

## **Indigenous Nations Studies**

### **Major recently approved; first offered Fall 2019**

Outcomes, Quality Assessment, and Student Experience

#### *Expected learning outcomes of the program:*

By the end of their major course of study students will be able to:

- 1) demonstrate their familiarity with and understanding of Indigenous Nations and Native American Studies, particularly epistemologies (oral, visual and written), theories (including decolonizing methodologies), and practices;
- 2) provide historical and contemporary examples illustrating American Indian/Alaska Native self-determination and Tribal sovereignty culturally, politically and scientifically;
- 3) incorporate respect for Indigenous community and national cultures in addressing contemporary issues impacting social, economic and environmental justice in Tribal and urban American Indian/Alaska Native communities;
- 4) produce a project that showcases the centrality of the environment through analysis of Indigenous ecological practices, cosmology, storytelling and collective responsibility;
- 5) reflect upon the ways in which their lived experiences and identities inform the process of decolonization inextricable to Indigenous Nations and Native American Studies.

#### *Methods by which the learning outcomes will be assessed and used to improve curriculum and instruction:*

In addition to distributing student course evaluations for core INNAS courses, INST will create an assessment mechanism that honors not only comprehension of theoretical elements (outcome 1), but also, respect for Indigenous self-determination and Tribal Sovereignty (outcomes 2 and 3), the bedrock importance of the larger environment (outcome 4), and the dynamic interplay of all of the above with students' lived experiences (outcome 5). INST will need to design an assessment rubric for its core classes that can best evaluate a range of theoretical and epistemological groundings, especially given that oral and visual artifacts can be as impactful as written ones. Ultimately, an assessment of selected assignment artifacts from NAS 201, Introduction to Native American Studies, NAS 392, Indigenous Ways of Knowing, NAS 226, Tribal Critical Race Theory, and NAS 442, Decolonizing Methodologies, will best accomplish this task. Ultimately, in order to evaluate knowledge of Indigenous self-determination culturally and politically, assessment of selected assignment artifacts from NAS 201, NAS 344, Indigenous Women Leadership, and NAS 392, Indigenous Ways of Knowing, will best accomplish this task. In order to evaluate mastery of the importance of the environment, assignment artifacts from NAS 348, Indigenous Practices for Environmental Sustainability, will accomplish this task. In order to evaluate the importance of lived experience, assignment artifacts from NAS 201 and NAS 392 will accomplish this task. It has yet to be determined whether the assessments will involve analysis of all artifacts for a given assignment in a course, or a representative sample.

*Program performance indicators, including prospects for success of program graduates (employment or graduate school) and consideration of licensure, if appropriate:*

Students in the INNAS program will be poised to enter several different pathways to success, in large part because they will be equipped with a skillset that is valued both by prospective employers and prospective institutions of higher education. Specifically, such skills include: appreciation for Indigenous ways of knowing, critical thinking, problem solving, decolonizing research, oral communication, and written communication. Our students will be prepared to serve and work alongside members of Indigenous populations during this critical wave of Native consciousness building, activism and awareness. Opportunities present themselves for graduates who seek to work in the nonprofit sector with specific Native-centered programs, such as the Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA). There are also career opportunities for individuals with an interest in Indigenous science with state, regional and federal governmental agencies such as Metro, the U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife. With its epistemological emphases on Tribal critical race theory, women's leadership, and decolonizing methodologies, as well as its practical emphases on Indigenous ecological practices and community-based engagement, the program will help prepare graduates who embrace a model of service leadership and respect for native sovereignty. The statements of support that accompany this proposal speak to the bedrock significance of the program for policymakers and grassroots activists alike. Furthermore, it should be noted once again that nearly half of all respondents to the survey noted that their work as INST minors was being utilized in preparation for graduate or post-baccalaureate work, including SGRN's graduate certificate program. Here PSU has an opportunity to establish itself as a university concerned with augmenting—if not directly, then certainly indirectly—the ranks of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous academicians dedicated to contributing to the scholarship on Native communities contemporarily and historically.

*Nature and level of research and/or scholarly work expected of program faculty; indicators of success in those areas:*

Program faculty will be held to the same standards for research and scholarly activities as are expected of all PSU faculty at similar status and rank. Scholarship in Indigenous and Native American studies focuses on a range of issues from the epistemological to the theoretical to the practical and community based. The work of these faculty members not only challenges colonized approaches to scholarship and teaching, but also, affirms the proactive work of Indigenous scholars engaged in areas as varied as Indigenous science, Tribal critical race theory, and Indigenous futurisms.