



Syllabus: AIS 101-1 Intro to American Indian Studies (Online)

Course Information

Course Title:	Introduction to American Indian Studies
Course Prefix/Number:	AIS 101-01
Semester:	Summer 2026
Class Days/Times:	Online
Prerequisite:	None
Credit Hours:	3 Credit Hours

Instructor Information

Name:	Dr. Marcus Macktima
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Office hours:	Online via Zoom (By Appointment)

Course Description

Examination of the diversity of American Indian tribes. Includes successive colonization waves and conflict between Native Americans and colonizing nations. Also includes the development of Native American cultures, and policies toward Native Americans.

Student Learning Outcomes

After completion of the course students will be able to:

- Understand the historical/political relationship between Indigenous peoples in the United States and the U.S. federal government.
- Explore and analyze the social, economic, and political impacts of the federal trust relationship between Indigenous peoples and the U.S. federal government.
- Recognize both past and contemporary issues facing Indigenous populations and organizations.
- Define sovereignty and self-determination, as well as understand the relationship between Native nations and the U.S. government.
- Develop an awareness of the historical and ongoing efforts of resistance, adaptation, and endurance among Native peoples.
- Integrate the concepts learned to address contemporary Native American issues.

Course Structure

This course will be graded on several parameters dictated below.

Attendance (Discussion Assignment): 20 pts

During Week 1 you will be required to post on the “Introductions” discussion board. This will count as your attendance and understanding that you have examined the course and syllabus as well as acknowledge your responsibilities in this course. ***IF YOU DO NOT YOU WILL BE ADMINISTRATIVELY WITHDRAWN!*** The instructor reserves the right to withdraw students from the course because of consistent inactivity, inappropriate behavior, or other reasons deemed reasonable, following San Carlos Apache College policy as explained in the student handbook.

Discussions and Required Readings: 20 pts

Students will be required to submit an individual post each week and respond to at least *two* peers. The first post (initial post) is due every **FRIDAY** and replies to peers by **SUNDAY**. You may be required to do additional research in order to complete the assignment, so be prepared. Pay attention to the instructions posted on the discussion board.

Initial Post Response	10 pts
1 st Peer Response	5 pts
2 nd Peer Response	5 pts
TOTAL POINTS:	20 points

Exams: 100 pts – Midterm/Final

The class is structured to include a Midterm, and Final Exam. The Midterm and Final will pertain only to the first and second half of the semester, respectively. The exams are structured to include 4 sections: multiple choice, matching, T/F, and 1 short essay question. The Final Exam will be conducted the last week of the semester and will ***NOT BE CUMULATIVE***. The format of both the Midterm and Final Exam are similar in design, which may incorporate analyses and descriptions of key terms and examinations of specific historical events. All elements from the course will be used (readings, lectures, etc.,) for the questions. A study guide is provided.

Papers: 100 pts per paper/20 pts for response

Papers will be submitted to **TURNITIN, a PLAGIARISM** software that will check submitted papers for any copied or plagiarized material, through Canvas.

Paper 1: Reflection Paper:

The semester paper will be a 1,500-word reflection paper that answers the question:

- Based on the Peoplehood Model by Robert K. Thomas and reading by Tom Holm et. al. on the model's use as a tool for sovereignty, can the United States be considered a "people"?

Article Provided:

- *Holm, Tom, J. Diane Pearson, and Ben Chavis. "Peoplehood: A Model for the Extension of Sovereignty in American Indian Studies." Wicazo Sa Review 18, no. 1 (2003): 7-24.*

Students will be asked specific prompts to answer this question which will include the use of at least 2 traditional origin stories (Researched and chosen by the student), cite the Holm article, as well as any other secondary articles from the semester class reading list.

Movie Analysis Short Essay:

After watching the documentary film by John and Ken Little on Sports Mascots, students will be asked to write a short 2 paragraph essay response to the film. This will provided in a separate discussion board where students will be asked to engage with each other on the significance of the documentary.

Course Learning Materials and Textbook Information

No Book Required - Selected Scholarly and Primary Source Texts are Assigned to Each Week

**Syllabus Organized around SCAC's A.R.R.O.W. framework:
Accountability, Respect, Resilience, Openness, and Wisdom**

ACCOUNTABILITY:

Defines grade expectations and accountability for coursework; emphasizes students' responsibility for original work and proper citation; stresses punctuality, participation, and consequences of absences.

Policies and Expectations

Important Remarks:

THIS IS A READING AND WRITING INTENSIVE COURSE. Do not assume that you will be able to ignore the reading, discussions, quizzes, and other assignments. It is also imperative that you are able to receive the necessary information electronically. If you believe you will have a problem completing these assignments or do not have the appropriate tools to be successful in this class, please notify me ***IMMEDIATELY***. Do not wait until the last minute.

Late Policy:

Assignments will remain open for the duration of the course, however, should you submit an assignment after the due date, it will be penalized 50%. You may receive full credit for any late work with a valid excuse. If there is a problem and you are unable to turn in an assignment on-time, ***PLEASE NOTIFY ME IMMEDIATELY!***

Evaluations and Grading & Assignments:

90 and above is an A
 80 – 89 is a B
 70 – 79 is a C
 60 – 69 is a D
 Under 60 is Failing

Your grade will be determined by the following:

Grading for each of these assignments will have a turnaround time of one-week at maximum. It is imperative that you do every reading and discussion in order to be successful. Each assignment will have the following point designation:

Intro/Attendance Post	20
Discussion Posts	160
Reflection Paper:	100
Midterm Exam	100
Movie Analysis	20
Final Exam:	100
TOTAL POINTS:	500

Attendance Policy

During Week 1 you will be required to post on the “Introductions” discussion board. This will count as your attendance and understanding that you have examined the course and syllabus as well as acknowledge your responsibilities in this course. ***IF YOU DO NOT YOU WILL BE ADMINISTRATIVELY WITHDRAWN!*** The instructor reserves the right to withdraw students from the course because of consistent inactivity, inappropriate behavior, or other reasons deemed reasonable, following San Carlos Apache College policy as explained in the student handbook. Students are expected to contact instructor prior to absences.

Academic Integrity:

Violations of scholastic ethics are considered serious offenses by San Carlos Apache College. Students may consult the SCAC Student Handbook sections on student code of conduct, on scholastic ethics and on the grade appeal procedure.

All work done for this class must be your own, or the original work of your group. While you may discuss assignments with other class members, the final written project must clearly be original. You may use work from books and other materials if it is properly cited.

Instructor Withdrawals

Students who have missed four consecutive classes (or the equivalent), or have not submitted any assignments nor taken any quizzes by the 45th day census report, due on [date of 45th day found in Academic Calendar on SCAC website], are assumed NOT to be participating in the class and may be withdrawn at the faculty member’s discretion.

Student Withdrawals

Students may withdraw from class at any time during the first 2/3 of the semester without instructor permission and without incurring any grade penalty. Please be sure to withdraw yourself by [withdrawal deadline date found in Academic Calendar on SCAC website] if you do not expect to complete the class; otherwise, you may receive an "F" grade.

RESPECT:

Establishes a respectful learning environment free from discrimination; promotes a safe and inclusive campus.

Equal Access Statement/Disability Accommodations

San Carlos Apache College seeks to provide reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities. The College will comply with all applicable regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations as required to ensure an equal educational opportunity. This process includes self-identifying as a student with a disability, providing supporting documentation of their disability, and being approved for services through the Disability Resources Office (DRO). It is the student's responsibility to make known to their instructor(s) the student's specific needs within the context of each class in order to receive appropriate accommodations. We will work together in order to develop an accommodation plan specifically designed to meet the individual student's requirements.

For more information or to request academic accommodations, please contact: Anthony Osborn, TOCC Disabilities Resource Coordinator, aosborn@tocc.edu, or 520-383-0033 for additional information and assistance.

Title IX

San Carlos Apache College encourages each student to have the knowledge and skills to be an active bystander who intervenes when anyone is observed or being harassed or endangered by sexual violence. Sexual discrimination and sexual violence can undermine students' academic success and quality of life on campus and beyond. We encourage students who have experienced or witnessed any form of sexual misconduct to talk about their experience and seek the support they need.

Conduct: Bias, Bullying, Discrimination and Harassment

San Carlos Apache College faculty and staff are dedicated to creating a safe and supportive campus environment as a core value. Harassment based on age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status will not be tolerated.

RESILIENCE:

Supports students facing unavoidable circumstances and recognizes hardships, while setting academic expectations.

Incomplete Policy

Incomplete (I) grades are not awarded automatically. The student must request an "I" from the instructor who can choose to award an Incomplete only if all three of the following conditions are met:

1. The student must be in compliance with the attendance policy.
2. The student must have unavoidable circumstance that would prohibit the student from completing the course.
3. The student must have completed over 75% of the course requirements with at least a "C" grade.

Incompletes are not a substitute for incomplete work due to frequent absences or poor academic performance. Incomplete grades that are not made up by the end of the ninth week of the following semester will be automatically changed to an F if the agreed upon work, as stipulated on the written form signed by the instructor and the student when the I grade is awarded, is not completed.

Special Withdrawals (Y) Grade

The "Y" grade is an administrative withdrawal given at the instructor's option when no other grade is deemed appropriate. Your instructor must file a form stating the specific rationale, with documentation, for awarding this grade. "Y" grades are discouraged since they often affect students negatively. Your instructor will not award a "Y" grade without a strong reason.

OPENNESS:

Encourages open discussions between students and faculty and provides transparency about expectations and learning methods.

Courses Outline and Important Dates

UNIT 1 – Historical Perspectives and Foundations

- May 26 – May 31** **Week 1: Introduction to AIS and Decolonizing histories**
- Kidwell, Clara Sue. "American Indian Studies as an Academic Discipline." *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 35, no. 1 (2011): 27-31.
 - Sando, Joe. *Po'Pay: Leader of the First American Revolution*, Madison: University of Wisconsin, 2005.
 - **Intro Discussion Due by Friday**
 - **Discussions Due by Friday**
- June 1 – June 7** **Week 2: Indigeneity in Early Colonialism and Deconstructing Histories**
- O'Brien, Jean. "Divorced from the Land: Accommodation Strategies of Indian Women in Eighteenth Century New England" in *Gender, Kinship, Power: A Comparative and Interdisciplinary History*.
 - Donna L. Akers. "Decolonizing the Master Narrative: Treaties and Other American Myths." *Wicazo Sa Review* 29, no. 1 (2014): 58-76. doi:10.5749/wicazosareview.29.1.0058.
 - **Discussions Due by Friday**

UNIT 2 – Sovereignty and Indigenous Structures

- June 8 – June 14** **Week 3: Indigenous Governance and Reconceptualizing Sovereignty**
- Deloria, Vine. "Intellectual Self-Determination and Sovereignty: Looking at the Windmills in Our Minds." *Wicazo Sa Review* 13, no. 1 (1998): 25-31. doi:10.2307/1409027.
 - *For Indigenous Eyes Only: A Decolonization Handbook*, edited by Waziyatawin Angela Wilson and Michael Yellow Bird. *The Decolonization of Indigenous Governance*.
 - **Discussions Due by Friday**
 - **Paper 1 Due by Sunday**
- June 15 – June 21** **Week 4: Significant Cases in "Indian Country"**
- Wilkins, David E., and Lomawaima, K. Tsianina. "Law of Nations: The Doctrine of Discovery" in *Uneven Ground : American Indian*

Sovereignty and Federal Law Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001.

- *Echo-Hawk, Walter, "Lone Wolf v. Hitchcock: Breaking the Treaties" In the Courts of the Conqueror: The 10 Worst Indian Law Cases Ever Decided. Golden: Fulcrum Publishing, 2010.*
 - **Discussions Due by Friday**
 - **Midterm Due by Sunday**

UNIT 3 – Indigenous Philosophy and Epistemologies

June 22 – June 28 **Week 5: Significance of Land and “Sacredness”**

- *Deloria Jr., Vine. "The Concept of History" in God is Red: A Native View of Religion 30th Anniversary Edition, 97-112. Golden; Fulcrum Publishing, 2003.*
- *Cordova, Viola F., "Usen: The Unidentifiable Is" in How it is: The Native American Philosophy of V.F. Cordova. Ed. Kathleen Moore et. al., 107-112. Tucson; The University of Arizona Press, 2007.*
- *Basso, Keith H., "Quoting the Ancestors" in Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language among the Western Apache. 3-35. Albuquerque; University of New Mexico Press, 1996.*
 - **Discussions Due by Friday**

June 29 – July 5 **Week 6: Power in Story and Food**

- *Pavel, Michael. "Decolonizing Through Storytelling" in For Indigenous Eyes Only: A Decolonization Handbook, 127-137. Santa Fe; School of American Research Press, 2005.*
- *Salmón, Enrique, "We still Need Rain Spirits" in Eating the Landscape: American Indian Stories of Food, Identity, and Resilience. 48-66. Tucson; The University of Arizona Press, 2012.*
 - **Discussions Due by Friday**

UNIT 4 – Contemporary Issues and Applications

July 6 – July 12 **Week 7: “Indian” Education**

- *Meza, Nizhone. 2015. "Indian Education: Maintaining Tribal Sovereignty through Native American Culture and Language Preservation." Brigham Young University Education & Law Journal 2015 (1): 353–66.*
- *Pewewardy, Cornel, "Ideology, Power, and the Miseducation of Indigenous Peoples in the United States" in For Indigenous Eyes Only: A Decolonization Handbook, 139-156. Santa Fe; School of American Research Press, 2005.*
 - **Discussions Due by Friday**

July 13 – July 19 **Week 8: Misrepresentations and Defining Ourselves**

- Gover, Kirsty. "Genealogy as Continuity: Explaining the Growing Tribal Preference for Descent Rules in Membership Governance in the United States." *American Indian Law Review* 33, no. 1 (2008): 243–309. <https://doi.org/10.2307/20455382>.
- Harjo, Susan S., "Just Good Sports" in *For Indigenous Eyes Only: A Decolonization Handbook*, 31-52. Santa Fe; School of American Research Press, 2005.
 - **Discussions Due by Friday**
 - **Watch "More Than a Word" by John Little and Kenn Little**

Finals Week: Final Exam on Canvas – July 22nd – July 23rd

Faculty/Student Communication

A faculty member will respond to a student's communication within 24 hours of receiving the communication excluding weekends and college closures. If a course is online a faculty will login their Canvas classroom a minimum of three times per week spread evenly throughout the week and respond to any discussion posts and check on student progress in the course.

Course Feedback:

All assignments will be graded and returned to the students promptly, typically within a week after the assignment is closed for handing in. Email and phone messages will be returned within 24 hours. A student or the instructor may request a student conference at any time during the semester. Quarterly grade reports will be provided to each student, either in person, by email or via the electronic system of Canvas.

WISDOM:

Encourages evaluation, reasoning and diverse perspectives; emphasizes organized and audience-aware expression and promotes learning from elders and cultural teachings for personal and academic growth.

SCAC General Education Learning Outcomes**Apache Wisdom**

Learning from the teachings carried on from Apache elders and other community leaders, students will appreciate their unique history, language, and culture as a source of strength for their personal, family, academic, and career aspirations.

Critical Thinking

Approach critical issues, problems, or questions using creativity and deductive reasoning, evaluating evidence, acknowledging diverse perspectives and contexts, and synthesizing one's own viewpoint into ongoing conversations and debates.

Communication

Effectively express ideas orally and in writing. Good communication includes understanding one's audience, organizing one's thoughts, acknowledging and integrating outside sources, using the most recent technology, and following the accepted writing and citation conventions of the particular discipline.

Environmental Literacy

Students will understand their connection to social, cultural, physical, and global environments. Students will consider and evaluate strategies for cultural, community and global sustainability.

DISCLAIMER: This syllabus is designed to evolve and change throughout the semester based on class progress and interests. You will be notified of any changes as they occur.