

# NATIVE AMERICAN STUDIES

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## Theodore Van Alst, Chair

The Native American Studies Department at the University of Montana builds its curriculum on the foundation of three interrelated principles: sovereignty, indigeneity and community well-being. In so doing we pay close attention to the continuing role of traditional value systems, the impacts of colonization and the efforts toward decolonization within tribal communities. We define sovereignty broadly as one of the rights of all indigenous peoples, including both the political-legal foundations as provided in U.S. law and policy and self-determination more generally. Indigeneity underlies the unique holistic relationship that Native American communities have to the land and to the environment. In addition, our degree program not only intends to advance the well-being of our individual students, both native and non-native, but also to enhance the well-being of Indigenous communities across Montana, the United States and globally, by providing necessary and relevant education about those communities as well as the skills and knowledge for those working within those communities to do so effectively. Our curriculum and the foundations of faculty research are broadly cross-disciplinary with these principles at their base.

Native American Studies is an academic discipline committed to examining the contemporary and past experiences and life ways of the indigenous nations of North America from their perspective. The curriculum is designed to provide a study of American Indians from a holistic and humanistic viewpoint by focusing upon their cultures, history, and contemporary life. Courses are designed for both Native American and non-Native American students so they can better understand human similarities and differences, thereby leading to more effective work with and within tribal communities, through stronger knowledge bases of tribal America, and the development of better communications and cross-cultural relationships.

The Native American Studies major supports the objectives of a liberal arts education. It is interdisciplinary and provides a perspective that critically analyzes and evaluates the strengths and limitations of each contributing discipline.

## Undergraduate

- Native American Studies B.A. (<http://catalog.umt.edu/past-catalogs/2017-2018/colleges-schools-programs/humanities-sciences/native-american-studies/ba-native-american-studies>)

## Undergraduate Minors

- Native American Studies (<http://catalog.umt.edu/past-catalogs/2017-2018/colleges-schools-programs/humanities-sciences/native-american-studies/minor-native-american-studies>)

## Undergraduates Certificate

- Language Rejuvenation and Maintenance Certificate of Art (<http://catalog.umt.edu/past-catalogs/2017-2018/colleges-schools-programs/humanities-sciences/native-american-studies/cert-language-rejuvenation-maintenance>)