

Bemidji State University
INST 4000: Nation Building and Leadership (Ziigwan/Spring 2026)
Course Credits: 3 credit hours

Version 1.2 (This syllabus is subject to change; I will let you know when it does!)

Contact Information:

Instructor: Dr. Niyokamigaabaw Deondre Smiles

Office: Office hours are offered via Zoom

Office Hours: Mondays-Fridays, 11 AM-12 PM, and other times by appointment

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Course Description:

This course provides students with an opportunity to analyze leadership, values, and diverse strategies for Indigenous nation building through the lenses of development, Indigenous philosophies, and sustainability.

Prerequisites/Co-Requisites:

Prerequisites: INST 1107, and INST 2201 or INST 2202, and INST 3307 or INST 3317, or professor permission. [Nisidotaading Course Requirement]

Textbooks/Materials:

There is no textbook for this course---instead, we will engage with a variety of readings and publications written by Indigenous community members, Indigenous scholars, and (selected) Indigenous allies who have been engaged in nation-building in Indian Country, historically and in the present. All materials will be available on D2L in advance, and it is your responsibility to have read them and come prepared to discuss them on seminar days.

Grades:

This course will use an A-F grading scale, with shading based on percentage points. I will automatically round up if you are within .2 percent of the next highest shaded grade: (89.8% will be rounded up to a 90).

97-100: A+

93-96.9: A

90-92.9: A-

87-89.9: B+

83-86.9: B

80-82.9: B-

77-79.9: C+

73-76.9: C

70-72.9: C-

67-69.9: D+

63-66.9: D

60-62.9: D-

60 or below: F

If you miss more than 20% of class meetings without notifying me beforehand, you cannot receive a grade higher than a B-, regardless of your performance in the course.

Learning Outcomes:

Students will:

1. compare and contrast Indigenous nation-building efforts.
2. demonstrate research skills.

3. analyze Indigenous national issues.
4. describe the impacts of colonial policies on Indigenous nation-building efforts.
5. apply Indigenous philosophies to nation-building efforts.

Major Content Areas:

1. Indigenous history
2. Indigenous leadership
3. Indigenous values
4. Treaty federalism
5. Indigenous nation building
6. Indigenous sovereignty
7. Indigenous resistance
8. Indigenous administration
9. Indigenous governance
10. Indigenous politics
11. Indigenous treaties
12. Indigenous issues
13. Indigenous philosophy

Outline/Assignments:

• **Weekly Reflections (30% of your grade)**

At the end of most weeks, you will be asked to write a short reflection (2-4 double-spaced pages) based off of a few prompts that I will provide—this is designed to get you to think deeply on each week’s topic, and begin to see how these topics and themes can be integrated into the broader course theme of Indigenous Nationhood, as well as how your thinking on this is developing. I will provide more guidelines on how these will be written, on D2L

• **Context paper (25% of your grade)**

At about the halfway point of the semester, you will write a short paper to demonstrate your knowledge and grasp of topics we’ve covered up to that point based on a series of prompts/challenges that I will provide in advance. What I’m looking for in this paper is to see your skill and mastery of beginning to integrate the topics together to make your claims/arguments.

• **Final paper/project (35% of your grade)**

You will create a final research product based on a topic (that you get to choose) that incorporates the broader course theme of Indigenous Nation Building and Leadership. You even get to choose the format—you can either create a traditional research paper, or you can propose a creative project—the possibilities are nearly limitless. Regardless of what option you choose, you will give a short presentation on your chosen topic to your classmates during the final week of class. During the course of the semester, we will go through differing steps that go into the research process, so you can feel supported in this work!

• **Participation (10% of your grade)**

Besides the lectures, we will also devote some time towards discussing the readings and lectures in class, in a seminar-style setting. Students should come to class prepared and ready to discuss and contribute to the larger discussion.

I recognize that for some students, “in-person” participation may be anxiety inducing and difficult to do in a large class setting. Therefore, there are alternative ways for students to show that they are engaging with the course material and the lectures/guest lectures without having to do so in a way that can make them

uncomfortable. Based on practices done by Dr. Max Liboiron (Memorial University), these alternatives take the form of class participation roles—such as volunteering to be an official note taker for a given class, developing seminar discussion questions, e-mailing an author of a text with your reaction to their writing, and other activities. I will discuss these roles more in detail in class.

Topics/Schedule:

Week:	Topic:
Week 1: Introduction to the Course 1/13: Lecture 1/15: Seminar Reading: This syllabus! ☺	
Week 2: What is Nation Building? What is Indigenous Nationhood? 1/21: Lecture 1/23: NO CLASS MEETING Readings: <u>Nemiah Declaration</u> Minnesota Chippewa Tribe Constitution Simpson, A., 2000. Narratives of Citizenship and Nationhood. <i>Political theory and the rights of indigenous peoples</i> , 113.	
Week 3: A Primer on Settler Colonialism 1/28: Lecture 1/30: Seminar Readings: Barker, Adam J. "Locating settler colonialism." <i>Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History</i> 13, no. 3 (2012). Englert, Sai. "Settlers, workers, and the logic of accumulation by dispossession." <i>Antipode</i> 52, no. 6 (2020): 1647-1666. Simpson, Audra. 2016. "Whither Settler Colonialism?" <i>Settler Colonial Studies</i> 6 (4): 438–45. doi:10.1080/2201473X.2015.1124427.	

Week 4: The Federal/Tribal Treaty Relationship

2/4: Lecture

2/6: Seminar

Readings:

1855 Treaty (full text)

Stark, Heidi. "Respect, responsibility, and renewal: The foundations of Anishinaabe treaty making with the United States and Canada." *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 34, no. 2 (2010).

Cornell, Stephen. "Nation-building and the Treaty Process." *Indigenous Law Bulletin* 5, no. 17 (2002): 7-10.

Week 5: The Sovereign Turn: Indigenous Nationhood in the 1990s and 2000s

2/11: Lecture

2/13: Seminar

Readings:

Waasa-Inaabidaa, Episode 2: Making Decisions the Right Way (video)

Loew, Patty. "Hidden Transcripts in the Chippewa Treaty Rights Struggle: A Twice Told Story. Race, Resistance, and the Politics of Power." *American Indian Quarterly* 21, no. 4 (1997): 713–28.

<https://doi.org/10.2307/1185721>.

Grossman, Zoltan. "Treaty rights and responding to anti-Indian activity." In *Hate and bias crime*, pp. 203-210. Routledge, 2012.

Week 6: Research Proposal Workshop

2/18: Lecture

2/20: Workshop on research proposals!

Kovach, Margaret "Conversation Method in Indigenous Research". *First Peoples Child & Family Review* 5, no. 1 (2010) : 40–48.

<https://doi.org/10.7202/1069060ar>

Gone, J. P. (2019). Considering Indigenous Research Methodologies: Critical Reflections by an Indigenous Knower. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 25(1), 45-56. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800418787545>

Week 7: The State/Tribal Relationship

2/25: Lecture

2/27: Seminar

Readings:

Peacock, Thomas D., and Donald R. Day. "Nations within a Nation: The Dakota and Ojibwe of Minnesota." *Daedalus* 129, no. 3 (2000): 137–59. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20027650>.

Erlinder, Peter. "Treaty-Guaranteed Usufructuary Rights: Minnesota v. Mille Lacs Band of Chippewa Indians Ten Years On." *Environmental Law Reporter* 41, no. 10 (2011): 10921–35.

Week 8: Defining 'metaphysics' and its connection to Indigenous nation building

3/4: Lecture

3/6: Seminar

Readings:

Treuer, Anton. "Indigenous Voice: Language and Identity in America's Native Nations." *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 163, no. 3 (2019): 220–26. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45380632>.

Hadjiyanni, T. (2019). Ojibwe Stories: "When the traditions are lost, it is like a person who has no identity". In: *The Right to Home*. Palgrave Macmillan, New York. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1137-59957-5_6

Henderson, Sakej, and Leroy Little Bear. "Coming home: A journey through the trans-systematic knowledge systems." *Engaged Scholar Journal: Community-Engaged Research, Teaching, and Learning* 7, no. 1 (2021): 205-216.

Week 9: SPRING BREAK—NO CLASS ☺**Week 10: Avoiding the Politics of Recognition**

3/18: Lecture

3/20: Seminar

CONTEXT PAPER DUE BY 11:59 PM 3/22

Coulthard, G. Subjects of Empire: Indigenous Peoples and the 'Politics of Recognition' in Canada. *Contemp Polit Theory* 6, 437–460 (2007). <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.cpt.9300307>

Stampe, Jennifer. "'A swing of the pendulum, maybe': Ojibwe self-representation, settler intolerance, and the collaborative state." *Settler Colonial Studies* 3, no. 2 (2013): 189-201.

Week 11: Indigenous citizenship and its challenges

3/25: Lecture

3/27: Seminar

FINAL RESEARCH PROJECT PROPOSALS DUE BY 11:59 PM 4/5

Readings:

Hamill, J. F. (2003). Show me your CDIB: Blood Quantum and Indian Identity among Indian People of Oklahoma. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 47(3), 267-282. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764203256187>

Schmidt, Ryan W., American Indian Identity and Blood Quantum in the 21st Century: A Critical Review, *Journal of Anthropology*, 2011, 549521, 9 pages, 2011. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2011/549521>

Doerfler, Jill. 2017. "‘We Aren’t like Dogs’: Battling Blood Quantum." *Wasafiri* 32 (2): 41–47. doi:10.1080/02690055.2017.1290394.

Week 12: Indigenous Nationhood in the face of climate crisis

3/31: Lecture

4/2: Seminar

Readings:

Latta, Alex. "Indigenous Rights and Multilevel Governance: Learning From the Northwest Territories Water Stewardship Strategy." *International Indigenous Policy Journal* 9, no. 2 (2018): 1–22. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48767150>.

Schug, Kathryn and Gordon, Ted (2024) "Rights of Nature: The Indigenous-Led Movement for Sovereignty and a Sustainable Future," *The Journal of Social Encounters*: Vol. 8: Iss. 2, 291-298. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.69755/2995-2212.1291>

Frischkorn, Nathan. "Treaty Rights and Water Habitat: Applying the United States v. Washington Culverts Decision to Anishinaabe Akiing." *Ariz. J. Env't L. & Pol'y* 11 (2020): 34.

Week 13: Land-Based Resurgence and Nation

Building

4/7: RECORDED LECTURE—Dr. Smiles in New York

4/8: Seminar

Readings:

Waasa-Inbidaa, Episode 3: That Which Is Given To Us

Hermes, Mary, Mel M. Engman, and James

McKenzie. "Everyday stories in a forest: Multimodal meaning-making with Ojibwe Elders, young people, language, and place." *WINHEC: International Journal of Indigenous Education Scholarship* 1 (2021): 267-301.

Freedman, Eric. "When Indigenous Rights and Wilderness Collide: Prosecution of Native Americans for Using Motors in Minnesota's Boundary Waters

Canoe Wilderness Area." *American Indian Quarterly* 26, no. 3 (2002): 378-92.

<http://jstor.org/stable/4128490>

Week 14: "Land Back"

4/14: Lecture

4/16: Seminar

Readings:

Goeman, Mishuana. "From Place to Territories and Back Again: Centering Storied Land in the Discussion of Indigenous Nation-Building."

International Journal of Critical Indigenous Studies 1, no. 1 (2008): 23–34.

<https://search.informit.org/doi/10.3316/informit.4988.11919799456>.

"Exploring a State-Tribal Partnership to Advance Energy Goals" (2023)

Week 15: The Futures of Indigenous Nationhood

4/21: Lecture

4/23: Seminar

Readings:

Simpson, L. B. (2022). Kwe As Resurgent Method. *Feminist Asylum: A*

Journal of Critical Interventions, 1(1). <https://doi.org/10.5195/faci.2022.85>

Week 16: Course Wrap-Up

4/28: Wrap-Up Discussion

Readings: Googling ideas for your summer vacation 😊

Time expectations:

We will meet for **150 minutes a week** (75 minutes per meeting x 2 meetings a week). You should expect to dedicate **about 6 hours of work a week outside of class** to the readings, preparing for discussions, and working on other assignments for this course. This is an estimate and will vary based on your time management strategy, and other commitments you may have. My goal is to not overload you with work, as I recognize you have lives outside of this class, so if there are other commitments or events that affect your ability to complete course work, please contact me as soon as possible and we will work on accommodations.

Academic Integrity:

BSU students are expected to practice the highest standards of ethics, honesty and integrity in all of their academic work. Any form of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating and misrepresentation) may result in disciplinary action. Possible disciplinary actions may include failure for part or an entire course as well as suspension from the University. It is suggested that students review BSU's statement on academic integrity found within the Student Code of Conduct.

I also highly do not recommend using AI for this course. It will not do you very much good for the course, I will be able to tell you're using AI, and you run the risk of being referred for disciplinary action, which also means a lot of paperwork for me. **Do us both a favor and use your own work.** 😊

Disruptive Behavior in the Classroom:

We at Bemidji State University believe the classroom is an environment where civility, human dignity and respect is maintained. Any variation from this for example yelling or saying profanity at an instructor or another person in the classroom, or any other loud, lewd, belligerent or obnoxious behavior resulting in a disruption from teaching, and learning are violations of the Code of Conduct and will not be tolerated. If this occurs, you will be asked to leave the classroom not to return until you meet with the University Conduct Officer and you could be subject to a judicial hearing.

As this course is Indigenous focused, there is absolutely zero tolerance for bigoted/racist/anti-Indigenous behavior. I support debate and discourse in the class, and feel it can be a learning opportunity, but I do not consider bigotry to be a valid currency for debate. **This includes anti-LGBT, ableist, transphobic, xenophobic, sexist, and racist behavior.**

Extended Leave Procedure:

If a student has to be away from class from an extended period of time (more than two class sessions) for medical emergencies or a funeral, you are asked to contact the Student Life and Success Office where a leave notice will be given to your faculty. This notice informs the faculty of your departure and return date back to campus. This leave does not absolve you from any assignment you have due during your leave. You are to make arrangements with your instructors of when to complete any assignments due during the leave period. You can complete a leave form as this website <https://www.bemidjistate.edu/offices/student-lifesuccess/extended-absence/>

Students with Special Needs:

BSU is committed to making all educational programs, course materials, services and activities sponsored by the University accessible to individuals with disabilities. Students requesting accommodations due to a disability or other need for access should contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible. Accessibility

Services is located at Decker Hall 202. PH: 218.755.3883 or email: accessibility@bemidjistate.edu. This information is also available through Minnesota Relay Services at 800.627.3529.

Tutoring:

BSU's Student Success Center is your first stop if you are wishing to improve your academic skills and excel in your classes. Services include academic advising and tutoring, peer tutoring, and additional resources. The center is located at Decker Hall 202.

Tutor.com:

The Minnesota State system has updated the online tutoring service available to our students. We are now partnering with Tutor.com to offer 24/7 online tutoring, which will connect students with an expert tutor for extra assistance one-on-one. Online tutoring services can be accessed through the main page in D2L and your course page, by clicking on the tutor.com link, located in the "HelpLinks" menu.

All students will receive 15 hours of tutoring at no cost. Tutoring services cover a variety of subject areas including math, writing, accounting, economics, biology, languages and nursing. Additional time may be purchased by students directly through tutor.com.

Mental Health and Counseling:

Students may experience mental health concerns or stressful events that may lead to diminished academic performance. The Student Center for Health & Counseling is available to assist you with concerns and can include stress relief services. They can be reached in Cedar Hall, First Floor. Phone: (218) 755-2053.

Campus Safety Statement:

It is the right of every student to feel safe in their classes and on campus. If someone is preventing you from feeling safe at BSU, and/ or if you have been a victim of harassment and/ or sexual violence, affirmative action measures are available for you. If you are in an emergency situation, call 911. If you are in a non-emergency situation, contact Public Safety and/ or the Office of Equal Opportunity & Affirmative Action by phone or email. At BSU, student safety is a top priority and all harassment and discrimination complaints will be handled promptly at your discretion.

- Discrimination/Harassment Complaint Form:
<https://www.bemidjistate.edu/offices/affirmativeaction/wp-content/uploads/sites/49/2017/03/Discrimination-Harassment-Complaint-form.pdf>
- Sexual Misconduct/ Violence Form:
https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?BemidjiStateUniv&layout_id=7
- Public Safety: 218-755-3888
- Office of Equal Opportunity & Affirmative Action: By e-mail at affirmativeaction@bemidjistate.edu or 218-755-4121

Accessibility statement:

Upon request this document can be made available in alternate formats. Please contact Accessibility Services at 7553883.