Course Description
This introductory course will ask, “what is decolonization?” through the perspective of Native American Studies. The course is organized around two core themes: (1) Native American peoples are still here, in the present, and (2) a semester-long inquiry into the nature of decolonization as a liberatory social project. We will challenge popular stereotypes about Native American peoples, learn about contemporary Indigenous issues, and ask how re-conceptualizing the United States as a settler colonial state changes our understanding of history, politics, and society. We will discuss issues ranging from identity, boarding schools, truth and reconciliation, language revitalization, Indigenous feminisms, two-spirit/queer Indiginites, environmental justice, and Indigenous futurisms/science fiction. Students will gain a deeper understanding of Native American historical and contemporary perspectives as well as critical tools for identifying settler colonialism as it permeates our everyday lives and institutions. Focus will be placed on
Native American/First Nation peoples in the United States and Canada, although this focus will not be exclusive.

Course Goals
Through this course, students will:
• Learn about the histories, diversity, and ongoing presence of Native American peoples in North America;
• Gain a basic understanding of the issues and approaches of Native American and Indigenous Studies as an interdisciplinary field of scholarship;
• Challenge stereotypes that place Native Americans within a mythical and static past;
• Inquire into why Native American histories and issues are often marginalized within primary and secondary education;
• Learn frameworks for how research can be transformed into tools for Indigenous self-determination;
• Practice tools of critical truth- and storytelling; and
• Develop a conceptual toolkit for thinking about settler colonialism, Indigeneity, and sovereignty;

Trigger Warning
In this class, we will discuss issues such as settler colonialism, genocide, racism, rape, forced sterilization, and state-organized child abuse. Students who suffer from past traumas may find these topics triggering. If a specific topic is likely to be triggering for you, I’d be happy to discuss any concerns you have before that subject comes up in class. If you need to step outside during one of these conversations, you may always do so without academic penalty. If you wish to discuss your reactions with me in class or afterwards, I welcome such conversations as an important part of the coursework.

Prerequisites
No prerequisites. This course serves as an introductory approach to Native American studies.

Course Requirements and Evaluation
Success in this 4 credit course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of 9 hours of study time per week in preparation for class (including readings, papers, preparation for presentations, etc.)

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<th>Component</th>
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<td>Short Essay #1</td>
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A: The student consistently makes creative contributions to discussion and moves the conversation forward in significant ways. The student draws connections course materials and extends key concepts by applying them to novel situations. Engages with both the instructor and with fellow students.
B: The student consistently contributes to class discussion and demonstrates a solid understanding of course materials. The student thinks through the readings, other students’ comments, and one’s own points well. Engages with both the instructor and with fellow students.

C: The student sometimes participates in class discussion and understands the basic facts of the readings, but perhaps not the big picture.

D: The student only infrequently participates in class discussion or makes statements that are unrelated or do not advance the project of the course. Only has a partial understanding of the materials. Spotty attendance.

F: The student does not consistently come to class, does not participate in or disrupts class discussion, or misses the point of course materials.

**Participation**

We will work through course materials during class discussion, during which we will review, interpret, extend, draw connections between, and critique the readings. As such, students must come to class having completed the readings and be prepared to discuss them. Departing from a “banking” model of education in which knowledge is “deposited” in students’ brains and “withdrawn” in tests, the goal of these discussions will be to practice the tools of critical thinking and analysis, particularly with respect to understanding the relationships between Indigeneity, settler colonialism, and decolonization.

Some students may find some of the critiques of settler colonialism that we discuss to be challenging and uncomfortable. This is a part of the learning process, particularly when it comes to telling hard truths to power. At minimum, students are expected to work to understand the arguments being made in the course materials, whether they agree or disagree with them. But students can also “lean in” to the discomfort by reflecting on why you are hitting this resistance. For example, many people feel resistance when they encounter something that challenges their sense of themselves as a good person. Instead, you might ask, “Is the important question really about whether I personally am a good or bad person, or is it about sharpening my ability to apprehend settler colonial violence that was invisible to me before now?”

**Group Presentation**

Students will give an in-class presentation in small groups focusing on contemporary Indigenous peoples in Massachusetts. Groups will conduct research and share what they learned with the rest of the class. Each presentation should be 25 minutes, with time afterwards for Q&A.

**Essays**

All essays must be proofread, paginated, and double-spaced, using 12-point font and 1 inch margins. All essays must draw connections to course materials. Prompts will be distributed in class two weeks prior to the deadline.

The short essays (#1 and #2) will each be 3-5 pages in length.
The final essay will be 6-8 pages in length. For this essay, will conduct research into a topic of your own choosing that relates to course materials. You may go deeper into a topic we discussed in class or select a totally new topic. You may also look into issues that effect Indigenous peoples in other parts of the world, such as Latin America, Australia, the Pacific Islands, or Africa. Students are also required to give a 10 minute, conference style presentation based on their essay to the class. Presentations will be given during the final period.

**Alternative Creative Option**
Students may opt to take a more creative approach as an alternative to a traditional essay format. This could involve making a comic, painting, photo essay, or film, or using another medium entirely. Students selecting this option are expected to reflect on how their approach allows them to do something different than a traditional essay: in other words, why select this creative option? Students must consult with the professor before taking this option.

**Alternative Service-Learning Option**
As an alternative to the three essays, students with existing relationships with nearby Native American communities or organizations can complete a service-learning option. Students opting to take this option will volunteer with an Indigenous organization and write a short reflection essay. If you are interested in this option, you must get approval from the professor beforehand.

**Academic Integrity**
You are expected to be honest in all of your academic work. Please consult Brandeis University Rights and Responsibilities for all policies and procedures related to academic integrity. Students may be required to submit work to TurnItIn.com software to verify originality. Allegations of alleged academic dishonesty will be forwarded to the Director of Academic Integrity. Sanctions for academic dishonesty can include failing grades and/or suspension from the university. Citation and research assistance can be found at LTS - Library guides.

**Communications**
Updates regarding the class, including syllabus changes and snow days, will be communicated by email.

**Email Policy**
I will respond to reasonable email inquiries within a reasonable timeframe: usually within 24 hours. I expect your emails to be courteous and professional: it is good etiquette to include a salutation and signature and to make the subject line relevant to the content. Proofread all emails before sending.

However, grammar and email etiquette standards are ultimately a means of reproducing social hierarchies.

**Students with Disabilities**
I do my best to make the classroom accessible. If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please see me immediately. Please do not hesitate to let me know if there is a way I can make the class more accessible to you.
Required Materials

- Cook Inlet Tribal Council (CITC) and Upper One Games. 2014. *Never Alone (Kisima Innitchuna)*. E-Line Media.


Schedule of Readings

**Week 1: What is Native American and Indigenous Studies?**

**Wednesday, August 29 – Introduction to the Course**

- No readings

**Thursday, August 30**


- Review these maps of the lands of Native American peoples. Who were the traditional landowners in Boston? Where you grew up?
  - [http://www.emersonkent.com/images/maps/native_american_map.jpg](http://www.emersonkent.com/images/maps/native_american_map.jpg)
  - [https://native-land.ca/](https://native-land.ca/)

**Week 2: What is Native American and Indigenous Studies? Pt. 2**

**Monday, September 3 (No Class)**

**Wednesday, September 5**


**Thursday, September 6**


Week 3: Colonial Representations and Stereotypes
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**Monday, September 10 (No Class)**

Wednesday, September 12

**Thursday, September 13**
- Film: *Real Injun* (2009)

Week 4: US History is a History of Settler Colonialism
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**Monday, September 17**

**Wednesday, September 19 (No Class)**

Thursday, September 20

Week 5: Decolonial Truth-Telling
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**Monday, September 24 (No Class)**

Tuesday, September 25 (Brandeis Day)
- Waziyatawin (Wahpetunwan Dakota), Introduction and Chapter 1

**Wednesday, September 26**
- Waziyatawin (Wahpetunwan Dakota), Chapter 2

**Thursday, September 27**
- **Guest Speaker TBA**

Week 6: Tearing Down Settler Monuments, Making Space for Justice
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**Monday, October 1 (No Class)**

Wednesday, October 3
- Waziyatawin (Wahpetunwan Dakota), Chapter 3 and 4

**Thursday, October 4**
- Waziyatawin (Wahpetunwan Dakota), Chapter 5
**Week 7: Boarding Schools and the Work of Truth and Reconciliation**

**Monday, October 8 (Indigenous People’s Day)**
  - Read pages 1-53, 77-87

**Wednesday, October 10**
- Film: Dawnland (2018)

**Thursday, October 11**
  - Read pages 1-53, 77-87

**Essay #1 due in my mailbox on MONDAY, 5:00 PM**

**Week 8: Language Revitalization and Digital Storytelling**

**Monday, October 15**

**Wednesday, October 17**
- Begin: Cook Inlet Tribal Council (CITC) and Upper One Games. 2014. *Never Alone (Kisima Innitchuna)*. E-Line Media.
  - Be sure to watch and take notes on the “Cultural Insights” videos as you unlock them. These are unlocked by finding owls. If you miss one, you can find them all here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FI141nipj_g&list=PL1vS4D9HSKasMZmLDNyKOlauwrCdionBQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FI141nipj_g&list=PL1vS4D9HSKasMZmLDNyKOlauwrCdionBQ)
  - Please do not spend six hours dying over and over. If you are the kind of person that just cannot get the hang of this game, watch a run through here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GeQPDGefyeA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GeQPDGefyeA)

**Thursday, October 18**
- Finish: Cook Inlet Tribal Council (CITC) and Upper One Games. 2014. *Never Alone (Kisima Innitchuna)*. E-Line Media.
• O’Brein, Jean (White Earth Ojibwe), Introduction

**Week 9: Native New England**
Monday, October 22
• O’Brien, ch. 1

Wednesday, October 24
• O’Brien, ch. 2

Thursday, October 25
• O’Brien, ch. 3

**Week 10: Native New England, Pt. 2**
Monday, October 29
• O’Brien, ch. 4 and conclusion.

Wednesday, October 31
• Group presentations

Thursday, November 1
• Group presentations

**Week 11: Settler Borders and Indigenous Sovereignty**
Monday, November 5

Wednesday, November 7

Thursday, November 8
• **Guest Speaker TBA**

**Week 12: Decolonizing Gender and Sexuality, Pt. 1**
Monday, November 12
Introduction to Decolonization

Syllabus

Wednesday, November 14

Thursday, November 15
- Skim: Thomas, Wesley (Diné) and Sue-Ellen Jacobs. 1999. “‘And We Are Still Here:’ From Berdache to Two-Spirit People.” American Indian Culture and Research Journal 23(2):91-107.

Week 13: Decolonizing Gender, Pt. 2

Monday, November 19

Essay #2 due in my mailbox at MONDAY, 5 PM

Wednesday, November 21 (No Class)

Thursday, November 22 (No Class)

Week 14: Decolonizing the Earth and Environmental Justice

Monday, November 26
Wednesday, November 28

Thursday, November 29
- Selection from *Walking the Clouds*

**Week 15: Rethinking Settler Identities**

Monday, December 3

Wednesday, December 5

Thursday, December 6

**Week 16: Decolonial Futures, Pt. 2**

Monday, December 10

**Final Essays due during the finals period**