

Critical Native American and Indigenous Studies

Critical Native American and Indigenous Studies (NAIS) is an interdisciplinary concentration offered through the American Studies department focused on research, teaching and engagement with the social, cultural, artistic, ancestral, heritage, legal and political aspects of Native American and Indigenous peoples in the historical and contemporary periods. It emphasizes the integrated study of indigeneity within contemporary U.S. borders, also extending across the Americas, to Oceania and to other parts of the world. This concentration builds on Brown University's strengths and history of engagement with critical theory, studies and pedagogy, and with topics of social justice, inequality, power structures and structural violence. Through courses across four breadth areas (Creative Expressions; History, Politics and Policy Issues; Language and Identity; Systems of Knowledge and Belief: Fundamentals of Indigenous Living, Society and Wellness) and including foundational and capstone courses, concentrators explore topics and research projects focused on further supporting the interests, concerns and needs of Indigenous peoples in the Western Hemisphere and globally.

This critical approach is also grounded in Indigenous-centered knowledge production, in addition to engagement with topics such as: decolonial scholarship and practices (and the further defining of those terms); Indigenous self-determination and political and social justice; Indigenous activism and sovereignty struggles; the politics of land, dispossession and heritage studies; critiques of racial capitalism and extractive economies; issues of policing, incarceration, criminalization and violence against women; environmental justice and global environmental change; health and economic disparities; structural racism; language loss; cultural and intellectual property rights; and human rights advocacy.

Prospective concentrators should visit the Native American and Indigenous Studies website to learn more about the concentration and associated faculty, courses and affiliated staff.

To declare the Critical Native American and Indigenous Studies concentration, visit Advising Sidekick.

Contact Rae Gould (donna_rae_gould@brown.edu) for additional information and advising. Dr. Gould serves as the CNAIS Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS) for the 2023/24 Academic Year.

Requirements

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| ETHN 1200K | Introduction to Native American and Indigenous Studies | 1 |
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| Four (4) courses at the 1000-level related to a focus area of study (determined by the student, in consultation with the NAIS DUS and faculty advisor), also serving to prepare for the capstone requirement; these courses may be from different breadth areas. | 4 |
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| Four (4) Elective Courses from across the Concentration Breadth Areas | 4 |
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Concentration breadth areas are:

- 1) Creative Expressions (Arts, Literature and Language)
- 2) History, Politics and Policy Issues
- 3) Language and Identity
- 4) Systems of Knowledge and Belief: Fundamentals of Indigenous Living, Society and Wellness (Environment, Medicine, Biology, Health, Psychology, Public Health, Philosophy, Religion)

These courses must be at the 1000-level

At least two breadth areas must be included in the overall course of study, with a minimum of two courses in a breadth area outside of the focus area of study (if that is connected to only one breadth area); electives provide an opportunity for expansion beyond the focus area.

No more than two Independent Study Project (ISP or GISP) courses counting towards fulfillment of the concentration.

Courses that are not NAIS designated (in the list of concentration courses) may count toward the concentration if agreed upon by the department faculty advisor and NAIS DUS and closely connected to areas of study.

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| NAIS 1900 | Critical NAIS Capstone Course | 1 |
| Total Credits | | 10 |

Double Concentrations: Students concentrating in Critical Native American and Indigenous Studies and another discipline may count no more than two courses towards both concentrations.

Transfer credits: Credits for courses taken at other institutions may be applied to the Critical NAIS concentration following review by the department faculty advisor and the NAIS DUS. No more than four (4) transfer courses can be applied toward this A.B.

Language Study:

Through a focus on the Language and Identity Breadth Area, students may include one year (two courses) of language study (determined by the student and faculty advisor, which could be met through a DISP or a GISP course). The language may be an Indigenous one but does not need to be; rather, it should align closely with the goals and interests of the concentrator and could contribute to research and learning goals through access to records, manuscripts and other documents not in English. Students not focusing on Language and Identity may also be interested in language study and are encouraged to include that in their Concentration if it contributes to their goals and objectives.

Honors Thesis or Project (Optional):

Students may choose to complete their Critical NAIS concentration with honors by completing an honors thesis or project, in addition to other course requirements and the 10 credits needed to complete the concentration. To successfully complete Honors in the Critical NAIS concentration, a student must:

- outline a viable research project
- have the support of at least one faculty advisor
- submission and approval of a thesis or project proposal to the faculty advisor and NAIS DUS.

Thesis Requirements:

- Good academic standing at the University and in the concentration (see below)
- Completion of a thesis based on extended independent research under the guidance of a Brown University faculty advisor(s)
- Enrollment in two thesis preparation courses (with thesis advisor) over the final year of undergraduate study (in the fall and spring semesters of final year)
- Submission of an Honors Thesis/Project outline and application for honors designation within the Critical NAIS concentration (to the NAIS DUS and faculty advisor(s)) at the end of the third year of study or by Sept. 30 of the final year. A final proposal of a five-page, double-spaced project description along with a bibliography of relevant sources should be submitted following approval of the thesis/project outline.
- Completed thesis submitted to the NAIS Faculty Director and thesis faculty advisor no later than the third week of April (for May graduation) or the first Monday of December (for winter graduation).

Academic Requirements:

- At least two consecutive semesters in good academic standing at the time of application (submission of honors prospectus)
- The Honors Thesis must earn an A (or a recommendation for Honors) from two faculty readers, in addition to fulfilling all other concentration requirements.

If a student completes an honors thesis that is not conferred honors status, the two semesters of research and writing would constitute completion of the Capstone course (NAIS 1900).