

BA in International Indigenous Studies
Curriculum Review Report
Faculty of Arts
Approved Spring 2021

Curriculum Review Team

Curriculum Review Lead: Dr. Daniel Voth – Director of the International Indigenous Studies Program

INDG Program Governance Committee:

Judy Anderson MFA – Department of Art

Dr. Adela Kincaid – International Indigenous Studies (commenced position August 2020)

Dr. Jennifer Leason – Anthropology and Archeology

Dr. Adam Murry – Psychology

Dr. Rain Prud'homme-Cranford – English

Dr. Roberta Rice – Political Science

Dr. Aruna Srivastava – English

Dr. Gina Starblanket – Political Science

Hoai Dang – INDG Program Administrator

Faculty of Arts:

Dean's Office Advisor – Dr. Dawn Johnston, Associate Dean Teaching – Learning and Student Engagement

University of Calgary:

Taylor Center for Teaching and Learning Advisor – Dr. Kimberley Grant

Special Thanks:

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Context of the International Indigenous Studies Program

Background

International Indigenous Studies at the University of Calgary is a program designed to enhance the strength and vibrancy of Indigenous nations around the globe. The mandate of the program is to advance teaching and research in areas of importance to Indigenous peoples using tools and methods from a wide variety of academic disciplines. The program is committed to realizing this mandate in a way that draws on and expands worldviews of inter-relatedness, and in so doing, operationalizes *ethical space* in which “disparate systems come together for meaningful engagement”¹. The program contributes to the transformation of our current world by building capacities leading to decolonial practices and relationships. Program participants will be exposed to curriculum that centers the individual and collective ethical responsibilities of all students, equipping them to take up a range of positions working in relation with Indigenous people upon completion of their degree.

In her Master of Arts thesis, Monique Fry provides both a history and a comparative analysis of the International Indigenous Studies Program (hereafter the INDG program). Using in-depth interviews with previous Directors and Coordinators, she catalogues the inception and realization of the program. The program had its first cohort of students in the 2003/2004 academic year. The drive to create the program appears to have been led by Dr. Rick Ponting (Sociology). To date, the program has had four leaders: Drs. Sarah Carter (History), Jim Frideres (Sociology), Aruna Srivistava (English), and starting July 1 2019, Daniel Voth (Political Science). Using files provided by Ponting, Fry argues that the program was designed to facilitate “the examination of the experiences, culture and artistic endeavors, and current status of Indigenous people from around the world” (Ponting, 2003, p. 1 as quoted in Fry, 2018).

The program continues to be interdisciplinary at its core. However, unlike several interdisciplinary programs in the Faculty of Arts, the INDG program has a number of its own named courses. The program’s calendar currently includes 15 named courses. In addition, students are able to select from a range of courses offered by other departments to complete their degrees. Currently, there are 58 courses offered by other disciplines that—when timetabled—can be used towards fulfillment of the degree. There are a further seven topics courses from across a number of disciplines that can be used when the topic and content of the course is sufficiently relevant to Indigenous Studies. The disciplinary diversity includes anthropology, archeology, history, political science, Latin American studies, African studies, religious studies, English, sociology, art, linguistics and Indigenous languages to name just a few.

¹ Please see Ermine 2007, 203. This framing is also intended to align these PLOs with ii'taa'poh'to'p, the University of Calgary’s Indigenous Strategy.

Guiding Questions

Guiding questions are queries or concerns that are posed to shape the direction of a curriculum review process. They are designed to focus inquiry on specific avenues of curriculum evaluation. They are important because not everything is able to be addressed in a review, meaning the guiding question identify what one most wants to explore, and can range from broad encompassing questions, to specific curriculum concerns.

The Governance Committee approved the following five questions:

1. What do the permanent faculty teaching in the program want students to get out of their INDG degree?
2. What do students in the program like about their degree? What do they dislike? What do they wish their degree did more of?
3. Is the program laddering content in the non-INDG field courses? Is this laddering complementary with what is being done in INDG courses? If yes to both, can that laddering be enhanced? If not, how do we address it?
4. Does the program wish to have more participation from the Treaty 7 Nations in any of the governance, teaching, topics, and direction in the curriculum? If yes, how ought we approach that?
5. In light of the answers to the above questions, what calendar changes are required to achieve these goals?

Action Plan

Short Term: One year or less

Medium Term: Two to three years

Long Term: Four to five years

Recommendation:	Action Item	Timeline Term	Lead by
Improve Student experience and mentorship outside the classroom	Explore refining supports for INDG students looking for degree advising	Medium	Director
	Include stronger career advice component to the program	Medium	Director
	Include supports in INDG syllabus template	Short	Director, Program Admin
	Explore space collaboration with Dean's office, INDG majors/minors, and the ISA	Long	Director, Student rep
	Create ongoing graduate student mentorship bridge	Short - Medium	Director
Build stronger INDG relationships with Indigenous communities off-campus	Enhance community mentorship opportunities	Medium	Director, Curriculum Committee
	Review community engagement in program governance	Medium	Director, Curriculum Committee
Redesign courses and program requirements to better align with new PLOs, and faculty strengths	Creation of a sequence of methodology courses either through new classes, or by adapting existing sequences (303, 305, 415, and a 5xx)	Short	Director

	Transitioning regularly offered topics courses into permanent named courses	Short	Director
	Addition of a cross-listed Art offering	Short	Director
	Addition of new content courses	Short	Director
	A review to re-tool or replace courses that have not been regularly offered	Short	Director
	Analysis of where to sequence 312 (cultural immersion)	Short	Director
	Explore decriminalizing 312 to allow students to take the class from different Nations perspectives (similar to how INDL is offered)	Short	Director
	Explore re-positioning 312 as a 400 or 500	Short	Director
	Creation of a course to facilitate study abroad	Short	Director
	A discussion about how to prepare students to talk about Indigenous content (prep class, or perhaps good web resources)	Short	Director, Curriculum Committee
	Develop an assessment and review process for the Field Courses	Medium	Director, Curriculum Committee
	Review Major program requirements to consider streamlining and simplifying program experience	Medium	Director, Curriculum Committee