CLASS STRUCTURE:

This course will be conducted both in-person and remotely, as needed, with all assignments submitted via Canvas. Class will be held twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:30 to 5:00 pm (Eastern Standard Time). In general, class meetings will feature inter-active lectures on specific topics, based on specific readings. Each week, students will be required to complete assignments that may include any of the following: discussion comments; critical analyses of specific readings; research assignments; interpretations of case studies, etc. All of the necessary textbooks and other reading materials for this course will be organized and available via Canvas, where students can access readings, locate links for websites, respond to discussion questions, submit written assignments, etc. We will also host some guest speakers remotely.

DESCRIPTION:

This course will delve into some of the innovative theoretical approaches and interpretations, rooted in long-standing Indigenous ontologies, that are emerging within the inter-disciplinary field of Native American and Indigenous Studies and within the disciplines of Anthropology, History, Literature, etc. Decolonial projects highlight Indigenous conceptions of materiality, kinship, and landscape, while also critically examining the impact of colonizing ideologies, and undoing biased colonial settler interpretations. Students will learn practical methods for deploying Indigenous theory and decolonizing methodologies in diverse research settings, including considerations of philosophy, sovereignty, and environmental ethics. Course readings and interviews with Indigenous scholars will feature innovative socio-cultural, ethnohistorical, museological, and archaeological research projects that emphasize processes of consultation and collaboration. Individual case studies will focus on: ecological knowledges; territorial sovereignty; law and resistance; community-based archaeological research; the reclamation and preservation of cultural heritage, etc. A key goal is to understand how academic research can be more inclusive of, and more responsible to, Indigenous communities.

TEXTBOOKS:


NOTE: All textbooks are available on-line as free digital books through Penn Libraries.
PREREQUISITES & RELATED COURSES:
For graduate students, no prerequisites are necessary. For undergraduate students, at least one course that applies to the Minor in Native American and Indigenous Studies (or permission from the Professor) will be required as a prerequisite.

This course will expand the current course offerings associated with the Native American and Indigenous Studies initiative. This course will intersect with and complement other courses taught by faculty from Africana Studies, Latin American Studies, Gender Studies, etc. who are collaborating on the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation’s “Just Futures” Grant titled “Dispossessions in the Americas: The Extraction of Bodies, Land, and Heritage from La Conquista to the Present.”

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
Students will pursue the following intellectual and practical approaches:
- Track the increasing attention to Indigenous ontologies in the field of Native American and Indigenous Studies as an intellectual project, not just as a study of diverse cultural beliefs.
- Study case histories of projects that utilize Indigenous theory to illuminate the shifting dynamics of gender, ethnicity, culture, religion, and conflict over time.
- Learn practical methods for deploying Indigenous theory and decolonizing methodologies in diverse research settings.
- Study related decolonizing approaches in other fields and other parts of the world.
- Critically analyze specific colonial-settler practices that have been used, in the past, to situate Indigenous cultures, technologies, belief systems, geographical regions, and cultural expressions as antiquated and primitive.
- Learn how specific Indigenous practices are being used, in the present, to situate Indigenous cultures, technologies, belief systems, geographical regions, and cultural expressions as modern and innovative.
- Track and critically analyze emergent multi-disciplinary approaches that can inform and shape research in Native American and Indigenous Studies, and that could be applied elsewhere.
- Interrogate some of the arguments that inspire pushback to decolonizing in various academic and world settings.
- Improve critical analysis skills by weighing a wide range of sometimes competing data gleaned from historical, anthropological, museological, and archaeological interpretations of Indigenous peoples.
- Improve writing skills by composing research reports that blend scientific data, theoretical models, decolonizing methods, and collaborative approaches to create more holistic studies of Indigenous topics.
- Understand the protocols and methods used to shape processes of consultation and collaboration in diverse settings.

INTEGRITY:
All students are expected to complete their coursework with fairness and honesty and, most especially, to meet all deadlines on-time. Failure to do so might be construed as seeking unfair advantage over others. Requests for make-up work will only be granted under dire extenuating circumstances or documented emergencies.

Please note that violations of the student code include: misrepresenting someone else’s work as your own (plagiarizing); cheating; submitting duplicate work for different classes; unauthorized collaboration; using test materials without permission; fabricating or falsifying data, etc. To avoid problems, students should familiarize themselves with the Code of Academic Integrity at the University of Pennsylvania.

Note: If you are in need of special assistance through Student Disabilities Services, notify the Professor and plan on scheduling regular meetings at the Weingarten Learning Resources Center at 215-573-9235.
STUDENT PRESENTATIONS:

**In-class Discussions:** Students should always be prepared to comment on specific readings, respond to guest speakers, contribute interesting questions, and discuss their individual interests in particular topics.

**Media Articles:** Each week, two student volunteers will be assigned to investigate current media articles on a particular topic. This assignment is designed to raise awareness of the influence of media reporting and representation in shaping public views of Native American and Indigenous people and issues. Students will find a media example relating to the current topic of that week, taken from recent (no more than 30 days old) newspapers, magazines, radio, tv, film, advertising, public events, or other media.

**PowerPoint:** One PowerPoint, 5-7 minutes long, composed to accompany an oral presentation summarizing the topic and explaining the relevance of the research conducted for the final research paper/project.

EXAMS:

There will be NO mid-term exam and NO final exam.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:

**Discussion Posts:** Individual weekly contributions to on-line Discussion Posts (minimum 400 words), composed of thoughts, insights, reactions, and questions that emerged from the reading assignments. These will be due on Tuesdays at 12 noon, posted to Canvas.

**Team Summaries:** Each week, from February 1 to April 21, students will be grouped into teams of two to work together on compiling a summary analysis of that week’s readings, including key glossary terms, important insights, and questions to prompt discussion.

**Response Papers:** On that dates noted, students will submit three Response Papers: (minimum 1,200 words), focused on analyses of a specific topic or case history, in response to prompt questions posted in the directions for each paper. Each response paper will be about 3-4 pages long, plus a list of sources cited. If you wish, these Response Papers may expand upon relevant discussion comments posted to Canvas. Include consideration of how various disciplinary approaches or insights might illuminate Indigenous perspectives on the topic. Each of these papers will be due on the dates specified in the syllabus, and posted as Assignments to Canvas.

**Final Paper/Project:** Each student will compose one Final Paper/Project (approximately 4,000 words), focusing on independent study of a particular event, individual, tribal nation, research site, or topic introduced in this class. This assignment can take any of the following forms: research paper; annotated bibliography; graduate field statement; thesis chapter; draft article for publication, etc. Students are encouraged to choose a form that will advance their particular research interests and fulfill part of their graduate study requirements.

The written version of this final paper/project should be about 9-10 pages long, formatted as a Word document in 11 pt Times Roman and ½ line spacing plus a list of sources cited.

Students must use concepts and techniques that have emerged from Indigenous theory and decolonizing methods, and they are also encouraged to consider, where possible and appropriate, how collaboration with a specific Native American or First Nations community might serve as a means to apply this research. The final work can include discussion of tribal or cultural differences, political relationships, power dynamics, colonial legacies, stereotypes, etc. that have influenced public or academic representations of Indigenous people vis-à-vis this issue. Include discussion of specific theoretical models that shape your approach to this research.

Your research sources must include all of the following:
- at least one primary document
- at least one contemporary media article
- at least one article by a Native American author
- at least two chapters or articles from the textbooks and assigned readings for this class
- at least four other sources

Limit internet sources to valid and reputable academic articles, tribal websites, museum sites, archives, etc. Avoid Wikipedia and amateur researchers. Further guidelines will be explained in class later in the semester.
WEEK ONE:
January 13, Introduction
Remote via Zoom

READINGS:
Read the partial syllabus and course guidelines posted to Canvas.

DISCUSSION:
Introduction to Indigenous Theory and Decolonizing the Classroom

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WEEK TWO:
January 18, Approaching the Indigenous: Positionality Check

READINGS:

WRITING:
Approaching the Indigenous: Where are you ethnically, socially, and intellectually positioned vis-à-vis Indigenous studies? Discussion comments due by 12 noon on Wednesday January 18.

January 20, Intro to Native American Studies

READINGS:


Dian Million. 2014. “There is a River in Me: Theory from Life.” In Theorizing Native Studies, 31-42.

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WEEK THREE:
January 25, Introduction to Native American & Indigenous Studies

READINGS:


WRITING:
How is NAIS distinct from other academic disciplines? Individual discussion comments and team summaries due by 12 noon on Wednesday January 25.

January 27, Theorizing Refusal

READINGS:


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**WEEK FOUR: Historical Experiences & Sources**

**February 1 and 3**

**READINGs:**


**WRITING:**
Individual discussion comments and team summaries due by 12 noon on Wednesday February 2.

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**WEEK FIVE: Recognition, Acknowledgement, Sovereignty**

**February 8 and 10**

**WEBSITES:**
National Conference of State Legislators, List of Federal and State Recognized Tribes. 

**READINGs:**


**WRITING:**
Individual discussion comments and team summaries due by 12 noon on Wednesday February 9.
WEEK SIX: Traditional Ecological Knowledge
February 15 and 17

READINGS:


WRITING:
RESPONSE PAPER #1: Ethnography, Sovereignty & Traditional Knowledge - DUE February 17

WEEK SEVEN: Oral Histories, Traditions, Archives
February 22 and 24

READINGS:


WRITING:
Individual discussion comments and team summaries due by 12 noon on Wednesday February 23.

WEEK EIGHT: Reclaiming Cultural & Intellectual Histories
March 1 and 3

READINGS:


WRITING:
RESPONSE PAPER #2: Reclaiming & Decolonizing Indigenous Intellectuals - DUE March 3

WEEK NINE:
March 8 and 10  SPRING BREAK – NO CLASSES

WEEK TEN: Indigenous Research & Material Heritage
March 15 and 17
READINGS:


WRITING:
Individual discussion comments and team summaries due by 12 noon on Wednesday March 16.

WEEK ELEVEN: Bio-Ethics of Health Research
March 22 and 24
READINGS:


**WRITING:**
Individual discussion comments and team summaries due by 12 noon on Wednesday March 23.

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**WEEK TWELVE: Museums & Repatriation Issues**

**March 29 and 31**

**WEBSITE:**

**READINGS:**


**WRITING:**
Individual discussion comments and team summaries due by 12 noon on Wednesday March 30.

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**WEEK THIRTEEN: Indigenous Ontologies, Philosophies & Archaeologies**

**April 5 and 7**

**READINGS:**


WRITING:

RESPONSE PAPER #3: Reframing Indigenous Research in the Academy - DUE April 7

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WEEK FOURTEEN: Acknowledging Indigenous Spaces & Places
April 12 and 14

WEBSITE:
United Nations Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

READINGS:

WRITING:
Individual discussion comments and team summaries due by 12 noon on Wednesday April 13.

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WEEK FIFTEEN: Relationality & Reconciliation
April 19 and 21

READINGS:
https://www.wbur.org/onpoint/2021/09/14/custody-case-investigates-native-american-rebecca-nagle-this-land

WRITING:
Individual abstracts of final projects due by 12 noon on Wednesday April 20.
WEEK SIXTEEN: Decolonizing Indigenous Futures

April 26


April 28

LAST DAY – STUDENT FINAL PRESENTATIONS

Note: Final Research Topics may include any of the following (or other related topics):

Theoretical perspectives               Indigenous History of North America               Recognition and Sovereignty
Decolonizing Environmental Ethics       Indigenous Ecological Knowledge                 Biopiracy and Biopolitics
Decolonizing Human Remains              Repatriation and Reconciliation                 Archives and Collecting Culture
Cultural Heritage                       Object Ontologies                                Relations with Other-Than-Humans
Performing Culture                      Land Acknowledgements                            Other Relevant Topic