The American Indian studies graduate degree program with a concentration in tribal leadership and governance focuses on preeminent issues facing Indigenous populations. Students will gain a new perspective on American Indian education leadership, tribal governments and constitutional reform alongside other policies and planning to create practical solutions for social justice.

Program Description

Degree Awarded: MS American Indian Studies (Tribal Leadership and Governance)

The MS in American Indian studies is a transdisciplinary program that provides students with an intellectual and practical understanding of the issues facing American Indian populations and the ability to apply that knowledge. Students acquire problem-solving skills useful in a range of professional arenas, including governmental, private and nonprofit agencies. The program focuses on languages, cultures, arts, activism, histories, legal policy and education from an American Indian studies paradigm and perspective. Delivery is through in-person courses.

The tribal leadership and governance concentration explores traditional and modern concepts of Indian education leadership, tribal government leadership, tribal governments, decision-making and legislation, constitutional reform, planning, economic development, community development, nation rebuilding, tribal courts, administration and planning.

At a Glance

- College/School: College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
- Location: Tempe campus
Concurrent Degrees

This degree is also offered as concurrent degree program with:

- Public Administration - Downtown Phoenix, MPA

Accelerated Degrees

This program allows students to obtain both a bachelor's and master's degree in as little as five years. It is offered as an accelerated bachelor's and master's degree with:

- American Indian Studies, BS

Acceptance to the graduate program requires a separate application. During their junior year, eligible students will be advised by their academic departments to apply.

Degree Requirements

30 credit hours and a thesis, or
30 credit hours including the required applied project course (AIS 580)

Required Core (9 credit hours)
- AIS 501 American Indian Studies Paradigms (3)
- AIS 502 American Indian Studies Research Methods (3)
- AIS 503 Contemporary Issues of American Indian Nations (3)

Concentration (9 credit hours)

Electives (6 credit hours)

Culminating Experience (6 credit hours)
- AIS 580 Practicum (6) or
- AIS 599 Thesis (6)

Additional Curriculum Information

Students may select a thesis or nonthesis option. Thesis students will be involved in a major research project under the direction of their faculty advisors, culminating in a thesis. This is the option students should select if they have an interest in a research-oriented position within an organization or agency or wish to pursue a doctoral degree. Nonthesis students will complete an applied project that identifies and addresses an applied problem or issue relevant to a partner agency or organization under the direction of their faculty advisors. This is the option students should select if they are interested in a leadership or managerial level position within an organization or agency.
Admission Requirements

Applicants must fulfill the requirements of both the Graduate College and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Applicants are eligible to apply to the program if they have earned a bachelor's or master's degree from a regionally accredited college or university of recognized standing in a related field such as history, justice studies, sociology, ethnic studies, anthropology, political science or education.

Applicants must have a minimum of a 3.00 cumulative GPA (scale is 4.00 = "A") in the last 60 hours of a student's first bachelor's degree program, or applicants must have a minimum of a 3.00 cumulative GPA (scale is 4.00 = "A") in an applicable master's degree program.

All applicants must submit:

1. graduate admission application and application fee
2. official transcripts
3. proof of English proficiency

Additional Application Information
An applicant whose native language is not English (regardless of current residency) must provide proof of English proficiency. Students should visit https://students.asu.edu/graduate/proficiency for more information.

Contact Information

American Indian Studies Program | DISCVRY 356
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