



## Master Course Syllabus

For additional course information, including prerequisites, corequisites, and course fees, please refer to the Catalog: <https://catalog.uvu.edu/>

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**Semester:** Fall

**Year:** 2025

**Course Prefix:** AIST/ANTH

**Course and Section #:** 1800G 001

**Course Title:** Introduction to American Indian Studies

**Credits:** 3

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### ***Course Description***

Provides an overview of modern and historical American Indian communities in the United States. Explores political and historical issues of major tribes and Indian communities by region. Provides students with information and perspectives on key social and cultural issues: spirituality, relations with the Federal government, notable individuals, art, literature, dance, media, health, education and activism.

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### ***Course Attributes***

This course has the following attributes:

- ☒ General Education Requirements
- ☒ Global/Intercultural Graduation Requirements
- ☐ Writing Enriched Graduation Requirements
- ☐ Discipline Core Requirements in Program
- ☐ Elective Core Requirements in Program
- ☐ Open Elective

Other: *Click here to enter text.*

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### ***Instructor Information***

**Instructor Name:** Nizhone Meza, J.D., MSW

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### ***Student Learning Outcomes***

Upon successful completion, students should be able to:

- 1 - Critique Indian tribal sovereignty, federal supremacy, and states' rights.
- 2 - Articulate the historical development of the federal Indian Law and Policy through written assignments and oral presentations.
- 3 - Specify what constitutes an Indian tribe and who is an Indian as related to Indian Law.
- 4 - Identify the jurisdictional framework in Indian country and the interrelationships among the tribes, the federal government, and the state governments.
- 5 - Analyze and evaluate global or intercultural issues.
- 6 - Discuss stereotypical cultural conceptions and recognize the complexity and variety of different cultural groups.

7 - Evaluate how one's own cultural rules and biases compare and contrast with those from different cultures.

#### GENERAL EDUCATION (GE) COURSE OBJECTIVES:

This course is part of UVU's General Education Program. It addresses Intellectual and Practical Skills Foundations, specifically the development of QUALITATIVE REASONING (QR) and COMMUNICATION (COMM) skills. It also emphasizes students' roles as STEWARDS OF PLACE (SP) in a global society. GE objectives for this course are:

- (1) Describe and explain differences in language, subsistence, family and kinship, law, religion, politics, economics, and gender among human populations across space and time. [QUALITATIVE REASONING, STEWARDS OF PLACE]
- (2) Demonstrate critical thinking and written expression with regard to cross-cultural perspectives. [QUALITATIVE REASONING, COMMUNICATION, STEWARDS OF PLACE]
- (3) Exhibit an awareness of cultural relativity and global connectivity among diverse peoples. [STEWARDS OF PLACE]
- (4) Development of oral presentation skills through discussion, debate, and class presentations. [COMMUNICATION]

GLOBAL/INTERCULTURAL (GI) COURSE OBJECTIVES: This course fulfills a Global/Intercultural (G/I) requirement for graduation. While realizing that developing intercultural understanding is a lifelong process, the expected outcomes for students completing the Global/Intercultural requirement include:

- (1) Gaining an informed and nuanced understanding of global or intercultural issues.
- (2) Replacing stereotypical cultural conceptions with recognition of the complexity and variety of different cultural groups.
- (3) Gaining appreciation for the contribution of different cultural groups to educational, social and cultural institutions, and for the value of difference within these contexts.
- (4) Gaining confidence in interrelating respectfully with individuals representing cultures and perspectives other than one's own.
- (5) Becoming knowledgeable, responsible, reflective and respectful citizens within an increasingly multicultural society and global community.

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## ***Course Materials and Texts***

Dunbar-Ortiz, Roxanne. *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*. Beacon Press, 2014.

Kimmerer, Robin Wall. *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*. Milkweed edition, 2013.

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## ***Course Requirements***

### **Course Assignments, Assessments, and Grading Policy**

Presentation: Students will give a 7-8 minute presentation on an approved class-related topic of their choice. (10%)

Essays: Every other week, there will be a two-page double-spaced essay due. (20%)

Quizzes: Every other week, there will be a quiz that covers the reading and class material. (15%)

Midterm Exam: A comprehensive exam up to the midpoint of the semester. (25%)

Final Exam: A comprehensive exam that covers all course topics. (30%)

Final grades are rounded to the nearest tenth and assigned the corresponding letter grade:

A = 93-100	B - = 80-82.9	D+ = 67-69.9
A - = 90-92.9	C+ = 77-79.9	D = 63-66.9
B+ = 87-89.9	C = 73-76.9	D - = 60-62.9
B = 83-86.9	C - = 70-72.9	F = 0-59.9

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### **Required or Recommended Reading Assignments**

RWK = Robin Wall Kimmerer – *Braiding Sweetgrass*

RDO = Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz – *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*

Week 1 – Introductions & Acknowledgements

Week 2 – Contemporary Indigenous Themes, “What is Your Why?”

Week 3 – RWK: “Aster & Goldenrod” (p. 39-47); RDO: “Author’s Note-Introduction” (p. xi-14), “Follow the Corn” (p. 15-31)

Week 4 – RWK: “Skywoman Falling” (p. 4-10), “People of Corn, People of Light” (p. 341-347), “In the Footsteps of Nanabozho” (p. 205-215)

Week 5 – RDO: “Culture of Conquest” (p. 32-44), “Bloody Footprints” (p. 56-77)

Week 6 – RWK: “Allegiance to Gratitude” (p. 105-117), “Windigo Footprints” (p. 303-309)

Week 7 – RDO: “Birth of a Nation” (p. 79-93), “The Last of the Mohicans & Andrew Jackson’s White Republic” (p. 95-116)

Week 8 – RDO: “Sea to Shining Sea (p. 117 - 132); “White Fragility” excerpt (p. 15-24); “Killers of the Flower Moon” excerpt; Dawes Allotment Act

Week 9 – Midterm & Fall Break – No Readings

Week 10 – RDO: “Indian Country” (p. 133-161)

Week 11 – RDO: “US Triumphalism & Peacetime Colonialism (p. 152-177), “Ghost Dance Prophecy-Resurgence” (p. 181-196);

Week 12 – Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA); *Cobell v. Salazar*; Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA)

Week 13 – RDO: “The Doctrine of Discovery” (p. 197-217)

Week 14 – RWK: “Burning Cascade Head” (p. 241-253)

Week 15 – RDO: “The Future of the United States” (p. 218-236)

Week 16 – Final exam – No Readings

*Cobell v. Salazar*, 573 F.3d 808. United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. 2009.

DiAngelo, Robin. *White Fragility: Why It’s So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism*. Beacon Press, 2018.

Grann, David. *Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI*. Doubleday, 2017.

*Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978*. Public Law 95-608, 25 Oct. 1978. *United States Code*, title 25, secs. 1901—1963, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/95th-congress/house-bill/12533>.

Kauanui, J. Kēhaulani. “A structure, not an event: Settler Colonialism and Enduring Indigeneity.” *Lateral : Journal of the Cultural Studies Association*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2016.

*Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act*. Public Law 101-601, 16 Nov. 1990. *United States Code*, title 25 secs 3001-3013.

Spruhan, Paul. “CDIB: The Role of the Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood in Defining Native American Legal Identity.” *American Indian Law Journal*, vol. 6, no. 2, May 2018.

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## General Description of the Subject Matter of Each Lecture or Discussion

### ***Week 1: Course Introduction & Indigenous Worldviews***

- Key course expectations and policies.
- Indigenous concepts of time, space, and relationality.
- Identity and positionality.

GE/GI Objectives: GE1, GE3, G/I2, G/I4

### ***Week 2: Indigenous Articulations & Personal Reflection***

- Indigenous expressions in contemporary art and activism.
- Indigenous voice and representation.

GE/GI Objectives: GE2, G/I2, G/I3

### ***Week 3: Creation Stories & Historical Foundations***

- Indigenous and Western origin narratives.
- Indigenous creation stories and their historical significance.
- Foundational themes in Indigenous histories.

GE/GI Objectives: GE1, GE2, G/I1

### ***Week 4: Storytelling & Cultural Continuity***

- Storytelling as a method of cultural transmission and preservation.

GE/GI Objectives: GE1, GE2, G/I2

### ***Week 5: Colonization & Resistance***

- Key events and ideologies in early colonization.
- The impact of colonization and Indigenous resistance.

GE/GI Objectives: GE1, GE2, G/I1

### ***Week 6: Gratitude & Reciprocity***

- Indigenous ethics of gratitude and reciprocity.
- Indigenous values of gratitude and reciprocity to environmental contexts.
- Personal relationships with land and community.

GE/GI Objectives: GE2, GE3, G/I3

### ***Week 7: Nation-Building & Representation***

- The development of U.S. national identity through Indigenous exclusion.
- The portrayal of Native peoples in literature and policy.
- How Indigenous peoples are represented in nation-building narratives.
- Implications of settler colonial narratives.

GE/GI Objectives: GE1, GE2, G/I1

### ***Week 8: Racism, Policy, and Midterm Review***

- Racism and white supremacy in historical context.
- Federal policies affecting Native sovereignty.
- Prepare for the midterm by synthesizing key themes.

GE/GI Objectives: GE1, GE2, G/I1

### ***Week 9: Midterm & Reflection***

- Demonstrate understanding of course content through mixed-format exam.
- Reflect on personal learning and growth.
- Organize ideas clearly in written form.

GE/GI Objectives: GE2, GE4, G/I5

### ***Week 10: Cultural Appropriation & Identity***

- Difference between cultural appreciation and appropriation.
- Stereotypes and misrepresentations of Native identity.
- Respectful engagement with Indigenous cultures.

GE/GI Objectives: GE2, GE3, G/I2

### ***Week 11: Colonialism & Prophecy***

- Ghost Dance as a form of spiritual resistance.
- Ongoing colonial structures in U.S. society.
- Indigenous prophecy and its relevance to contemporary resurgence.

GE/GI Objectives: GE1, GE2, G/I1

### ***Week 12: Sovereignty & Legal Frameworks***

- Legal frameworks and their impact on tribal sovereignty.
- Significance of key legal protections for Native communities.
- Role of federal law in tribal sovereignty.
- Compare different legal cases and their outcomes.

GE/GI Objectives: GE1, GE2, G/I1

### ***Week 13: Doctrine of Discovery & MMIW***

- The legal and moral implications of the Doctrine of Discovery.
- Raise awareness about the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women crisis.
- Historical and contemporary justice issues affecting Indigenous communities.

GE/GI Objectives: GE2, GE3, G/I3

### ***Week 14: Activism & Environmental Justice***

- Indigenous activism and environmental justice movements

- Environmental justice through Indigenous perspectives.
- Activism and ecological knowledge.

GE/GI Objectives: GE2, GE3, G/I3

### ***Week 15: Indigenous Futures***

- - Envision Indigenous futures rooted in sovereignty and sustainability.
- - Formulate personal commitments to decolonization.

GE/GI Objectives: GE2, GE4, G/I5

### ***Week 16: Final Exam***

- Synthesize course learning and present final reflections.
- Communicate insights through oral and written formats.
- Evaluate personal growth and intercultural competence.

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## ***Required Course Syllabus Statements***

### **Generative AI**

This course requires you to complete assignments that assess your understanding and application of the material. You are expected to do your own work, and the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools, such as chatbots, text generators, paraphrasers, summarizers, or solvers, is strictly prohibited for any part of your assignments. Using these tools will be considered academic dishonesty and will be handled according to the university's policy. If you have questions about acceptable use of AI tools, please consult the instructor before submitting your work.

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### **Using Remote Testing Software**

☒ This course does not use remote testing software.

☐ This course uses remote testing software. Remote test-takers may choose their remote testing locations. Please note, however, that the testing software used for this may conduct a brief scan of remote test-takers' immediate surroundings, may require use of a webcam while taking an exam, may require the microphone be on while taking an exam, or may require other practices to confirm academic honesty. Test-takers therefore shall have no expectation of privacy in their test-taking location during, or immediately preceding, remote testing. If a student strongly objects to using test-taking software, the student should contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester to determine whether alternative testing arrangements are feasible. Alternatives are not guaranteed.

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## ***Required University Syllabus Statements***

### **Accommodations/Students with Disabilities**

Students needing accommodations due to a permanent or temporary disability, pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions may contact UVU [Accessibility Services](#) at [accessibilityservices@uvu.edu](mailto:accessibilityservices@uvu.edu) or 801-863-8747.

Accessibility Services is located on the Orem Campus in BA 110.

Deaf/Hard of Hearing students requesting ASL interpreters or transcribers can contact Accessibility Services to set up accommodations. Deaf/Hard of Hearing services can be contacted at [DHHservices@uvu.edu](mailto:DHHservices@uvu.edu)

DHH is located on the Orem Campus in BA 112.

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### **Academic Integrity**

At Utah Valley University, faculty and students operate in an atmosphere of mutual trust. Maintaining an atmosphere of academic integrity allows for free exchange of ideas and enables all members of the community to achieve their highest potential. Our goal is to foster an intellectual atmosphere that produces scholars of integrity and imaginative thought. In all academic work, the ideas and contributions of others must be appropriately acknowledged and UVU students are expected to produce their own original academic work.

Faculty and students share the responsibility of ensuring the honesty and fairness of the intellectual environment at UVU. Students have a responsibility to promote academic integrity at the university by not participating in or facilitating others' participation in any act of academic dishonesty. As members of the academic community, students must become familiar with their [rights and responsibilities](#). In each course, they are responsible for knowing the requirements and restrictions regarding research and writing, assessments, collaborative work, the use of study aids, the appropriateness of assistance, and other issues. Likewise, instructors are responsible to clearly state expectations and model best practices.

Further information on what constitutes academic dishonesty is detailed in [UVU Policy 541: Student Code of Conduct](#).

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### **Equity and Title IX**

Utah Valley University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age (40 and over), disability, veteran status, pregnancy, childbirth, or pregnancy-related conditions, citizenship, genetic information, or other basis protected by applicable law, including Title IX and 34 C.F.R. Part 106, in employment, treatment, admission, access to educational programs and activities, or other University benefits or services. Inquiries about nondiscrimination at UVU may be directed to the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights or UVU's Title IX Coordinator at 801-863-7999 – [TitleIX@uvu.edu](mailto:TitleIX@uvu.edu) – 800 W University Pkwy, Orem, 84058, Suite BA 203.

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### **Religious Accommodation**

UVU values and acknowledges the array of worldviews, faiths, and religions represented in our student body, and as such provides supportive accommodations for students. Religious belief or conscience broadly includes religious, non-religious, theistic, or non-theistic moral or ethical beliefs as well as participation in religious holidays, observances, or activities. Accommodations may include scheduling or due-date modifications or make-up assignments for missed class work.

To seek a religious accommodation, a student must provide written notice to the instructor and the Director of Accessibility Services at [accessibilityservices@uvu.edu](mailto:accessibilityservices@uvu.edu). If the accommodation relates to a scheduling conflict, the notice should include the date, time, and brief description of the difficulty posed



by the conflict. Such requests should be made as soon as the student is aware of the prospective scheduling conflict.

While religious expression is welcome throughout campus, UVU also has a [specially dedicated space](#) for meditation, prayer, reflection, or other forms of religious expression.