

Assessment Plans

- A. Undergraduate Non-teaching Minor
- B. Graduate Certificate in Native American Studies
- C. Masters of Arts in Native American Studies

Department of Native American Studies
Montana State University

I. Introduction

The Department of Native American Studies traces its origins to 1968 when the then president of Montana State University, Bozeman (MSU) hired a counselor/advisor for the growing number of Native students enrolling at MSU. In 1974, the Center for Native American Studies (CNAS) was created and the first courses under the NAS acronym were offered. Since that time, a non-teaching minor in Native American Studies and a Masters of Arts in Native American Studies were established. In 2004, the Center for Native American Studies was granted departmental status by action of the Montana Board of Regents.

The Department of Native American Studies is housed in the College of Letters and Science, one of nine colleges at Montana State University. A challenge, but an honor unique to Native American Studies is that we are charged with providing services to all Native students, regardless of their academic home. NAS provides tutorial assistance, short-term loans and counseling services to a large number of the over 500 Native students on campus. The Department of Native American Studies provides indigenous perspective and considers it one of its main tasks to reflect that perspective in all departmental activities and dealings. The Department is accredited by the World's Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC). WINHEC accreditation acknowledges that the Native American Studies program and the Department is, in its values and beliefs, indigenous and is recognized internationally as a discipline. Also unique to Native American Studies is that, through our research, teaching and service, our faculty and staff acknowledge a duty to support tribal sovereignty and indigenous self-determination.

A. Mission Statement

Montana State University embraces and supports the traditions and heritage of our Native American students, faculty and staff, and we are committed to improving and expanding opportunities for American Indian students and communities. The Department for Native American Studies was established to provide and advance quality education for and about American Indians of Montana, the region, and the nation. In fulfilling this mission, the Department is committed to meet the changing needs of Montana's Indian tribes and all Montana citizens through excellence in teaching, research, and service.

Native American Studies has assumed a uniquely broad responsibility to serve a number of constituencies. In doing so, it is committed to a balance in its four major roles: teaching, research, public service, and student services. In its academic program, the Department provides concentrated study through an undergraduate non-teaching minor, a graduate certificate in Native American Studies and a Master of Arts degree in Native American Studies. Students in any major can also gain a multicultural perspective through NAS offerings in the University's core curriculum. The Department, through its research and other creative efforts, actively pursues interdisciplinary scholarship in the field of Native American Studies. At the same time, the faculty seeks opportunities to develop programs which address the needs of its campus and off-campus constituencies. In its service function, the department has a special responsibility to Indian tribes, communities and organizations to assist self-directed

educational, socioeconomic, cultural, and community development. In addition to fulfilling the traditional role of an academic unit, Native American Studies also assumes a commitment to the educational advancement of Indian people and in doing so, the Department performs a vital student service function to increase the academic achievement and retention of Native American students at Montana State University.

Native American Studies reflects an Indian voice in the University's teaching, research, and service functions. In pursuing its missions and goals, the Department will continue to serve as a vital link between the University and Indian people.

B. Cultural Standards

The Department of Native American Studies provides service to a wide variety of constituencies, including the representatives from many different Indian nations who come here as our students. Because of that it is hard to look to or rely on any one nation's value system. Nevertheless, the department's longstanding commitment to students, communities, and nations--native and non-native alike--has helped craft our core values and principles as international, pantribal, and universalist ones. They cut across various traditions and are at work in our department.

Native American Studies Department Values:

1. *Honesty*: Honesty in all dealing is a number one principle that the Department operates on.
2. *Generosity*: We cooperate with and serve the community and students, gladly sharing knowledge and resources in our possession. Our faculty and staff members help design various courses for the tribal colleges as well as provide other services upon request.
3. *Kindness/Openness*: We try to treat all who come into contact with MSU-NAS department with kindness and respect acknowledging all people's background and needs and respecting cultures they consider their own. It is our priority to create an atmosphere of friendliness.
4. *Hard work*: We all work hard to carry out the mission of our department and to achieve its goals in serving students and community and preserving and fostering Native American ways and traditions.
5. *Family*: The value of family in Native cultures is tremendous. That is how Native Americans identify themselves – by their family ties. We recognize the importance of family life and strive to become a family for our students as well. It is of central importance for our Native students, who often have complex familial and community (extended family) responsibilities to attend to. As faculty members, we try to be sensitive to that, and strive to be flexible in our expectations of students when unforeseen circumstances arise.
6. *Spirituality*: Many Native people place a high value on their connectedness to “that which is greater than self.” These beliefs often form a sense of meaning and purpose, a sense of self and of relationship with “the Supernatural,” however the individual or culture defines it. The Department acknowledges these beliefs and itself honors the Creator in its private and public activities.
7. *Humor and Respect*: In dealings with each other and with our students, we find that these two core values are part of the commerce of human relationship and two sides of the same coin. The foregoing values all work together to create a mutually respectful and safe working, learning and teaching environment where no one takes himself or herself too seriously.

II. Academic Programs

A. Non-teaching Minor in Native American Studies

The non-teaching minor in Native American Studies is designed to enhance the student's major area of study, offering an interdisciplinary program for Indians and non-Indians who wish to concentrate in the study of Native American Life or who are preparing for careers in tribal affairs or other Indian-related professional employment.

1. Native American Studies Undergraduate Minor Learning Outcomes

The Native American Studies minor degree is comprised of a 21 credit hour course of study that examines Native North American cultural and social life from historical and contemporary perspectives. There are three required courses: NASX 105, *Introduction to Native American Studies*; NASX 232, *Montana Indian Cultures, Histories and Contemporary Issues*; and, NASX 476, *American Indian Law and Policy*.

It is expected that students completing an undergraduate minor degree in Native American Studies will be able to:

- LO1: Explain the concept of tribal sovereignty and how tribal sovereignty is both restricted and acknowledged by the federal trust relationship and by relationships with the states.
- LO2: Understand the development of modern tribal governments and their functions and importance in contemporary society.
- LO3: Understand and appreciate the roles of history, culture, and politics in the development of tribal world views that relate to modern life and contemporary issues of concern for Native American peoples.
- LO4: Identify historical, cultural, and political diversity and significance in Native oral traditions and written literatures.
- LO5: Recognize stereotypes about Native American peoples and explain why these stereotypes were created and why they are sustained in modern society.
- LO6: Understand historical experiences and contemporary issues in North America from the perspective of American Indian peoples.

| Expected Learning Outcomes Students will ... | Assessments Direct and Indirect Evidence | Conclusions Based on Evidence | Actions Taken or Planned |
|---|--|--|---------------------------------|
| LO1 Explain the concept of tribal sovereignty and how tribal sovereignty is both restricted and acknowledged by the federal trust relationship and by relationships with the states. | Within each section of NASX 476, <i>American Indian Law and Policy</i> ; NASX 232, <i>Montana Indian Cultures, Histories, Current Issues</i> ; or NASX 105, <i>Introduction to Native American Studies</i> , faculty will identify an assignment that best indicates student success in achieving learning outcomes. | Scores on papers and exams indicate competency in this area. | To be reviewed: Spring 2014 |
| LO2 Understand the development of modern tribal governments and their functions and importance in contemporary society. | Within each section of NASX 476, <i>American Indian Law and Policy</i> ; NASX 232, <i>Montana Indian Cultures, Histories, Current Issues</i> ; or NASX 105, <i>Introduction to Native American Studies</i> , faculty will identify an assignment that best indicates student success in achieving learning outcomes. | Scores on papers and exams indicate competency in this area. | To be reviewed: Spring 2015 |
| LO3 Understand and appreciate the roles of history, culture, and politics in the development of tribal world views that relate to modern life and contemporary issues of concern for Native American peoples. | Within each section of NASX 476, <i>American Indian Law and Policy</i> ; NASX 232, <i>Montana Indian Cultures, Histories, Current Issues</i> ; or NASX 105, <i>Introduction to Native American Studies</i> , faculty will identify an assignment that best indicates student success in achieving learning outcomes. | Scores on papers and exams indicate competency in this area. | To be reviewed: Spring 2016 |
| LO4 Identify historical, cultural, and political diversity and significance in Native oral traditions and written literatures. | Within each section of NASX 476, <i>American Indian Law and Policy</i> ; NASX 232, <i>Montana Indian Cultures, Histories, Current Issues</i> ; or NASX 105, <i>Introduction to Native American Studies</i> , faculty will identify an assignment that best indicates student success in achieving learning outcomes. | Scores on papers and exams indicate competency in this area. | To be reviewed: Spring 2017 |

| | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| <p>LO5</p> <p>Recognize stereotypes about Native American peoples and explain why these stereotypes were created and why they are sustained in modern society.</p> | <p>Within each section of NASX 476, <i>American Indian Law and Policy</i>; NASX 232, <i>Montana Indian Cultures, Histories, Current Issues</i>; or NASX 105, <i>Introduction to Native American Studies</i>, faculty will identify an assignment that best indicates student success in achieving learning outcomes.</p> | <p>Scores on papers and exams indicate competency in this area.</p> | <p>To be reviewed: Spring 2018</p> |
| <p>LO6</p> <p>Understand historical experiences and contemporary issues in North America from the perspective of American Indian peoples.</p> | <p>Within each section of NASX 476, <i>American Indian Law and Policy</i>; NASX 232, <i>Montana Indian Cultures, Histories, Current Issues</i>; or NASX 105, <i>Introduction to Native American Studies</i>, faculty will identify an assignment that best indicates student success in achieving learning outcomes.</p> | <p>Scores on papers and exams indicate competency in this area.</p> | <p>To be reviewed: Spring 2019</p> |

B. Graduate Certificate Degree Learning Outcomes

The Graduate Certificate in Native American Studies is comprised of a 12 credit hour course of study. Students will gain a deeper insight into the American Indians of Montana, the region, and the nation through courses on current and historical aspects of Native American art, law, culture, and contemporary issues. NASX 530, Federal Law and Indian Policy, is required of all certificate students. In addition, students select from a variety of available courses to complete the 12 credits.

Graduate minor degree learning outcomes include the ability of the students to:

- LO1 Make apparent in masters'-level research the interdisciplinary connections between American Indian studies and the primary field of graduate study
- LO2 Integrate American Indian studies research methods with the research methods used in the primary field of graduate study
- LO3 Demonstrate in writing the ability to understand a variety of subjects from a tribal perspective

| Expected Learning Outcomes Students will ... | Assessments Direct and Indirect Evidence | Conclusions Based on Evidence | Actions Taken or Planned |
|--|--|--|--------------------------------|
| LO1 Make apparent in masters'-level research the interdisciplinary connections between American Indian studies and the primary field of graduate study | Course Evaluations | Scores on papers and exams indicate competency in this area. | To be reviewed: Spring 2014 |
| LO2 Integrate American Indian studies research methods with the research methods used in the primary field of graduate study | Course Evaluations | | To be reviewed: Spring 2015 |
| LO3 Demonstrate in writing the ability to understand a variety of subjects from a tribal perspective | Written Assignments | Scores on papers and exams indicate competency in this area. | To be reviewed: Spring 2016 |

C. Masters of Art in Native American Studies

1. Learner Outcomes

- LO1:** Ability to orally express oneself clearly and effectively.
- LO2:** Ability to express oneself clearly and effectively in writing.
- LO3:** Ability to critically read primary texts in the discipline.
- LO4:** Understand theories and concepts in Native American Studies
- LO5:** Demonstrate competence in basic field research methods.
- LO6:** Demonstrate ability to conduct scholarly or professional activities in an ethical manner.

2. Primary Indicators

- a. Research Prospectus (Oral Defense)
- b. Thesis or Professional Paper

3. Rubrics

a. Rubric: Prospectus Defense (Oral Presentation of Research Proposal) – LO1

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|--|--|--|---|
| Organization | Lacked sequence in presentation or missing information. Presented too little/much material for allotted time. | Poor sequence or illogical presentation of information. Some Relevant information not presented. Presentation not well timed. | Some information presented out of sequence. Had some pacing and timing problems. | Information presented nearly complete and relevant and presented in logical sequence. Pace and timing appropriate. | Information presented was complete and in logical order. Easy to follow. Very well-timed and well-paced. |
| Originality | Problem/purpose lacked creativity or not new. Duplication of previous work. Design/approach inappropriate and/or ignored previous well established work in area. | Problem/purpose limited in originality and creativity. Design/approach only marginally appropriate or innovative. | Problem/purpose moderately original or creative. Design/approach Moderately appropriate or innovative. | Problem/purpose fairly original or creative. Design/approach appropriate or innovative. | Problem/purpose very creative or original with new and innovative ideas. Explored original topic and discovered new outcomes. Design/ approach introduced new or expanded on established ideas. |
| Significance/ Authenticity | Project has no significance/ authenticity to field and will make no contribution. | Project has little relevance or significance/authenticity to field and will make little contribution. | Project only moderate relevance or significance/ authenticity to field and will make a nominal contribution. | Project has fair relevance or significance/ authenticity to field and will make good contribution. | Project extremely relevant or has significant importance/ authenticity to field and will make an important contribution. |
| Discussion/ Summary/ Conclusions | Little or no discussion of project findings/ outcomes. Displayed poor grasp of material. Conclusion/summary not supported by findings/outcomes. | Major topics or concepts inaccurately described. Considerable relevant discussion missing. Conclusions/ summary not entirely supported by findings/ outcomes. | Few inaccuracies and omissions. Conclusions/ summary generally supported by findings/outcomes. | Discussion sufficient and with few errors. Greater foundation needed from past work in area. Conclusions/ summary based on outcomes and appropriate, included no recommendations. | Discussion was superior, accurate, engaging, and thought-provoking. Conclusions/summaries and recommendations appropriate and clearly based on outcomes. |
| Delivery | Presenter unsettled, uninterested, and unenthused. Presentation was read. Inappropriate voice mannerisms, body language, and poor communication skills. Poor quality of slides/presentation materials; did not enhance presentation/ performance. | Presenter unenthused, monotonous and relied extensively on notes. Voice mannerisms, body language, and communication skills sometimes inappropriate. Poor quality of slides /presentation material; poor enhancement of presentation/ performance. | Displayed interest and enthusiasm. Read small parts of material. Occasionally struggled to find words. Generally appropriate voice mannerisms, body language, and communication skills. Moderate quality of slides/presentation materials. | Displayed interest and enthusiasm. Read small parts of material. Occasionally struggled to find words. Generally appropriate voice mannerisms, body language, and communication skills. Moderate quality of slides/presentation materials. | Relied little on notes. Displayed interest and enthusiasm. Good voice mannerisms, body language, and communication skills. Good quality of slides/ presentation materials; enhanced presentation/ performance. Relied little on notes. Expressed ideas fluently in own words. Genuinely interested and enthusiastic. Exceptional voice mannerisms, body language, and communication skills. Exceptional slides/ presentation quality materials; greatly enhanced presentation/ performance. |

b. Thesis and Professional Paper Rubric (LO2 – LO6)

| Attribute and Applicable Learner Outcome | Does Not Meet Expectations | Meets Expectations | Exceeds Expectations |
|---|--|--|---|
| <p>Overall Quality of Scholarship</p> <p>LO2, LO3, LO4, LO5</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Arguments are incoherent or flawed <input type="checkbox"/> Objectives are poorly defined <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates rudimentary critical thinking skills <input type="checkbox"/> Does not reflect understanding of subject matter and associated literature <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates poor understanding of theoretical concepts <input type="checkbox"/> Displays limited creativity and insight | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Arguments are coherent and clear <input type="checkbox"/> Objectives are clear <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates average critical thinking skills <input type="checkbox"/> Reflects understanding of subject matter and associated literature <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates understanding of theoretical concepts <input type="checkbox"/> Displays creativity and insight | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Arguments are superior <input type="checkbox"/> Objectives are well defined <input type="checkbox"/> Exhibits mature, critical thinking skills <input type="checkbox"/> Exhibits mastery of subject matter and associated literature <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates mastery of theoretical concepts <input type="checkbox"/> Displays exceptional creativity and insight |
| <p>Contribution to Discipline</p> <p>LO2, LO3, LO4, LO5</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Limited evidence of discovery <input type="checkbox"/> Limited expansion upon previous research <input type="checkbox"/> Limited theoretical or applied significance <input type="checkbox"/> Limited publication potential | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence of discovery <input type="checkbox"/> Builds upon previous research <input type="checkbox"/> Reasonable theoretical or applied significance <input type="checkbox"/> Reasonable publication potential | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Exceptional evidence of discovery <input type="checkbox"/> Greatly extends previous research <input type="checkbox"/> Exceptional theoretical or applied significance <input type="checkbox"/> Exceptional publication potential |
| <p>Appropriate and Responsible Conduct of Research</p> <p>LO2, LO5, LO6</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates unacceptable originality <input type="checkbox"/> Lacks regulatory compliance <input type="checkbox"/> Research method appropriate <input type="checkbox"/> Research methodology absent or inappropriate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates acceptable originality <input type="checkbox"/> Considers regulatory compliance <input type="checkbox"/> Documentation is adequate <input type="checkbox"/> Research method appropriate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates exceptional originality <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates regulatory compliance <input type="checkbox"/> Documentation is excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Research method creative and appropriate |
| <p>Quality of Writing</p> <p>LO3, LO5</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Writing is weak <input type="checkbox"/> Numerous grammatical and spelling errors apparent <input type="checkbox"/> Organization is poor | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Writing is adequate <input type="checkbox"/> Some grammatical and spelling errors apparent <input type="checkbox"/> Organization is logical | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Writing is publication quality <input type="checkbox"/> No grammatical or spelling errors apparent <input type="checkbox"/> Organization is excellent |
| <p>Overall Assessment</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Does not Meet Expectations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Meets Expectations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Exceeds Expectations |

c. Rubric: LO6 - Demonstrate ability to conduct scholarly or professional activities in an ethical manner.

See Rubric B – Thesis and Professional Paper Rubric (LO – LO6, Subcategory “Appropriate and Responsible Conduct of Research).” Additionally, NASX 505, *Proseminar in Native American Studies* possesses a unit on culturally appropriate research with emphasis on indigenous intellectual and cultural rights. Students are required to complete Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) training in order to insure a passing grade in NASX 541, *Critical Approaches to Native American Studies Research Methods*.

d. Thresholds

1. 90 % of Research Prospectus will be accepted or deemed “Passing” (3-year average).¹
 - a. Prospectus will be deemed “Passed” when student achieves a score of 3 or above on the following categories of measure, vis., Organization, Originality, Significance/Authenticity, Discussion/Summary/Conclusions and Delivery
 - b. Acceptance or “Passing” will indicate approval of student’s Research Proposal
2. 90 % of Thesis and Professional Papers will rate “Meets Expectations” or “Exceeds Expectation” (3-year average).²
3. Time to completion (no Threshold; report only)

e. Corrective Actions (Response):

A. Research Prospectus

In the event that the threshold is not met, the faculty of Native American Studies will review the unit in NASX 505, *Proseminar in Native American Studies* to determine if additional emphasis needs to be placed on the expectations of the Research Prospectus.

B. Thesis/Professional Paper

If 90 percent of the master’s students fail to meet or exceed expectations, the faculty of Native American Studies will review content in the following required courses for improvement in appropriate areas:

- NASX 540 - *Theoretical Positions in Native American Studies*
- NASX 541 - *Critical Approaches to Native American Studies Methods*

f. Legislative History

Adopted: 10 March 2005
Updated: 29 February 2008
Updated: 16 May 2013
Updated: 14 August 2014

¹ Threshold includes all masters students admitted and in attendance after one semester.

² Threshold includes master’s students whose Prospectus has been accepted.