The University of Idaho's American Indian Studies program engages with Indigenous knowledge(s) and cultures(s) as dynamic, vibrant, diverse, place-based, and resilient. The AIS program seeks to educate, contemplate and study the deep continuities of Indigenous knowledge(s) rooted in place and sophisticated problem solving engaged across time and space, past and the present. By privileging the voices and experiences of Indigenous peoples themselves, AIS offers:

1. Recruitment and retention – enhance the recruitment and retention of Indian students, as well as other students of ethnic heritage, attending and graduating from UI.

2. Intercultural communication – provide an opportunity for face-to-face Indian/non-Indian exchange of ideas, perceptions, and misconceptions about Indian and Euro-American culture, including a meaningful context for intercultural communications and understanding, and solution of problems of bias and stereotyping.

3. Cultural appreciation – foster a better understanding of and appreciation for the vitality, breadth, depth, and rich diversity of components of contemporary Indian cultures (e.g., arts, economics, literature, government, and social and religious life), as well as their histories.

4. Rigorous curriculum with an interdisciplinary approach – enable students to acquire the knowledge, critical methods, and research skills of the academic fields that comprise the minor, including but not limited to anthropology, English, history, sociology, and teacher education.

5. Application – provide an Indian pedagogy and knowledge base, i.e., an Indian perspective, that would complement and be integrated with students’ other academic fields of study (e.g., business, education, engineering, forestry and natural resources, health care, humanities, or social sciences), better preparing students with the skills and expertise to address and successfully meet the various issues and challenges faced in Indian communities.

6. Collaboration – build partnership relationships between UI and regional tribes (Idaho and adjacent western states), especially the Coeur d’Alene and Nez Perce Tribes, improving communications, educational delivery, the sharing of expertise, and ability to address common concerns and problems.

7. Institutional growth – advance the concerns and issues faced in Indian communities, as well as an Indian pedagogical and knowledge perspective within the university and academic communities.

8. Inclusivity – serve both Indian and non-Indian students and communities alike. Through the offered curriculum and sponsored activities, the overarching objective of the American Indians Studies Program is to provide a transformational educational experience for students.

Acknowledging the vital role native languages continue to play in American Indian communities and the need for their preservation, a curriculum in Nez Perce language is offered and upon completion of two years of study can be used to satisfy the Bachelor of Arts language requirement at the University of Idaho.

Students enrolled in the academic minor in American Indian Studies will be required to complete an academic service learning internship in collaboration with an area tribe. This internship helps fulfill the program’s vision and objectives of application and collaboration through the American Indian/Indigenous value of reciprocity.

Minors


AIST 110 Community Building
3 credits
This course is aimed towards first generation college students from indigenous communities. This course helps students build community support through existing programs at the university and facilitates students’ connections with their tribal cultures. It also helps students develop good study habits and build study skills.

AIST 111 Intro to Success
1 credit
This course assists each student’s academic, cultural, and social adjustment to the University. The course is also designed to provide supportive tools and resources to each student to ensure they are maximizing their ability. The course will focus on a few of the topic areas: time management, organization skills, tribal issues and tribal governmental structures, importance of diversity, learning styles, budgeting, and test taking.

AIST 204 (s) Special Topics
Credit arranged.

AIST 210 Native Identities
3 credits
This course is intended to develop a dynamic modern understanding of indigenous communities and self. The class will focus on such themes as family, history, blood & kinship, colonization, treaty rights and sovereignty, land and linguistics.
AIST 244 (s) Tribal Elders Series
3 credits, max 9
This course is intended to share information from the neighboring tribes surrounding the University of Idaho. Elders from these communities will share a tribal epistemology that each tribe considers to be essential to an education of an adult. Such educational perspective may often be missing/misrepresented or misunderstood in current university pedagogy. This class will place an emphasis on contemporary indigenous voices. This course will have a subtopic heading to incorporate the possibility of having many neighboring tribes participate.

AIST 314 Tribal Sovereignty and Federal Policy
3 credits
The Tribal Sovereignty and Federal Policy course is designed to provide an in-depth understanding of how colonial and Federal Indian Policies have impacted the lives of Tribes and their surrounding communities. Through a survey of the changing eras of policy (conquest, pre-Revolutionary approaches, the Marshall Trilogy, the Treaty Era, Allotment and Termination, and Self-Determination), students will learn about the forces that have shaped tribal communities, and a deeper appreciation for tribes’ efforts to restore and exercise their sovereignty. Tribal Sovereignty as it applies to land management, natural resources and community development will be a focal area.

AIST 320 Native American & Indigenous Film
3 credits
Gen Ed: American Diversity

AIST 344 Indigenous Ways of Knowing
3 credits
The course is intended as an introduction to issues of cultural, racial, ethnic and linguistic diversity that arise in American school and society. In particular we will be looking at indigenous epistemological comparison with Western educational models. The central question for the course will be: Why is educational attainment different for different groups in society, and how does that difference relate to social stratification characteristics of the larger society? We will also try to answer other questions: What is the impact of cultural and linguistic diversity on the various institutions of society, including family, schools, and the economic system? What policies and programs have been developed in the US and other societies to deal with cultural diversities? These and other questions will be the basis for our reading and discussions.

AIST 400 (s) Seminar
Credit arranged.

AIST 401 Contemporary American Indian Issues
3 credits
Gen Ed: American Diversity
Identifies and addresses key cultural, economic, educational, legal, resource, and sovereignty issues facing Indian communities today; an essential component involves presentations by representatives from the Indian communities. (Spring only)

AIST 403 (s) Workshop
Credit arranged.

AIST 404 (s) Special Topics
Credit arranged.

AIST 411 Native American Architecture
3 credits
Gen Ed: American Diversity
Cross-listed with ARCH 411
An exploration of Native American architecture in North America, including ancient, historic, and contemporary buildings and settlements within their diverse social, cultural, and physical contexts. Additional assignments required for graduate credit. (Spring only)

AIST 412 Tribal Governance
3 credits
This course is intended to impart an understanding of the vitality and rich diversity of contemporary American Indian societies, their histories, and their literatures, e.g., in the arts and expressive culture, governmental affairs both indigenous and external, economics, ecological relations and natural resources, health care, and family, social and religious life, oral traditions, world views and cultural values. This understanding is inclusive of both indigenous cultural and contact-historical expressions. An understanding of Tribal sovereignty and its varied meanings is key to this outcome.

AIST 420 Native American Law
3 credits
Cross-listed with LAW 949
Study of Tribal Sovereignty and interaction with the U.S. government at various levels with an emphasis on treaty rights, jurisdictional issues, the trust relationship, protection of lands, the eras of U.S. Indian policy, and the continued assertion of tribal rights and interests. LAW 949 is a law class and will be graded based on the norms and expectations to which law students are normally held. AIST 420 is an undergraduate course that will be assessed on a P/F basis according to the general norms and expectations for an upper division undergraduate course.

AIST 421 Native American Natural Resource Law
3 credits
Cross-listed with LAW 979
Study of the natural resources over which Tribal Nations assert stewardship or seek to influence others regarding protection of resources including sacred sites, land use and environmental protection, natural resource development, taxation, water rights, rights associated with hunting, fishing and gathering, and international approaches to indigenous lands and resources. Recommended Preparation: LAW 949. LAW 979 is a law class and will be graded based on the norms and expectations to which law students are normally held. AIST 421 is an undergraduate course that will be assessed on a P/F basis according to the general norms and expectations for an upper division undergraduate course.

AIST 422 Plateau Indians
3 credits
Gen Ed: American Diversity
Cross-listed with ANTH 422 and RELS 422
An overview of historic and contemporary Indian cultures of the Plateau; oral traditions, ceremonial life, social organization, and subsistence activities; history of contact with Euro-American society. Two 1 to 2-day field trips reqd. Additional projects/assignments reqd for grad cr. ANTH 422 is a cooperative course available to WSU degree-seeking students.
AIST 426 Red Earth White Lies: American Indian History 1840-Present
3 credits
Gen Ed: American Diversity
Cross-listed with HIST 426.
Survey 1840 to present; dynamics and themes of Indian history with emphasis on Indian-White relations in the U.S. Additional work required for graduate credit.

AIST 431 Stolen Continents, The Indian Story: Indian History to 1840
3 credits
Gen Ed: American Diversity
Cross-listed with HIST 431
Survey 1400 to 1840; dynamics and themes of Indian history with emphasis on Indian-White relations in the U.S. Additional work required for graduate credit.

AIST 478 Tribal Nation Economics and Law
3 credits
Cross-listed with LAW 928
Survey of economic development strategies by various Tribal Nations, including an overview of federal incentive programs and disincentives for the growth of strong tribal economies. Tribal legal codes, commercial projects, and federal Indian law parameters will be discussed. Topics will include: the tribal government-owned corporate model, gaming enterprises, economic diversification, the federal 8(a) program, limitations on tribal tax-exempt bond offerings, and value-added on-reservation products. LAW 928 is a law class and will be graded based on the norms and expectations to which law students are normally held. AIST 478 is an undergraduate course that will be assessed on a P/F basis according to the general norms and expectations for an upper division undergraduate course. (Spring, alt/ys)

AIST 484 American Indian Literature
3 credits
Gen Ed: American Diversity
Cross-listed with ENGL 484
Major themes and traditions in American Indian texts.
Prereq: ENGL 102
Prereq or Coreq: ENGL 175 or ENGL 257 or ENGL 258.

AIST 498 (s) Internship
Credit arranged
Supervised internship in an Indian community setting, integrating academic study with work experience; requires formal plan of activities to be approved by the on site supervisor and assigned faculty member; a final written report will be evaluated by the assigned faculty member.
Prereq: Permission.

AIST 499 (s) Directed Study
Credit arranged.