

American Indian Studies, Minor

DEPARTMENT

Department of Anthropology

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MN in American Indian Studies, Minor
MN in Anthropology, Minor
BA in Anthropology, B.A.
MN in Asian American Studies, Minor
MN in Southeast Asian Studies, Minor
Courses Offered

Anthropology is concerned with everything that is human, in all parts of the world, both present and past. It is unique among the social sciences in its scope. Most disciplines focus only on modern civilization or concentrate on single aspects of life, such as government or the economy. Anthropology is interested in all human societies and views life as a complexly integrated whole that is more than the sum of its parts. It is the human experience as a whole that anthropology seeks to understand.

The breadth of anthropology is reflected in its four subfields. **Physical anthropology** studies biological evolution and how heredity conditions the ways we conduct life. **Cultural anthropology**, by studying the enormous diversity of lifeways in contemporary cultures throughout the world, attempts to explain both differences and similarities in the way different peoples carry out the process of living. **Archaeology** explores the human past far beyond the range of written records, using specialized techniques to probe human prehistory. **Linguistic anthropology** investigates the nature of language and the critical role it has played in developing our unique intellectual capabilities and behavior. The central concept in anthropology is "culture," and it is this vital idea which binds the subfields into an integrated discipline.

Our program has three goals:

- to provide students with a clear conception of human variability and its implications, enabling them to understand and deal with lifestyles other than those of "mainstream America;"
- to provide students with the broad intellectual skills that are essential to the widest range of professional careers;and
- to prepare students to use anthropological concepts in both applied and research careers.

Both the anthropology major and minor offer a varied but well-structured exposure to all four subfields of the discipline. The major consists of two parts. The core curriculum introduces both data and theory in a logical sequence of courses from basic to advanced and includes an introduction to anthropological fieldwork. The four degree tracks are intended to prepare students for specific careers in the following areas: education, cultural resources management, social services, or post-secondary teaching. The minor is a briefer but balanced survey of the discipline, designed to complement any major whose graduates need to understand and deal with people from different cultural backgrounds.

Special Resources and Facilities

The Anthropology Department provides student training in both archaeological and ethnographic studies. Advanced students may also pursue specialized training in our archaeological and ethnographic field schools, as well as our archaeology laboratory. We encourage internships as an important aspect of student development and help place advanced students as interns with a large variety of organizations.

REQUIREMENTS

Minor in American Indian Studies Requirements

American Indian Studies Minor

Lower-division requirements (6 units)
AIS 5, 50

Upper-division requirements (6 units)
AIS 103, 170

Approved American Indian Studies electives (6 units)

Total (18 units)

It is anticipated that AIS 100 may be used for the American Indian Studies Minor and to satisfy General Education requirements.

Note: The minor also requires a 2.0 GPA and 6 upper-division units in residence.

About the Program

The American Indian Studies program (AIS) at California State University, Fresno offers an interdisciplinary curriculum that provides culturally-appropriate knowledge and skills through an understanding of the American Indians in North America. The program also involves its faculty and students in research, experiential learning, career counseling, computer technology, curriculum development, conference participation, and day, evening, and weekend courses.

The program offers courses leading to a minor in American Indian Studies. Students can seek other professional degrees in such areas as business, human resources, teacher education, and law. The program teaches appreciation for the heritage of American Indians and their contributions to the shaping of the fabric of American life and history.

Faculty Specialties

The AIS program is made up of faculty with backgrounds and expertise in business, English, history, education, Anthropology, and American Indian affairs.

American Indian Studies is a discipline within the Anthropology Department that focuses on the indigenous cultures of ancient, historical, and contemporary America. American Indian cultures include American Indians, Arctic Natives, as well as the indigenous populations of Northern Mexico. This program recognizes the artificiality of both the Canadian and the Mexican borders, but is primarily concerned with the indigenous populations of the USA. The courses offer a distinctively American perspectives that is crucial to an understanding of the historical and social processes that have led to the development of contemporary American society. This program is intended to strengthen the position of American Indian students and communities in this region as well as introduce these cultures to all students. Courses are interdisciplinary and are principally drawn from the social sciences and the humanities.

Student Life and Community Events

The office of the AIS program serves as a resource and information center for American Indian student organizations and the community at large.

First Nations American Indian Student Organization

First Nations is a student organization that works to bring awareness of indigenous cultures by building upon the camaraderie of the indigenous communities of the Americas. The organization actively seeks to raise social consciousness by creating an environment of awareness and understanding of First Nations peoples. First Nations members include those directly connected to a sovereign nation existing prior to colonization, and those who support First Nations through participating in cultural, political, and social events.

FACULTY

For faculty phone numbers and e-mail, see the campus directory.

For more on the faculty, see the faculty pages.

The faculty pages are updated by the department or program.