





# Indigenous Studies (INST) 511

## Indigenous Knowledge and Education (Revision 2)

**Status:**

Replaced with new revision, see the [course listing](#)  for the current revision 

**Delivery mode:**

[Grouped study](#) 

**Credits:**

3

**Area of study:**

Arts

**Prerequisites:**

An undergraduate degree is required. Students will also need university-level analytical and communication skills.

**Precluded:**

None

**Faculty:**

[Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences](#) 

**Notes:**

INST 511 Spring Term only. Please contact the MAIS program at [mais@athabascau.ca](mailto:mais@athabascau.ca) to register for this course.

## Overview

This course addresses Indigenous knowledge as a fundamental component of Indigenous education. Indigenous peoples have always had their own philosophies, teachings, and educational goals. Rigorous and deep-rooted, Indigenous intellectual traditions and the sharing of information were both formalized and localized. The methodologies, processes, and means to share this information were embedded in the everyday: life lessons were functional and required, taught from birth to death, and wholistic.

Thus, a general, life-long education was a known and regularized practice. It taught people how to survive. But survival did not include just hunting, provisioning, and defence; survival meant passing on educational and philosophical tenets related to living together well, living a good life, and shared responsibilities and obligations among neighbours (in Western traditions, those beings and things perceived as animate and inanimate).

The same processes through which philosophy was/is taught would be used to teach Indigenous citizens arts, politics, laws, and language. Storytelling, sharing circles, organized meetings, and ongoing training in the home through experiential learning were and are the pedagogic vehicles used to teach and transfer knowledge. This course will address Indigenous knowledge as a fundamental component of Indigenous education. In doing that, it will also prepare the student to address and understand Indigenous pedagogy and knowledge for and about Indigenous peoples.

## Outline

INST 511 comprises the following eight units:

### **Unit 1: Introduction**

This unit includes a discussion of terms relevant to education in an Indigenous context, including definitions and some contextualization.

### **Unit 2: The Blackfoot Peoples**

The unit enables students to begin to understand the wholistic nature of Indigenous education and pedagogy, and addresses what the land can teach us and how it teaches us.

### **Unit 3: The Neheyiwak (Cree) Peoples**

This unit requires students to address wholistic education and Neheyiwak

tenets of learning in the acquisition of skills related to curriculum development in Neheyiwak education.

#### **Unit 4: The Metis Nation**

This unit informs students about the formation of Metis identity and nationhood. Students will be required to assess relevant and accessible sources for inclusion in curriculum development related to Métis peoples.

#### **Unit 5: The Dene Tha' Peoples**

In this unit, students will gain valuable insights into the diversity and world views of the Dene Tha' people, and will gain an understanding of the ways in which historical events have shaped contemporary Dene Tha' experiences.

#### **Unit 6: Critical Indigenous Education**

The unit addresses many of the attempts to fuse Indigenous and Canadian education principles, institutional development, and curriculum development. The intent is to facilitate discussion among students in this course about successful and less successful attempts to teach Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners about Indigenous peoples.

#### **Unit 7: Applying the Knowledge**

This unit deals with curriculum materials, research sources, information gathering, and bias identification, enabling students to apply the tools they brought to the course and those they develop in the course in determining the nature, sources, and impact of bias in educational materials and approaches.

#### **Unit 8: Conclusion**

This unit deals with Indigenous pedagogical principles and their application. Practical in design, this unit pulls together all of the lessons and the understandings gained from the course.

## **Learning outcomes**

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to

- provide geographical, political, cultural and social context related to Indigenous peoples in Alberta;
- define and describe traditional Indigenous pedagogies, ontological understandings;
- identify and describe cultural protocols in the context of responsibly accessing Indigenous knowledge that will aid in the success of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students;

- demonstrate an understanding of Indigenous knowledge, philosophies, and world views;
- compare and contrast learning techniques, educational understandings, teachings, and oralities related to Indigenous learning processes and success;
- identify cultural protocols integral to the respectful gathering and sharing of Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing;
- demonstrate an understanding of how issues of colonialism, racism, discrimination, and bias towards Indigenous peoples and knowledge has impacted Indigenous education;
- demonstrate the capacity to analyze critically course readings and course experiences in order to arrive at a respectful approach to Indigenous education (including the areas of pedagogy, ontology, information gathering and sharing);
- provide a framework for the provision of culturally relevant, community responsive, and respectfully gathered information related to Indigenous world views.

## Evaluation

To receive credit for INST 511, you must achieve a minimum grade 60 per cent on each assignment, and an overall grade 60 percent for the entire course. Students will complete three assignments and earn a participation grade. The weighting of the composite grade is as follows:

Activity	Weight	Complete by
Assignment 1: Article Review	10%	Week 3 following completion of Unit 2
Assignment 2: Critical Reflection Paper	25%	Week 6 following completion of Unit 4
Assignment 3: Research Paper	40%	Week 11 following completion of Unit 7

Activity	Weight	Complete by
Virtual Circle Participation	25%	ongoing throughout all 13 weeks
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	

## Materials




All course materials are available online. They include the units of the study guide, course outline and syllabus, online readings, and support resources.

## Special Course Features

Students will be joined by their tutor to participate in the weekly virtual circle discussions throughout the course.

Athabasca University reserves the right to amend course outlines occasionally and without notice. Courses offered by other delivery methods may vary from their individualized-study counterparts.

## Important links

- > [Courses](#) 
- > [Programs](#) 
- > [Contact Us](#) 

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*Updated February 4, 2025*

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