M.A. in Native American Studies

Native American Studies offers a Master of Arts (MA) degree in Native American Studies with an inter-disciplinary approach which makes the best possible use of university resources. The program allows each graduate student the opportunity to select a course of study that combines Native American Studies and a student’s particular area of interest (e.g., history, business, literature, political science). The 30/31-credit program is designed so that each graduate student could complete the program within three to four semesters of concentrated work. Students will be expected to attend at least two full semesters on campus. Students who have completed the graduate certificate in Native American Studies may transfer 9 credits of coursework to the Master’s degree. The program’s mission, purpose, and objective emphasis is to graduate, in a timely manner, knowledgeable professionals and academicians well grounded in Native American issues and scholarship.

The Master’s program offers two plans: Plan A – Thesis Option or Plan B – Professional Paper/Project Option.

Plan A requires coursework, oral defense of a research prospectus, a written thesis, and an oral defense of the thesis. This option is preparation for doctoral work in Native American Studies or a related field of study.

Plan B requires coursework, oral defense of a research prospectus, and completion of a professional paper or project. The non-thesis option is preparation for employment in tribal, state, or federal government, a small or large business, and/or a tribal college.

Admission

Candidates are not required to complete the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) General Test, but may do so if they feel it will strengthen their applications. The closing date for receipt of completed applications is May 15 for Summer, August 15 for Fall, and December 15 for Spring. For detailed Graduate School requirements, please see the Policies and Procedures (http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/policy/dates-deadlines.html) online. Successful applicants must have their applications accepted by The Graduate School (with departmental endorsement) before an individual is considered a graduate student at MSU.

A bachelor’s degree or equivalent from an accredited institution is required for admission to the Master’s program in Native American Studies. The Graduate School recommends that prospective applicants reach out to the Native American Studies Department by email or phone call in order to ascertain the suitability of the program for the applicant.

Each applicant must submit the following during the online application process (http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/admissions/apply.html) through The Graduate School (which includes a non-refundable $60 application fee):

1. Official transcripts of all university/college degree(s) conferred (students must have a minimum GPA of 3.00 for the last two years of undergraduate study). The applicant does not need to submit transcripts from a degree awarded from MSU.
2. Two academic writing samples, demonstrating the applicant’s graduate-level research and writing capabilities.
3. A 2-5 page statement of purpose and goals which includes applicant’s experience and knowledge of historical and contemporary American Indian issues, work background, and how the M.A. in NAS will help the applicant reach long range goals, and benefit American Indian peoples/communities.
4. Three letters of recommendation addressing the applicant’s potential as a graduate student, preferably by academic sources. The applicant will be prompted to submit contact information of their recommenders directly in the online application.
5. A current curriculum vita or résumé.
6. International Applicants ONLY: Mandatory English proficiency test scores are required for all applicants who are not U.S. Citizens are are not from countries where English is the “official” language. Minimum scores required are as follows: TOEFL [80], IELTS [level 6.5] or PTE [54].

Limited slots are available, and admissions are competitive.

Deadlines & Assistantships

For students applying for graduate teaching assistantships, the application deadline is April 15 for the following academic year.

For all other applicants, the deadline is August 15 for fall semester, December 15 for spring semester and May 15 for summer semester. Applicants must be formally accepted by The Graduate School with departmental endorsement from Native American Studies.

Financial Assistance

Graduate Teaching Assistantships, awarded on a competitive basis, are available in NAS to formally admitted graduate students. The GTA includes a 6 credit tuition waiver and stipend. Selected graduate students will teach a section of Introduction to Native American Studies and/or other NAS courses. A prerequisite for application is the successful completion of NASX 530 Federal Law and Indian Policy. See the Graduate Assistantships sections on the Graduate School website for detailed information on appointment criteria.

Further Information

For further information regarding the program, contact Native American Studies at (406) 994-3881 or e-mail nas@montana.edu. In addition, you may refer questions to The Graduate School (http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/). Students are expected to be familiar with the degree requirements of both the department and The Graduate School.

Master’s Degree Requirements

Plan A – Thesis Option, 31 credits required:

• 10 credits minimum Thesis (590) credits
• ½ of total credits must be at 500 level
• Maximum of four (4) Independent Study (592) credits

Plan B – Non-thesis - Professional Paper or Project, 30 credits required:

• Maximum of 6 Professional Paper/Project (575) credits
• 15 credits minimum at 500 level
• Maximum of six (6) 570 credits
• Maximum of six (6) Independent Study (592) credits
• Pass/Fail – Maximum of 3 credits allowed (excluding thesis)

Requirements for both Plan A and Plan B:

• 490, 492/470, 494/400, 498/476, 588, 589 credits – Not allowed on the program of study
• 594/500, 598/576, 592/570 credits – May not exceed 1/3 of total credits required for degree (10 credits)
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Required Content Courses
NASX 530 Federal Law and Indian Policy 3
NASX 542 Research Praxis in Native American Studies 6

Graduate courses in Native American Studies
The following upper division and graduate level courses are offered in Native American Studies:

NASX 405 Gender Issues in Native American Studies 3
NASX 415 Native Food Systems 3
NASX 430 American Indian Education 3
NASX 440 Montana Indian Literature 3
NASX 450 History of American Indians 3
NASX 470 Indigenous Planning: Strategic Economic and Human Development Approaches 3
NASX 476 American Indian Policy and Law 3
NASX 490R Undergraduate Research 1-6
NASX 490Z Undergraduate Research 1-6
NASX 491 Special Topics 1-4
NASX 492 Independent Study 1-3

NASX 494 Seminar 1
NASX 498 Internship/Cooperative Educ 2-12
NASX 505 Proseminar Native Amer Studies 3
NASX 515 Native Food Systems 3
NASX 520 Fem/Gender Theories IN NAS 3
NASX 521 Tribal Government: Yesterday & Today 3
NASX 523 Am Indians/Minority in High Ed 3
NASX 524 Contemporary Issues in American Indian Studies 3
NASX 525 Indigenous Philosophies/Sacred Ecologies 3
NASX 530 Federal Law and Indian Policy 3
NASX 542 Research Praxis in Native American Studies 6
NASX 550 Native Americans: Dispelling the Myths 3
NASX 551 Native North America: Art, Agency, Activism 3
NASX 552 Indigenous Nations of Montana 3
NASX 553 Indigenous Literature and the West 3
NASX 560 Native American Lit Tradition 3
NASX 570 Indigenous Planning: Strategic Economic and Human Development Approaches 3
NASX 571 Native Grantsmanship 3
NASX 575 Professional Paper 1-6
NASX 589 Graduate Consultation 1-3
NASX 590 Master’s Thesis 1-10
NASX 591 Special Topics 1-4
NASX 592 Independent Study 1-3
NASX 594 Seminar 1-4
NASX 598 Internship 1-6

Faculty
Chair
Walter Fleming
PhD

Associate Professors
Matthew Herman
PhD
Leo Killback
PhD
Kristin Ruppel
PhD

Assistant Professor
Cheryl Bennett
PhD

Professor Emeritus
Wayne Stein
EdD