tangible and sustainable personal goals for action; and move out into our families, communities, work places, and social arenas to incite positive, inclusive, and equitable change armed with knowledge and understanding. Participants drive the conversation by bringing in their topics and questions of interest, and deeply engage by bringing resources to the community learning group in response to questions raised in discussions. Guest speakers from indigenous activism and educational groups will join some Class Discussions.

Course Objectives

1. Become knowledgeable about the history informing colonialism, and subsequently racism, both in our nation as a whole, and in our specific home places.
2. Identify personal habits, misunderstandings, and informational gaps in our knowledge of our history of colonialism and subsequently racism.
3. Create tangible and sustainable personal goals for self-education.
4. Create tangible and sustainable community goals to incite positive, inclusive, and equitable change in our specific home places.

5. Work together as a learning community to establish respectful, open, honest, creative and curious discussions, practices that can expand into our personal lives and communities

Assignments

- Reading (weekly): focused on both curated and self-selected books on colonialism and indigenous history both in the nation and in personal home places
- Journaling Prompts (once a month): Freewriting exercises to explore personal gaps in knowledge, feelings and thoughts about class material
- Activism Activities (once a month): Self-discovery and selection of activities to bring knowledge into communities, including such activities as: decolonizing your book shelf; identifying indigenous activism groups in area; learning indigenous history of home place
- Final Assignment: Based on personal desires and specific home place, create a Personal Activism Plan to move out into the community, family, classroom, friend groups. Can include reading, volunteer work, lesson plans and activities, making personal connections, further education and activism activities.

Logistics

This course is conducted as a hybrid, meaning those in Gunnison County can meet in person, while those in other locations will be able to Zoom in for the live, in-class discussions.

Synchronous two-hour Class Discussions (offered both in person and on Zoom) occur 1st and 3rd Thursdays beginning January 9 from 5 – 7 p.m. A-synchronous Online Forum discussions occur the 2nd and 4th weeks beginning January 16. Participants can therefore take this course from anywhere and sessions will be recorded in case of absence. A large focus is placed on independent inquiry and study.

Each month abides by the following format. Each week requires 5 hours of work total between Class Discussions, Online Forums, Readings, Journaling Prompts and Activism Activities:

Week 1: Synchronous Class Discussion (2 hrs) + Reading (3 hrs)

Week 2: A-synchronous Online Forum (1 hr) + Journaling Prompt (1 hr) + Reading (3 hrs)

Week 3: Synchronous Class Discussion (2 hrs) + Reading (3 hrs)

Week 4: A-synchronous Online Forum (1 hr) + Activism Activity (1 hr) + Reading (3 hrs)

Registration & More Information

- Please feel free to contact faculty Molly Murfee at mmurfee@western.edu
- About Molly: www.western.edu/people/molly-murfee/, www.mollymurfee.com
- Course registration link: [Spring 2025 Teacher Institute Courses](#)
- Western's Teacher Institute: www.western.edu/academics/teacher-institute/

Registration deadline is Friday, December 20, 2024