

WAPANAKEW AS PEDAGOGY: LESSONS FOR REFLECTIVE PRACTICE AND LEGAL EDUCATION

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CERTIFICATE IN INDIGENOUS LAW

- **Comparative study** of **Indigenous** and **State legal orders** in Canada
- **Evening courses** offered remotely via **Zoom**, with one **land-based course** in person
- **Co-teaching** with Indigenous knowledge holders and legal professionals
- Grounded in **Indigenous pedagogical approaches**

INDIGENOUS PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES

Indigenous legal pedagogy at the heart of the Certificate

- **Experiential legal learning** guided by Elders, knowledge keepers, and language guardians.
- **Observing** the natural world and all of Creation to draw legal teachings.
- **Oral traditions** taught through active participation with Elders, using stories, and legends.
- **Land-based education** to establish direct relationships between learners and with the natural world.

🎧 **To learn more about land-based education**

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WHAT DOES "WAPANAKEW" MEAN?

"In *Atikamekw Nehiromowin*, WAPANAKEW refers to the **first ceremony of the human being,** following the creation of the world.

It is performed once a year in spring, and celebrated over four days. This ceremony is performed to **pay homage to the Creator.**

WAPANAKEW begins at **sunset and continues until sunrise**, in reference to the birth of life as the human being emerges from the waters.

The legend describing this ceremony evokes the evolution of the human being to the point where he implements his traditions and customs to **allow him to live in balance with the world around him.** It also evokes catastrophic events, often premonitory and historic, to bring today's human being back to the essentials of balance and harmony in life on Earth."

https://jurivision.ca/wapanakew/

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INDIGENOUS LAW REVITALIZATION CENTER



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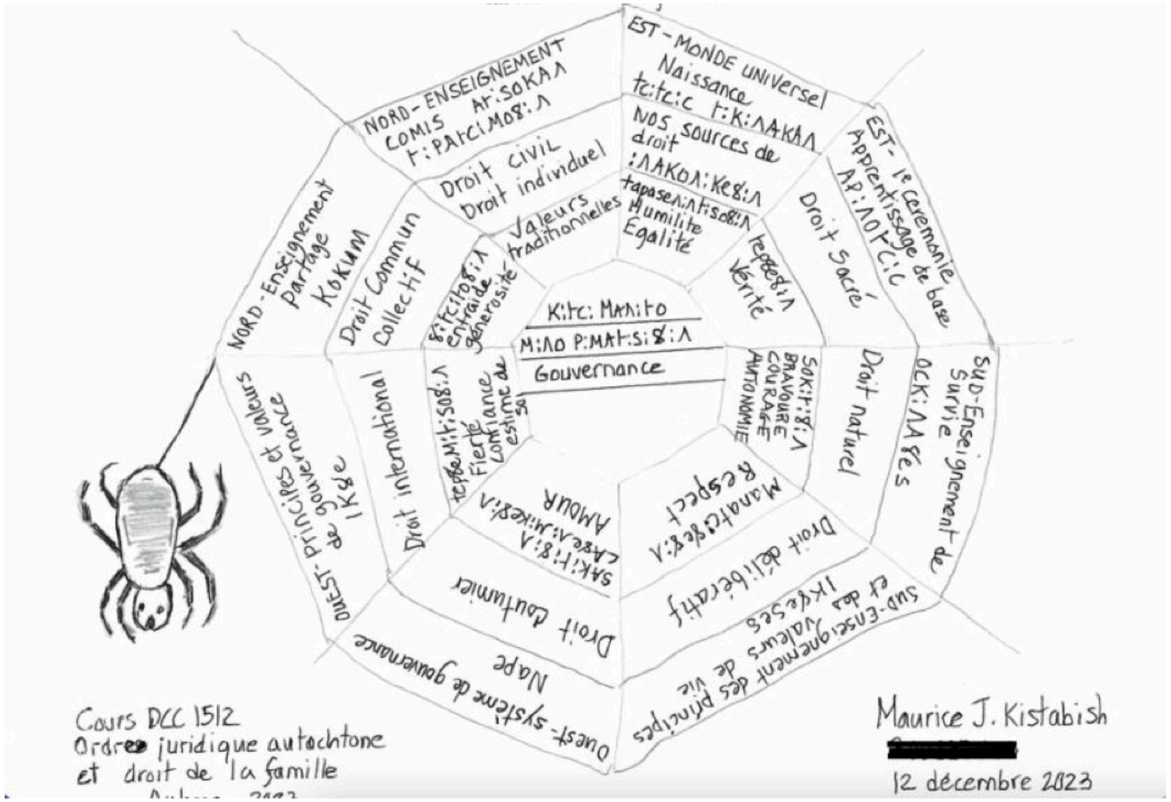
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PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES IN PRACTICE

- Opening & closing ceremonies
- Indigenous legal resources (Stories, language, art, Elders, etc.)
- Discussion circles
- Assessment: Artwork, Drawing legal principles from stories, Self-assessment, etc.







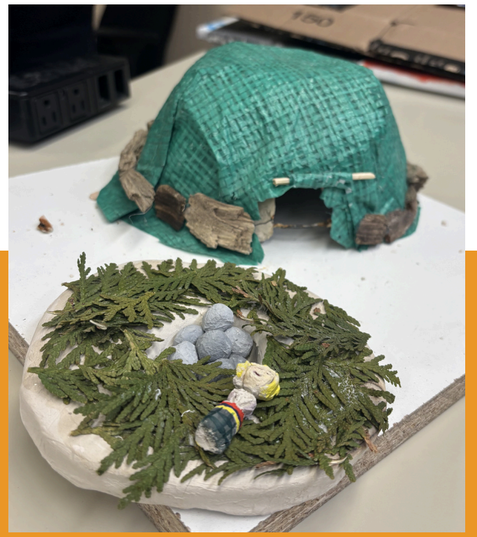
IMPLEMENTING THIS APPROACH IN LAW SCHOOL MORE GENERALLY



"Student Maya Rioux speaks of 'a new way of learning through stories, practices, and exchanges—something no textbook can provide.' It was an experience that helped her grow 'not only as a lawyer, ***but as a person.***'" [My translation]

https://www.uottawa.ca/faculte-droit/droit-civil/nouvelles/apprendre-droit-il-se-vit-premier-cours-immersif-droit-anicinabe






THANK YOU!