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**Graduate School of Design**



**HARVARD**  
**GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**

**Native Americans in the Twenty-First Century**  
**Nation Building II**  
**Spring 2023**

**KSG DEV502, GSE A102, FAS EMR121, GSD SES5427**  
**Tuesdays from 4:30pm to 6:30pm**  
**Room is Wexner 330 at the Kennedy School**

Course led by Eric Henson, Chickasaw citizen and Program Director/Lecturer  
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**COURSE OVERVIEW**

This community-based research course focuses on some of the major issues Native American tribes and nations face as they seek to assert rights of self-determination in the 21st Century. It provides in-depth, hands-on exposure to development issues faced by American Indians, including: sovereignty, economic development, constitutional reform, leadership, health and social welfare, land and water rights, culture and language, religious freedom, finance and budgeting, and education. In particular, the course emphasizes problem definition, fieldwork relationships, and designing and completing a research project for a real-world tribal “client.” This course is devoted primarily to the preparation and presentation of a comprehensive research paper, memo, or report based on a semester-long investigation in partnership with the tribal client. In addition to interdisciplinary presentations on topics such as research methods and problem definition, students will share their work-in-progress, as well as preliminary and final findings, with the class. At

the end of the semester, each team of students is required to make a video presentation of its final report in addition to submitting a final written report.

Projects are typically completed by teams of two or three students, with students selecting from project topics requested by tribes, First Nations, and organizations active in tribal affairs. These clients are seeking assistance on a wide range of matters, and the *Nation Building II* project reports are intended to be useful to the requesting organizations. Students are initially provided the opportunity to visit with their partner organizations via phone or video conference in order to determine feasibility and investigate approaches to the problems at hand and finalize the scope of the project. In addition, one-on-one or group meetings with the course leader or the course assistants are always available with advance scheduling; these sessions can take place pretty much any time via Zoom, and can potentially take place during in-person office hours as well. Students are expected to attend and participate in class as much as possible, to support the production of high-quality research results and presentations for their own client and those of other students taking the course. The form and format of the required research reports are not restricted to having the appearance of a “term paper” per se, and past reports have included multi-media presentations and other innovative approaches designed to maximize the communication and effectiveness of the students’ work. The course has funding available to send a small number of groups to visit their clients in person. Groups will be selected through consultation with the teaching team early in the semester. Applications will be evaluated on the importance of in-person consultation and other relevant criteria.

This course is open to all Harvard University students, at the graduate and undergraduate levels. In the event of over-enrollment, priority is given to students who have taken *Nation Building I* (KSG DEV501, GSE A101) and students in the last year of their degree program. All interested students are highly encouraged to sign up for the course – past feedback indicates that it is nearly always an excellent experience for students and their tribal clients.

**Learning Objectives:** Students will develop a set of tools that can be employed to address a wide range of issues facing tribal governments, including: access to resources; economic barriers that must be overcome to advance tribal nations and individuals; the importance of tribal, state, and federal regulations; the prime role tribal culture plays in community development; relations with non-tribal entities; and other concerns essential to the strengthening of native nations.

**Office Hours:** Office hours are available nearly every day and are usually conducted via Zoom. It is recommended that you schedule office hours with Eric Henson and/or the teaching team as needed.

## KEY DEADLINES/COURSE DATES

1. **January 18-19: Shopping Days**
2. **January 23: First day of class**
3. **February 13: Student/Client MOU emailed to Henson**
4. **March 5: Outline of expected final report (typically 3-6 pages) emailed to Henson**
5. **March 9-17: Spring Break**
6. **March 26: Interim Report emailed to Henson**
7. **April 16 to April 23: Presentations with clients**
8. **April 30: Reports due to Henson**
9. **May 7: Final reports due to clients**
10. **May 13: Grades due**

## SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

### Week 1

#### January 23

#### **Introductions and Overview: What Makes a Good NB II Project?**

Time permitting, we will have introductions and a discussion of potential projects, in addition to a discussion of the attributes of a good Nation Building II topic, focusing on issues of scope, relevance to the client organization, feasibility, and presentation. Then, we will review the topics that tribes and organizations have requested assistance with. This will start the process of matching students to topics and organizing client calls.

Note that an explicit reading list is not a major part of this particular course. The learning that will take place fundamentally flows from the practice of engaging in the class, with the tribal client, within your own project group, with the other students in the course, and with the teaching team, and with our guest speakers. For those interested in reading for some of the flavor that could be useful, the following are suggested:

- Dennis Norman and Joseph Kalt, *Native Nations and Universities: Collaborative Strategies for Nation Building* (available for download on muse.com at <https://muse.jhu.edu/book/39460>)
- HPAIED, *State of the Native Nations: Conditions Under US Policies of Self-Determination* (available on amazon.com at <https://www.amazon.com/State-Native-Nations-Conditions-Self-Determination/dp/0195301269>)

- Samples of past Nation Building II projects to provide perspective on goals and outcomes (available from Eric Henson)
- Keith Richotte, Jr., *Federal Indian Law and Policy, An Introduction* (available on amazon.com at [https://www.amazon.com/Federal-Indian-Law-Policy-Introduction/dp/1642426059/ref=sr\\_1\\_2?dchild=1&keywords=keith+richotte&qid=1607789839&sr=8-2](https://www.amazon.com/Federal-Indian-Law-Policy-Introduction/dp/1642426059/ref=sr_1_2?dchild=1&keywords=keith+richotte&qid=1607789839&sr=8-2))
- Larry D. Keown, *Working in Indian Country* (available on amazon.com at <https://www.amazon.com/Working-Indian-Country-Successful-Relationships/dp/1936449005>)
- Joseph P. Kalt, *American Indian Self-Determination Through Self-Governance: The Only Policy That Has Ever Worked*, Statement to The Commission on Native Children, December 15, 2022 (available from Eric Henson)

**Assignment:** Let the course instructor know which three potential projects you prefer, and in which order, no later than Friday, January 26 at 1:00pm. In the same communication let the instructor know your school affiliation, your contact info (both school and personal email addresses), and if you are a citizen of a Tribe or First Nation.

## Week 2

### January 30

#### **Problem Definition and Client Relations: Getting Your Project Off the Ground**

Perhaps the most critical aspect of field-based research is defining the problem. Thinking through a series of questions can help you with this:

- What is it that the research is aimed at?
- What are the sub-questions you could/should address?
- How do you adjust your client's initial problem statement to define a workable and meaningful project?
- How is your client going to use your report?
- How and where will you get the information to address the questions you have laid out for yourself?
- Given the number of hours you will have to devote to the project over the semester, what is feasible?

As you begin your work, focus on problem definition, feasible scope, data and evidence availability, appropriate expectations of both researchers and the requesting client/organization, and negotiation of those expectations. We will go over the matches of students with proposed projects. Each research team will have a chance to ask questions about the first stages of effective research and field engagement.

**Guest Speaker:** We will have a guest speaker join us via Zoom for this class session, to discuss issues key to working in a consultative environment. The guest speaker is:

- Andrew Lemon (Senior Consultant and Visiting Professor, Compass Lexecon and Vassar College), on key topics for working with outside clients.

Note that the exact dates for all guest speakers are subject to change.

**Assignment:** Set up first phone call with your client and have that call before the next class meeting (**if assistance from the course instructor is needed, we can work together to arrange initial client calls, which need to take place as soon as possible**).

**Suggested readings:** Samples of past Nation Building II projects (to provide perspective on goals and outcomes).

### Week 3

#### February 6

#### The Critical Elements of a Successful Field Research Project

As you set about designing your research strategy and, ultimately, producing a useful project, what are the common stages and ingredients that must be collected? Beginning with the definition of the problem, a framework for analysis and assessment must then be developed, critical reasoning and evidence must be applied within that framework, and resulting potential solutions must be assessed for their reasonableness and feasibility. Developing research results and associated recommendations, however, is not sufficient. Attention must also be paid to implementation strategies, and results must be communicated effectively to the target audience.

**Student Presentation(s):** Volunteers might be asked to share information about their tribal clients with the class. In previous years we have found that classmates are very interested in knowing more about each of the tribes involved in the course.

**Guest Speakers:** We will have guest speakers join us via Zoom for this class session, to discuss issues of importance to contemporary tribal affairs. The guest speakers are:

- Momi Afelin (former Environment and Natural Resources Program Manager, Sust‘āinable Molokai), Puna Kalipi (Landback Manager at Sust‘āinable Molokai and PhD candidate at University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa), Katy Mokuau (Program Manager of the Molokai Climate Change and Sea Level Rise Adaptation and Resiliency Master Plan), Tehani Ka‘alekahi (Executive Director of Sust‘āinable Molokai), on the importance of environmental stewardship in Native communities.

Note that the exact dates for all guest speakers are subject to change.

**Assignment:** Draft a description of your project, including problem definition and expected deliverables (no longer than one page), and secure a completed written/email

agreement with your client about the project description; provide this to the teaching team by the next class session.

## **Week 4**

**February 13**

### **Student Presentations**

Students might make brief presentations reflecting the conceptualizations of their projects and preliminary hypothesized conclusions. Beginning to think about likely conclusions helps focus the research toward ultimately making the projects useful to tribal clients.

**Guest Speaker:** We will have a guest speaker join us via Zoom for this class session, to discuss issues of importance to contemporary tribal affairs. The guest speaker is:

- Geordie Hungerford (CEO, Financial Management Board of Canada), on the RoadMap Project, which is a practical and implementable pathway to Indigenous economic reconciliation.

Note that the exact dates for all guest speakers are subject to change.

**Student Presentation(s):** Volunteers might be asked to share information about their tribal clients with the class. In previous years we have found that classmates are very interested in knowing more about each of the tribes involved in the course, and classmates' questions can help sharpen and guide student research.

## **Week 5**

**February 20**

### **Role of the researcher in Indian Country**

What is the role of the researcher in Indian Country? How do the issues particularly relevant to Indian Country translate into other contexts, such as developing countries or urban communities? Thinking about these types of questions as they relate to designing a research strategy, assessing the type of data needed, conducting the research in the time available, etc. will help ensure a successful project for each student research team. You should pay attention to your strategies for gathering information, social norms when dealing with tribal clients, interviewing approaches in a cross-cultural setting, dealing with politically and/or culturally sensitive information, and listening skills. Please discuss these with the teaching team as needed.

**Guest Speaker:** We will have a guest speaker join us in person for this class session, to discuss issues relating to the funding of tribal governments. The guest speaker is:

- Jonathan Taylor (Founder, Taylor Policy Group), on multi-institutional development and the case of the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska.

Note that the exact dates for all guest speakers are subject to change.

## **Week 6**

**February 27**

### **What Does an Effective Final Product Look Like?**

Tribal clients are expecting a useful product that will educate and inform. What will the final deliverables look like? Answering this involves considering questions of media, formatting, use of demonstrative and graphical information, tone, length, document structure, and reader/hearer/viewer access to the research information you or your team/group creates. Students are encouraged to seek out assistance with final document preparation, as needed.

**Guest Speaker(s):** We will have guest speaker join us in person for this class session, to discuss federal/tribal interactions. The guest speaker is:

- Josh Flax (former Chief Strategy Officer), on the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, and the Tribal Transportation Self-Governance Program.

**Assignment:** Students and the teaching team will discuss final presentation time slots this week, so that students can begin to confer/confirm with clients.

## **Week 7**

**March 5**

### **Elements of Effective Oral Presentation**

Class time will be available for project updates and discussion of final logistical issues, as needed. In the final sessions of the semester, each team of students will make a formal presentation of its project and results to an audience of clients and peers (and potentially other invited guests). In considering what makes a good oral presentation, thought should be given to the role of such issues as tone, structure, level of detail, audience engagement for maximum conveyance of information, and effective use of technology.

**Guest Speaker:** We will likely have a guest speaker join us via Zoom for this class session, to discuss Native place names. The guest speaker is:

- James Irwin (Engineering Program Manager at Apple), on the importance of Native place names in mapping software. **NB: no recording allowed!**

Note that the exact dates for all guest speakers are subject to change.

**Assignment:** Students should begin to draft an outline of the final work product. This draft should reflect the overall structure and substantive analysis that will support the findings that will be completed by the end of the semester. It is okay if the outline still contains more questions than conclusions at this point; the idea is to organize your preliminary thoughts and ideas into a framework to guide the rest of the semester's work. This outline should generally be on the order of 3-6 pages in length, with a one-page Executive Summary being the most important part of the draft.

### **Week 8**

**March 9-17**

**No Class: Spring Break**

**Reminder: the course instructor is available to discuss any and all projects during this week, as needed.**

### **Week 9**

**March 19**

**Pulling It All Together**

Based upon the completed drafts/executive summaries, each team is expected to be honing in on a statement of findings/executive summary, while recognizing that final results are subject to revision and refinement.

**Guest Speaker:** We will have a guest speaker join us via Zoom for this class session, to discuss issues of importance to contemporary tribal affairs. The guest speaker is:

- Karen Diver (former Chairwoman of the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa and Special Assistant to the President for Native American Affairs under President Obama), on executive leadership and tribal/federal interactions.

Note that the exact dates for all guest speakers are subject to change.

**Assignment:** As needed, through the course of this week, each student team should meet with the teaching team to present draft work product. Student teams should also work on their Interim Report, which will be due next week. The goal of the Interim Report is to build accountability and begin working toward the final report, but the specific format and content may vary depending on the project and tribal partner; meeting with the teaching team this week will make sure your team's report helps you meet your own deliverable goals.



## **Week 10**

**March 26**

### **Pulling It All Together**

Based upon the completed drafts/executive summaries, each team is expected to be honing in on a statement of findings/executive summary, while recognizing that final results are subject to revision and refinement.

**Potential Guest Speaker(s):** We will potentially have a guest speaker(s) join us (via Zoom or in person) for this class session, to discuss issues of importance to contemporary tribal affairs. The potential guest speaker(s) is:

- Representatives from the Harvard Project Shared Interest Group (individuals TBD), on working in Native affairs after graduation from Harvard.

**Assignment:** As needed, through the course of this week, each student team should meet with the teaching team to present draft work product. All students should provide an Interim Report to the teaching team.

## **Week 11**

**April 2**

### **Class or Work Sessions**

Time will be available for working sessions, as needed, to assess student progress, troubleshoot team integration, share sources and approaches, and solve any issues that might have arisen with the process or substance of the research. The following questions should be kept in mind:

- What will you recommend to your client?
- What constraints should you bear in mind when making recommendations?
- How will you present these recommendations to your client?
- Is it possible to present your question, research strategy, data sources, finding, and recommendations in 15 minutes or less?
- What graphics would be useful?

**Guest Speakers:** We will have guest speakers join us via Zoom for this class session, to discuss issues of importance to contemporary tribal affairs. The guest speakers are:

- Christy Finsel (Osage) and Karen Edwards (Choctaw) of the Oklahoma Native Assets Coalition, on Native worldviews and understandings of Native assets, and the need for asset-building programs in Native communities.

Note that the exact dates for all guest speakers are subject to change.

**Assignment:** Students are encouraged to schedule individual feedback sessions as needed, or to continue independent work on their projects.

## **Week 12**

**April 9**

### **Class or Work Sessions**

Class time will be available for working sessions, as needed, to assess student progress, trouble-shoot team integration, share sources and approaches, and solve any issues that might have arisen with the process or substance of the research.

**Guest Speaker:** We will have a guest speaker join us in person for this class session, to discuss issues of importance to contemporary tribal affairs. The guest speaker is:

- Deidre Mitchell (CEO, Waséyabek Development Company), on best practices in business development, project management, strategic alliances, and personnel development, in a tribally owned development corporation.

**Assignment:** Students are encouraged to schedule individual feedback sessions as needed, or to continue independent work on their projects.

## **Week 13 to 14**

**April 16 to 23**

### **Presentations of Final Draft Reports**

Note that these dates cover an entire week. Students will make a formal presentation of its project to class members, invited guests, and their clients. Due to time constraints, the presentations often take place over multiple days. If more time is needed due to many projects being undertaken in a given semester, additional days can be utilized.

**Student Presentations/Assignment:** Student presentations.

## **Week 15**

**April 30**

### **Reports Due to Henson**

*A note on collaboration and academic integrity on written work in this class:* Discussion and the exchange of ideas are essential to high-quality academic work. For assignments in this course, you are encouraged to consult with classmates outside your team on the choice of topics and to share sources. You may find it useful to discuss your chosen topic with your peers, particularly if you are working on a similar topic as a classmate. However, you should ensure that any written work you submit for evaluation is the result of your own research and writing and that it reflects your own approach to the topic. You must also adhere to standard citation practices and properly cite any books, articles, websites, lectures, etc. that have helped you with your work. If you receive any help with your writing (e.g., feedback on drafts), you must also acknowledge this assistance. *A note on the use of Artificial Intelligence for written work in this class:* Keeping in mind the note just above, the use of all the tools available to make your work product the best it can be is encouraged. You should be especially mindful to provide full citation if you rely on Artificial Intelligence to generate any of your final work product.

**Assignment:** Students should provide an MSWord version of the “final” report to the teaching team. **Grades are assigned based on this version of the work product.** See the assignment for week 16 regarding the “final-final” report.

## **Week 16**

**May 7**

### **Final Reports Due to Client and Henson**

Based on any feedback from the prior week, students should make minor edits to their reports, as needed, and then provide the final work product to the client and the teaching team.

**Assignment:** Students should provide (in MSWord) a version of the final report to the teaching team. Students should provide a PDF version of the final report to the client, with a carbon copy to the teaching team.