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Native American Studies, B.A.

Native American Studies at Cal Poly Humboldt is more than an academic discipline. We're a continuation of Indigenous knowledge from time immemorial with a distinctly tribal perspective on major global challenges, such as climate change, environmental justice, and place-based initiatives. As the first campus in the California State University (CSU) system to offer a baccalaureate degree in Native American Studies, and still the only program of its kind in the CSU, Native American Studies continues to develop as a stand-alone department, with active input from tribes.

Why This Program

Cal Poly Humboldt is not only a proven leader in serving Native American students in California, but our broad program appeals to non-Native students who are passionate about law and policy, social and environmental justice, sustainability, and natural resource management.

Humboldt provides students across majors opportunities to collaborate with and learn from local tribes through place-based learning initiatives and programs.

The Rou Dalagurr: Food Sovereignty Lab & Traditional Ecological Knowledges Institute is dedicated to the learning, research, hands-on practice and preservation of food sovereignty, and Traditional Ecological Knowledges. The Lab provides an opportunity to work directly with the surrounding communities, tribal nations, and national and international scholars, and community leaders to center, learn, and engage with Indigenous science, environmental management, and preservation practices.

The Lab builds national and international connections that foreground Indigenous voices in rigorous academic research, publications, and community-centered programming, connecting youth to higher education, policy development, economic development, and climate resiliency.

X Did you know?

- Humboldt is located in Goudi'ni (Among the Redwoods) on Wiyot land with 13 federally recognized tribes in the University's service area.
- Native American Studies is a stand-alone major where students are prepared to engage with critical perspectives and Indigenous knowledges and for working with tribal communities and tribal peoples.
- One of two on-campus art galleries, the Goudi'ni Native American Arts Gallery was founded in 2011 to honor living culture through the presentation of contemporary and traditional Native American art.
- Complete your B.A. plus an M.A. in Environment & Community in as little as five years with our combined degree pathway.



Academics & Options

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Our curriculum helps students develop a critical perspective as well as cultural breadth through the study of Native American perspectives and worldviews. Students in our program are better prepared for careers by learning how to navigate tribal sovereignty and engage in tribal knowledges.

Program Concentrations

Law & Government: Federal Indian Law is the foundation of the United States legal system. Develop a critical understanding of law, politics, and policy development with courses like Tribal Justice Systems and Tribal Water rights.

Environment & Natural Resources: Explore and engage with Traditional Ecological Knowledge, Indigenous Science, and place-based learning through courses focused on sustainability and environmental justice.

Language & Literature: Engage with tribal knowledges and literatures to develop key understandings of language resurgence, and Native American literature and traditions.

Society & Culture: Critical approaches to social science, health sciences, and interdisciplinary hands on learning for community health, wellness, and research. Classes include: Native American Health; Native American Psychology; and Decolonizing Public Health.

Minors

- Native American Studies
- Indigenous Peoples, Natural Resource Use & the Environment
- Tribal Leadership Minor



Careers

A degree in Native American Studies, especially when combined with a minor in a specific field, helps prepare you for graduate school in several social sciences, to teach, and pursue professional careers.

- Cultural Resource Specialist
- Curator
- Environmental Policy Specialist
- Health Education Specialist
- Lawyer
- Linguist
- Mental Health Worker
- Natural Resource Manager
- Nonprofit Executive Director
- Social Worker
- Teacher
- Tribal Administrator
- Tribal Liaison



I chose Native American Studies for its multiple aspects on Native American communities, the environment, law, and policy because when people think of Native American Studies they usually think of mostly the history of Native American people but it's more than that. It's not just history. It's environmental justice, it's social justice."

Vincente Diaz ('21), graduate student in Water Management, Policy & Science at Northern Arizona University