

**Title of the proposed minor:** Graduate Minor in American Indian and Indigenous Studies  
**Sponsoring unit:** American Indian Studies Program  
**Date:** February 3, 2009

**Brief description of the program of study:** Beginning in the late 1980s, American Indian faculty, staff, students, and their allies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign called for a dynamic cultural space, a first-rate academic program, and a high-level administrative office to oversee recruitment and retention efforts and to advocate for the issues related to Indian students. As a result, the Native American House (NAH) opened in 2002, and in 2004 tenure-track faculty in American Indian Studies were appointed for the first time in the history of Illinois. In 2008, the Undergraduate Minor in American Indian Studies was approved. The development of a graduate minor helps cement the contributions American Indian Studies offers to the intellectual life of the campus and to the professionalization and development of the field nationwide.

The faculty of the American Indian Studies Program at Illinois strive to develop an intellectual paradigm for academic and community based research and teaching. Since its inception as a field in the 1970s, American Indian Studies programs across the nation have focused on issues of sovereignty and self-determination, intellectual and linguistic revitalization, and cultural and artistic expression. The faculty and program here at Illinois build upon these core disciplinary concerns in order to innovate the field by providing theoretical and methodological models that center themselves within American Indian communities and then engage outward toward international Indigenous Studies. Focused on the intersections between aesthetic, political, cultural, historical and anticolonial traditions, American Indian Studies at Illinois provides students the opportunity to study the interrelationships between and among American Indian nations, transhemispheric and transoceanic indigenous peoples, and settler-colonial nation-states and their ethnic and racial populations.

Grounded by a strong commitment to the worlds, histories, representations, and political struggles of indigenous peoples internationally, the intellectual project of the American Indian Studies Program uses interdisciplinary methods of critical inquiry as a means through which students engage research and scholarship in their major fields of study.

Graduate students pursuing the minor are expected to participate in the intellectual life of the American Indian Studies Program, which hosts speaker series, conferences and symposia, reading groups, and writer's workshops.

The American Indian Studies Program has memoranda of understanding with the following departments that express support and opportunity for faculty and students to participate in the Graduate Minor in American Indian and Indigenous Studies at the masters and/or PhD level (See Appendices):

- Anthropology
- English
- History
- Landscape Architecture

The minor is open to all students, though a number of students are expected to come from the departments listed above.

**Eligibility:**

Applicants to the Graduate Minor in American Indian and Indigenous Studies must be in residence and good standing in a masters or doctoral program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Applications to the American Indian Studies Program are accepted by April 15 each spring semester and must include three letters of recommendation and a personal essay that includes a statement of purpose describing the student's academic background, career plans, and how they will use the Graduate Minor in American Indian and Indigenous Studies. A student's intent to pursue the Graduate Minor must be formally approved by the student's major advisor and graduate program director in their home department. The student's home department will determine how many graduate hours of the minor may count toward the degree requirements in the student's program.

The Director of American Indian Studies and a faculty advisor will monitor students' advancement toward completion of the American Indian and Indigenous Studies Minor.

**Requirements:**

Students must complete AIS 501, 502, and 503 (preferably in sequence).

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**AIS 501: Indigenous Critical Theory**

*Course description: Explores the distinctive form of inquiry which critiques settler-colonial ideas and institutions at the interdisciplinary crossroads where American Indian and Indigenous Studies engages other theories including but not limited to feminist theory, critical race theory, semiotics and phenomenology, psychoanalysis, and postcolonial theory (to name only some of many possibilities). Prerequisite: Graduate standing or consent of the instructor.*

**AIS 502: Indigenous Decolonial Methods**

*Course description: Introduction for graduate students to key critical scholars and prevailing and emerging models in research methods that seek ethical knowledge production in American Indian and/or Indigenous Studies, including ethnography, archival research, interviews, and translation (to name only some of myriad options). Focus is on assisting students to initiate, develop, clarify, and justify the research methods they adopt and practice to reach their research goals. Prerequisite: AIS 501 or consent of the instructor.*

*Because the fundamentals for research in fine arts degree programs are significantly different from other disciplines, upon petition, in lieu of completing AIS 502, MFA students may be allowed to substitute a 4 credit hour 400- or 500-level graduate course offered by the American Indian Studies Program.*

**AIS 503: Seminar in Indigenous Studies**

*Course description: Research and writing seminar that offers special topics based on current research questions and concerns in American Indian and Indigenous Studies and opportunities for graduate students who have made considerable progress in defining a research project to advance the research and writing to the next stage (e.g., to include as a thesis or dissertation chapter or for publication). Topics vary. Prerequisite: AIS 501 and AIS 502, or consent of the instructor. May be repeated with different professors in subsequent semesters to a maximum of 8 hours.*

**Prerequisites for the minor:** No prerequisites are necessary. All students must be in good standing in a graduate program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

**Expected enrollment in the minor:** Twelve students annually.

**Graduate Minor advisor:** Incoming students are automatically assigned to an American Indian Studies faculty advisor for their first year. Incoming students need to meet with their advisor before registering for classes. By the end of their first semester of coursework, students are strongly recommended to choose a core faculty member of the American Indian Studies Program to serve on the student's masters or doctoral committee. This core faculty member also will serve as the student's Graduate Minor advisor.

**Certification of successful completion:** Upon completion of the requirements for the Graduate Minor in American Indian and Indigenous Studies and those of their masters or doctoral degree program, students will receive formal documentation from the American Indian Studies Program indicating that they have satisfactorily completed the Graduate Minor in American Indian and Indigenous Studies.

The minor requires at least 12 credit hours.

**Budgetary and staff implications:** No additional staff or dollars or internal reallocations are needed in order to offer the courses necessary for students to complete the Graduate Minor in American Indian and Indigenous Studies.

There will be no appreciable impact on library, computer or laboratory, and equipment use.

## **American Indian Studies**

[www.nah.uiuc.edu](http://www.nah.uiuc.edu)  
1204 W. Nevada Street  
Urbana, IL 61801  
217.265.9870

Fax: 217.265.9880

**Graduate Minor:** American Indian and Indigenous Studies

**Graduate Degree Programs**

The American Indian Studies Program is an interdisciplinary academic unit housed in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The thinking and intellectual work of Indigenous Peoples -- *including American Indians* -- is at its center. Thus, our curriculum emphasizes tribal peoples' centuries-long fight for sovereignty, including self-government, economic self-determination, and cultural self-representation. Degree-seeking graduate students pursuing masters or doctoral degrees, and who are in good standing, may complete the Graduate Minor in American Indian and Indigenous Studies. Contact the American Indian Studies Program to obtain an updated list of participating degree programs and an application form.

**Admission**

Applicants to the Graduate Minor in American Indian and Indigenous Studies must be in good standing in a masters or doctoral program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Applications to the American Indian Studies Program are accepted by April 15 each spring semester and must include three letters of recommendation from scholars or teachers familiar with the applicants work and potential and a personal essay that includes a statement of purpose describing the student's academic background, career plans, and how they will use the Graduate Minor in American Indian and Indigenous Studies to enhance their program of research. A student's intent to pursue the Graduate Minor must be approved by the student's major advisor and graduate program director in their home department. The student's home department will determine how many graduate hours of the minor may count toward the degree requirements in the student's program.

**Degree Requirements**

\*For additional details and requirements refer to the department's graduate degree requirements and the Graduate College Handbook.

<b>Required Courses:</b>	<b>Required Hours</b>
AIS 501: Indigenous Critical Theory	4
AIS 502: Indigenous Decolonial Methodologies	4
AIS 503: Seminar in Indigenous Studies	4
Students must complete AIS 501, 502, and 503 (preferably in sequence)	
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Other Requirements:*</b>	
In addition to the minor requirements, students must also complete the	

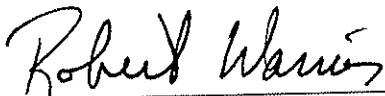
requirements of their major degree. The major department determines which and how many minor hours may also be applied to the major degree. Please contact your department for more information.	
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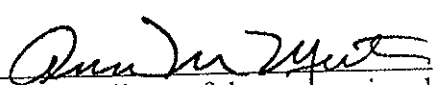
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le we think the professional interests of graduate students would best be served by their including a member of the American Indian Studies (AIS) core faculty on their thesis and dissertation committees, we strongly recommend that graduate students at the very least seek guidance on their thesis or dissertation topic, resources, and methodology from an American Indian Studies faculty advisor and draw as much as is reasonable from all of the intellectual resources offered by the American Indian Studies Program in their professional development.

Because the fundamentals for research in fine arts degree programs are significantly different from other disciplines, upon petition, in lieu of completing AIS 502, MFA students may be allowed to substitute a 4 credit hour 400- or 500-level graduate course offered by the American Indian Studies Program.

**CLEARANCES:**

 _____ Head/chair of the sponsoring department or unit Robert Warrior	11/11/08 _____ Date
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 _____ Dean of the college of the sponsoring department or unit	11/20/08 _____ Date
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 _____ Dean of the Graduate College	2/17/09 _____ Date
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_____ Chair, Senate Educational Policy Committee	_____ Date
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