Spring 2015
NATIVE AMERICANS IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY:
NATION BUILDING II

KSG PED-502, GSE A102
Tuesdays, 2:10-4:00 p.m.
Conference Room, Suite 400, 14 Story Street

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This field-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 native development issues, including: sovereignty, economic development, constitutional reform, leadership, health and social welfare, land and water rights, culture and language, religious freedom, and education. In particular, the course emphasizes problem definition, fieldwork relationships, and designing and completing a research project. This course is devoted primarily to preparation and presentation of a comprehensive research paper based on a field investigation. In addition to interdisciplinary faculty presentations on topics such as field research methods and problem definition, students will make presentations on their work-in-progress and findings.

Typically, projects are completed by teams of two, students select research topics from projects requested by tribes, First Nations, and related Native organizations. These “clients” are seeking assistance on a wide range of matters, and the Nation Building II research reports are intended to be useful to the requesting organizations. Students are provided the opportunity to visit with their sponsoring organizations, in order to determine feasible and valuable approaches to the problems at hand. Class meetings are conducted in a workshop setting, with students participating in a team setting to support the production of high-quality research results and presentations. The form and format of the required research reports are not restricted to “term paper” format, and past reports have included multi-media presentations and other innovative approaches designed to maximize the communication and effectiveness of the students’ work. In addition to the final research report, each team of students is required to make a public, in-class presentation of its final report.

Prerequisite: Open to all Harvard University students, graduate and undergraduate. In the event of over-enrollment, priority is given to students who have taken Nation Building I (KSG PED-501, GSE A-101).
KEY DEADLINES/COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

February 10: Project Description, MOU with Client

February 17: Short powerpoint presentation of initial project ideas and goals

February 24: Deadline for Travel Arrangements

March 10: Outline of final project (6-8 pages)

March 14-22: Spring Break, site visit deadline

March 24 & 31: Practice/Draft Final Presentation and Executive Summary

April 7, 14: Small Group Work Sessions

April 21, 28: Final Presentations with clients

May 11: Final Report due to teaching team and clients

***Weekly: Online check-ins with teaching team on project progress, Due Monday night before class

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

Week 1
January 27 Introductions and Overview: What Makes a Good NB II Project?

Students will introduce themselves and give a short description of their interests. We will discuss the attributes of good Nation Building II topic, focusing on issues of scope, relevance to the “client” organization, feasibility, and presentation. Then, we will provide a description of the topics that the many tribes and organizations have requested assistance with. This will start the process of matching students to topics.

Introduction to Harvard University Native American Program and its role in NBII


Guiding Principles for Engaging in Research with Native American Communities (available on course website)

Walk Softly, NCAI Guidelines for research in Indian Country

Samples of past Nation Building II projects will on course web site to provide perspective on goals and outcomes.
Week 2
February 3  Problem Definition and Client Relations: Getting Your Project Off the Ground

Perhaps the most critical aspect of field research is defining “the problem:” 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? Class discussion will focus on problem definition, feasible scope, data and evidence availability, appropriate expectations of both researchers and the requesting organization, negotiation of those expectations, and advisor relationships.

Each research team of two students will be paired with a team advisor. The first stages of effective research and field engagement will be outlined, with emphasis on orienting students to their client’s organizational, political, and cultural setting.

Guest Speakers: Shelly Lowe & Jason Packineau, Harvard University Native American Program

Project Presentation: Previous project will be presented to class

Assignment: Set up first phone call with your client and advisor and have that call before the next class meeting.

Readings: Samples of past Nation Building II projects will on course web site to provide perspective on goals and outcomes.


Week 3
February 10 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 assembled? 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 prospects for solution 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.

Assignments Due: One-page description of your project (i.e., problem definition); completed letter agreement with your client sponsor. Each team will make a brief presentation of its topic, emphasizing the problem definition.

**Week 4**
**February 17  Student Presentations of Preliminary Structure of Project**

Students will make brief PowerPoint presentations reflecting their conceptualizations of their projects and their preliminary conclusions. It is too early to really have conclusions, but this exercise focuses on ultimately making the students’ projects useful to their clients.

*Assignment Due:* Short PowerPoint slide presentation.

*Schedule Appointment* with Adrienne or Dennis to finalize and make travel arrangements

*Purchase of Air Tickets must be by March 5th*****

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**Week 5**
**February 24  Getting into the Field: Gaining Entry, Developing Contacts, Fitting In, Interviewing, Being Objective/Subjective**

What is the role of the researcher in Indian Country should you be aware of? How do these issues impact on questions asked and research methods? How do the issues relevant to Indian Country translate into other contexts, such as developing countries or urban communities? We will focus on these and other questions related to designing a research strategy, assessing the type of data needed, and the probability that the data can be gathered in the time available. We will also discuss strategies for gathering information. Attention will be paid to important matters such as personal conduct in the field, interviewing approaches in a cross-cultural setting, dealing with politically and/or culturally sensitive information, and listening. Invited AI/AN to recall what it was like to have researchers come into their communities.

*Readings:*
Keown, Larry D. “Working in Indian Country”: Chapter 4+5 (pages 73-139) [In-Class Handout]

*Additional Reading (optional):*

*Assignment Due:* Short PowerPoint slide presentations continued from the previous week, as needed.
Week 6  
March 3  
Getting to the End: What Does an Effective Final Product Look Like?

Project Updates. Your sponsor client is expecting a useful product that will educate and inform. What will the delivered product look like? Answering this question entails questions of media, formatting, use of demonstrative and graphical information, tone, length, document structure, and reader/hearer/viewer access to the research information your creates. Examples of alternative approaches will be considered and basic skills of document preparation will be reviewed. Students will also be offered training in final document preparation.

****Students will receive their final presentation time slot this week, with time to confirm with clients during site visit****

Week 7  
March 10  
Delivering Your Research and the Elements of Effective Oral Presentation

Project Updates and final logistical issues before site visits. In the final sessions of the semester, each team of students will make formal presentations of its projects and results to an audience of their peers and other invited guests. What makes a good oral presentation? Consideration will be given to the role of such issues as tone, structure, level of detail, audience engagement for maximum conveyance of information, and techniques such as Powerpoint slide shows.

Assignment Due: Began an outline of your final product, reflecting overall structure and substantive analysis and findings that will be completed after your site visit. This outline will generally be on the order of 6-8 pages in length.

Week 8  
March 17  
No Class - Spring Break

*******Reminder: Travel Receipts are DUE March 26th

Week 9  
March 24  
Student Mid-Term Presentations (1) -- Pulling It All Together and Stating Findings

Based upon the completed drafts of the executive summaries, each team will present its research results and recommendations to the class. Emphasis is on statement of findings, recognizing that results at this stage are subject to revision and refinement. Class discussion will subject the statements of results and recommendations to critical evaluation, with the shared objective of improving the ultimate project.

Assignment Due: Draft of Executive Summary and Presentation
Week 10  
March 31  
Student Mid-Term Presentations (2) -- Pulling It All Together and Stating Findings

Based upon the completed drafts of the executive summaries, each team will present its research results and recommendations to the class. Emphasis is on statement of findings, recognizing that results at this stage are subject to revision and refinement. Class discussion will subject the statements of results and recommendations to critical evaluation, with the shared objective of improving the ultimate project.

*Assignment Due: Draft of Executive Summary and Presentation*

Week 11  
April 7  
Small Group Work Sessions with Advisors

Assessing your progress, trouble-shooting team integration, sharing sources and approaches, problem solving for process and substance. 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? How can you possibly present your question, research strategy, data sources, finding, and recommendations in 15 minutes? What graphics would be useful? Schedule individual feedback sessions with either Adrienne and Dennis or continue independent work on project. Attendance voluntary.

Week 12  
April 14  
Small Group Work Sessions with Advisors II

Assessing your progress, trouble-shooting team integration, sharing sources and approaches, problem solving for process and substance. 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? How can you possibly present your question, research strategy, data sources, finding, and recommendations in 15 minutes? What graphics would be useful? Schedule individual feedback sessions with either Adrienne and Dennis or continue independent work on project. Attendance voluntary.

Week 13  
April 21  
Presentations -- Presenting Final Draft Report to a Panel of Faculty, Students, and Practitioners

Each student team will make the formal presentation of its project’s results to class members, invited guests, and dignitaries.

*Assignment Due: Final report presented to class.*
Presentations -- Presenting Final Draft Report to a Panel of Faculty, Students, and Practitioners

Each student team will make the formal presentation of its project’s results to class members, invited guests, and dignitaries.

Assignment Due: Final report presented to class.

May 11: Final Report Due

Collaboration in Written Work:
Discussion and the exchange of ideas are essential to academic work. For assignments in this course, you are encouraged to consult with your classmates on the choice of paper topics and to share sources. You may find it useful to discuss your chosen topic with your peers, particularly if you are working on the same 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 in this discipline 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.