

## Readings for Treaty People: The Indian Act

Co-facilitated by Jocelyn Parr and Richard Cassidy

6:30-8:00 Thursday evenings, Atwater Library

Five Weeks: October 18, 25, Nov. 1, 15, 22, 2018

Ours is the age of reconciliation, so called. In the wake of the 2015 *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* report on the Residential School system, the term reconciliation is now ritually deployed in conversations about Indigenous-Settler relations across this country—in schools and in churches, in the media and in politics. However, as Indigenous scholars like Glen Coulthard, Chelsea Vowel, Leanne Simpson, and David Garneau rightly argue, the language of reconciliation is in many instances nothing more than a new phase of colonialism. They argue, rightly, that it remains presumptuous to talk about reconciliation so long as the truths about settler relationships with Indigenous peoples continue to be so easily ignored, misunderstood, and flatly denied. Indeed, non-indigenous populations in Canada have much work and learning still to do.

Join us, therefore, for the second session of “Readings for Treaty People,” a public education project designed for settlers but open always to anyone. This session will focus on the several iterations of the *Indian Act*. First legislated in 1876, its many amendments have governed the lives of First Nations people across Canada in a myriad of ways, replacing traditional forms of indigenous leadership with band council and Indian Status systems, banning traditional indigenous practices, and imposing such forms of control upon Indigenous peoples as the residential school and pass systems. For all the damage it does and has done though, it nevertheless holds the Canadian government to promises it has made in the Treaties negotiated over the past five centuries. Recognizing that this highly colonial piece of legislation is poorly understood by settler populations, we will explore a series of different amendments to the 1876 Indian Act, and conclude with a discussion of efforts by the Trudeau government to replace it with what is called the *Rights and Recognition Framework*.

Participants will be asked to come to the sessions prepared to discuss reading material that will frame our understanding of this crucial piece of Canadian legislation. Reading material will include historic debates in parliament, the act itself, and some articles for context. There will be no more than 30 pages of reading per week. Participants are also asked to contribute a small sum (on a sliding scale between 25-50\$) to pay for the meeting space and for visiting speaker(s).

We can accommodate a maximum of 25 participants. Pending funding applications, childcare and interpretation services may be provided as needed. Please sign up by emailing us at [Reading.the.treaties@gmail.com](mailto:Reading.the.treaties@gmail.com)