

UREAP APPLICATION FORM



THOMPSON RIVERS
UNIVERSITY

Office of Research and
Graduate Studies

First Name: **Jacob**

Last Name: **Boisclair**

Student ID: **T00615474**

(DD/MMM/YYYY)

Start Date of Project: **15/NOV/2023**

Please complete all sections of this application form.

1. FACULTY MENTORS INFORMATION

1.1 Who is your Primary Faculty Mentor? **Jenna Woodrow**

1.2 Who is your Secondary Faculty Mentor? **Wes Furlotte**

NOTE: Your Primary and Secondary Faculty Mentors must each complete a Faculty Mentor Support Form. Forms can be found under the attachments tab within your TRU Romeo UREAP application and on the TRU UREAP webpage under information and Forms for Faculty Mentors..

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 Provide an abstract of your proposed research: (maximum 1500 characters)

What constitutes a valid claim to Indigenous identity is a complex concept informed and shaped by a Nation's oral culture, language, and traditions. This results in a varied understanding of Indigeneity from band to band and Nation to Nation. By examining the works of notable Indigenous authors around Canada, an ontological approach to indigeneity rooted in Indigenous ways of *being* may provide further insight into what constitutes a valid Indigenous identity claim, and to whom it is valid. While resources such as the Jean Teillet Report on Indigenous Identity Fraud provide a general framework for engaging with this subject institutionally, perhaps an understanding of the lived experience of Indigenous being can provide further definitive and nuanced responses. Across Canada, events of Indigenous Identity Fraud (IIF) are occurring within academic spheres. In these cases, individuals with no Indigenous ancestry are taking jobs, funding, scholarships, and other resources from Indigenous people. A recent famous case can be seen in Carrie Bourassa formerly from the University of Saskatchewan, who claimed to be Indigenous despite findings proving she had no such ancestry. By analyzing Indigenous literature in the forms of prose and narratives, perhaps further development on the foundation of objective reporting can illuminate our understandings of indigeneity as settlers, mixed descendents, and Indigenous peoples disconnected from our ancestral cultures.

2.2 Provide a brief literature review for your proposed research: (maximum 3500 characters)

In *Islands of Decolonial Love* by Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, she explores moments of intimacy between her characters, establishing a framework for colonial and decolonial forms of love. This book relates to the research topic of indigeneity claims on the basis that, through these



narratives, Simpson reveals what “Indigenous being” is. Particularly, within the lens of relationships, which touch on key elements of what it means to be Indigenous (such as reciprocity and recognition), Simpson speaks to these core understandings through a Nishnaabek context.

Similarly, in Tanya Tagaq’s *Split Tooth*, the narrative follows the life of an Inuit girl living in her remote northern community. A particular passage that comes to mind discusses a time when there was an overabundance of foxes in the area, and it is her family’s “being” to cull their numbers before they needlessly starve to death (Tagaq 60-62). In terms of this research, this instance alone relates her family to the land in the traditional sense- meaning that all who live on and in and above the physical land and water, whether it is human or not, are interconnected intrinsically with this space. Tagaq shares understandings of indigeneity from an Inuit perspective.

Also by Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, in *Dancing on Our Turtle’s Back | Stories of Nishnaabeg Re-Creation, Resurgence and a New Emergence*, Simpson discusses the necessity of reconciliation to be rooted in Indigenous political resurgence. As Indigenous forms of governance are different band-to-band and nation-to-nation, and are informed by their languages, oral cultures, and traditions, Simpson provides in-depth explanations on how each of these concepts relate to identity as an individual, and as a community within a Nishnaabek understanding. While *Islands of Decolonial Love* focuses on indigeneity within a Nishnaabek context of interpersonal relationships, *Dancing* encompasses broader conceptions of being. Informed by Elders, Knowledge Holders, and fluent speakers of her community and neighboring communities, Simpson provides traditionally informed notions of Indigenous being in a modern and urbanized context.

The Jean Teillet Report on Indigenous Identity Fraud produced for the University of Saskatchewan goes into more detail about the specific metrics of valid Indigenous identity claims, as well as typical argumentation employed by identity fraudsters. This will provide a more structured and concise reference to build an ontological framework upon. My reasoning in including narratives by Indigenous authors across Canada in addition to this report is that they provide room to include the lived experiences of Indigenous people in their *being*, rather than reducing it to a checklist, as this report might. The varied histories of Indigenous peoples and their own metrics they use to understand identity, informed by an individual group’s oral cultures, language, and traditions is not reflected in this report.

2.3 What is the hypothesis or research question for your proposed research? Include any specific objectives: (maximum 500 characters)

Through analyzing works by Indigenous authors in Canada, certain similarities appear in terms of what constitutes Indigenous being. By applying this knowledge to an ontological framework, while recognizing and therefore avoiding contributing to a sense of pan-indigenous

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identity, these commonalities can be explored, revealing definitive and nuanced notions about what constitutes valid claims to indigeneity.

2.4 Provide a description of the research methodology/methodologies and analysis that you intend to employ in completing this research: (maximum 1500 characters)

Throughout this research, I will be analyzing and referencing publications by authors such as Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, Tanya Tagaq, Audra Simpson, and Glen Sean Coulthard. Not only will I be using these sources to understand and develop a framework of ontology informed by Indigenous ways of knowing and being in the world, but also in methodology- in how I conduct myself through this research. In *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back* by Leanne Simpson, she introduces a Nishnaabeg concept called "Biskaabiiyang", literally meaning "to look back" (L. Simpson 49). However, in the context of scholarship, it can also be understood as "'returning to ourselves,' a process by which Anishinabek researchers and scholars can evaluate how they have been impacted by colonialism in all realms of being" (49). While I will not *biskaabiiyang*, as I am not Anishinabek, I will be deeply and intentionally reflecting on my positionality within this research, how western culture and academia have informed the way I approach, think, and process the knowledge I learn throughout this project, as well as how my learned being may include misunderstandings and mistakes in relation to the progression and results of this work.

2.5 Provide a description of how your research will significantly impact your field of study:

(maximum 1500 characters)

Exploring the boundaries of what constitutes valid claims to Indigenous identity has the ability to impact all forms of academia, including philosophy. By approaching this understanding through an Indigenous and philosophical framework, this work can provide information to institutions and individuals in how they can indigenize and decolonize their actions, work, and research, etc in academia. By particularly relating indigeneity claims and what constitutes them to an ontological framework informed by Indigenous ways of knowing and being in the world, this work may also help in safeguarding funding, jobs, positions, and scholarships intended for Indigenous people that are often wrongfully taken by pretendians. The timely nature of this research, with recent high-profile events such as with Carrie Bourassa at the University of Saskatchewan, presents an opportunity for understanding what it means to be and to claim to be Indigenous for the settler majority as well as those of mixed descent within Canadian academia. This research exists within a new and growing context of study.

2.6 Describe your plans to disseminate your research findings: (maximum 500 characters)

To disseminate my work, I plan on presenting at either TRU's Undergraduate Research Conference, or at TRU's PHP Conference. If I choose to present my work at the PHP Conference, I will have the opportunity to be published in the associated journal: PHP Dialogues.

2.7 List the references that you have cited throughout your research proposal observing the appropriate citation style for your discipline: (maximum 3500 characters)

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Jean, Teillet. "Indigenous Identity Fraud." *DocumentCloud*, 17 Oct. 2022,
www.documentcloud.org/documents/23262696-jean-teillet-report-on-indigenous-identity-fraud.

Simpson, Leanne. *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back*. Winnipeg, Arbeiter Ring Publishing

Simpson, Leanne. *Islands of Decolonial Love*. Winnipeg, Arbeiter Ring Publishing

Tagaq, Tanya. *Split Tooth*. Toronto, Penguin Random House Limited, 2019.

3. PROJECT TIMELINE WITH BENCHMARKS

3.1 Provide a timeline for your project that includes key benchmarks: (maximum 1000 characters)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● November: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Analyze, Annotate, Gather Data from texts: <i>Islands of decolonial Love</i> and <i>Dancing on our Turtle's Back</i> by Leanne Simpson as well as <i>Split Tooth</i> by Tanya Tagaq ○ Complete introductions, positionality, and reflection of <i>biskaabiiyang</i>.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● December: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Analyze, Annotate, Gather Data from texts: <i>As we Have Always Done</i> and <i>Noopiming</i> by Leanne Simpson as well as the "Report on Indigenous Identity Fraud" by Jean Teillet. ○ Compile Citations from Texts ○ Develop framework of argumentation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● January: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Analyze, Annotate, Gather Data from Texts: <i>Rehearsals for Living</i> by Robyn Maynard and Leanne Simpson, <i>Red Skin, White Masks</i> by Glen Sean Coulthard and <i>Mohawk Interruptus</i> by Audra Simpson ○ Present initial findings at PHP Conference.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● February: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Compile citations from texts. ○ Finalize draft of research paper. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Finalize citation list, argumentation. ■ Final preparations for submission.

NOTE: Please refer to the UREAP Help Guide for a project timeline example. Students must demonstrate a willingness to engage in 12 weeks or equivalent of sustained research per the Terms of Reference.

4. OPERATING GRANT BUDGET PROPOSAL

4.1 The UREAP award offers up to \$1000 toward direct research expenses. These expenses must be preapproved by the UREAP committee in the adjudication phase. Use the provided template under the Attachments tab in the TRU Romeo UREAP application to complete your budget proposal. Copy amount from the TOTAL AMOUNT line of the budget here. Total Amount: \$ 350

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4.2

Additional budget information: (maximum 500 characters)

This amount will cover expenses related to obtaining various texts with which I will engage with the notions presented within this proposal.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO ACADEMIC/PROFESSIONAL GOALS

5.1 Describe how this project will contribute to your academic and/or professional goals:

(maximum 1000 characters)

This UREAP project will vastly contribute to my academic and professional goals. This completed work will serve as a perfect example of the high-level academic research I can conduct as my sample writing piece for MA applications. Furthermore, it will serve as an effective launch-pad for further research as it is entwined with my research interests as I pursue a career in academia.

NOTE: Include your role in conceiving of the project, your role in the implementation of the project, and your overall academic objectives – explaining how this project will help to advance those objectives.