

## General Education Course Inclusion Proposal

**INTEGRATIVE THINKING**

*This proposal form is intended for departments proposing a course for inclusion in the Northern Michigan University General Education Program. Courses in a component satisfy both the Critical Thinking and the component learning outcomes. Departments should complete this form and submit it electronically through the General Education SHARE site.*

**Course Name and Number:** NAS 240: Sacred Ground: Native Peoples, Mother Earth and Popular Culture

**Home Department:** Center for Native American Studies

**Department Chair Name and Contact Information** (phone, email): April Lindala, Director  
227-1397  
[alindala@nmu.edu](mailto:alindala@nmu.edu)

**Expected frequency of Offering of the course** (e.g. every semester, every fall): Once a year (fall or winter)

**Official Course Status:** Has this course been approved by CUP and Senate?  YES  IN PROGRESS

*Courses that have not yet been approved by CUP must be submitted to CUP prior to review by GEC. Note that GEC is able to review courses that are in the process of approval; however, inclusion in the General Education Program is dependent upon Senate and Academic Affairs approval of the course into the overall curriculum.*

**Overview of course** (please attach a current syllabus as well): *Please limit the overview to two pages (not including the syllabus)*

A. Overview of the course content

*Sacred Ground* critically explores the depictions of Indigenous environmental philosophies as depicted in popular culture in the Americas and around the world. In analyzing these depictions, students examine the historical, philosophical/anthropological, environmental, representational, and political aspects and/or ramifications of various popular culture material from across the artistic genres including film, music, literature, art, oratory, and more. Students' critical analysis and developing understandings of these multidisciplinary issues are accomplished through graded small group discussions designed to complement guided whole class discussions on the course material and culminating in application of these understandings in the Final Project.

Building on students' growing critical understanding of the multidisciplinary aspects involved with the representation of Indigenous peoples and environmental issues in popular culture, at the end of the course *Sacred Ground* requires students apply their newly acquired knowledge in the Final Project through the development of political policies and the creative depiction of a theoretical society that applies these policies. The primary objective of this project is to engage students in a practical application of the course's theoretical discussions on the interplay of the creative process, personal/cultural/historical bias, and audience response to depictions of Indigenous peoples and environmental issues in popular culture as well as the practical application of the critical assessment skills students learned in their interdisciplinary critiques of various creative expressions throughout the semester.

B. Explain why this course satisfies the Component specified and significantly addresses both learning outcomes

*Sacred Ground* is based on critical examination of creative expressions in popular culture and requires students engage in critical assessment of expressions of popular culture through a multidisciplinary lens leading to a thorough understanding of the issues surrounding the depictions of Indigenous peoples and environmental issues in popular culture. In the Small Group Discussions and Whole Class Discussions, students are expected to assess the quality of the depictions in the examined works of popular culture through discussion of the Five Analytical Categories (which draw from the disciplines of history, philosophy/anthropology, environmental studies, political science, and critical art theory) and established questions associated with those categories. Argument support must be based, in large part, on the information presented in the course material (including but not limited to essays in critical theory and writings from Indigenous teachings) – this ability to support their arguments should be progressive as students increase their understandings of the topic through readings in critical theory, Indigenous teachings, and other applicable interdisciplinary course material.

At the end of the course students are expected to utilize their increased understandings of popular culture, Native peoples and environmental issues into an applied creative project of their choice. These projects are designed to demonstrate students' understandings of the depictions of Native peoples and environmental issues in popular culture through the creative presentation of a project of their choice. This project integrates the insights and ideas they have gained throughout the course regarding depictions of Indigenous peoples and environmental issues in popular culture using the Five Analytical Categories and their conclusions gleaned from the analysis of relevant critical theory, Indigenous teachings and other applicable interdisciplinary material studied throughout the course.

C. Describe the target audience (level, student groups, etc.)

This course is a two-hundred level course intended for students with a variety of needs and interests. Such students include those interested in the intersection of Indigenous peoples, Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), and environmental issues as well as students interested in literature, film, music, art, popular culture, science fiction, environmental science, environmental sustainability studies, international studies, anthropology, environmental history, Indigenous history, critical art theory, issues of cultural representation in art, environmental philosophy, Indigenous environmental philosophy, fisheries and wildlife management, and the development of environmental policy.

D. Give information on other roles this course may serve (e.g. University Requirement, required for a major(s), etc.)

NAS 240 is an elective for the Native American Studies major and minor. The course would also work well as an elective for Anthropology, Art, Communication Studies, English, Environmental Studies and Sustainability, Music, Philosophy, Public Relations, and Theatre and Entertainment.

E. Provide any other information that may be relevant to the review of the course by GEC

NAS 240 was developed by a contingent instructor in 2010 and has been taught by that same contingent faculty member each time the course was offered. Many students have indicated a strong interest in the course and have requested that work be done to make NAS 240 applicable toward general graduation requirements.

**PLAN FOR LEARNING OUTCOMES**  
**CRITICAL THINKING**

*Attainment of the CRITICAL THINKING Learning Outcome is required for courses in this component. There are several dimensions to this learning outcome. Please complete the following Plan for Assessment with information regarding course assignments (type, frequency, importance) that will be used by the department to assess the attainment of students in each of the dimensions of the learning outcome. Type refers to the types of assignments used for assessment such as written work, presentations, etc. Frequency refers to the number of assignments included such as a single paper or multiple papers. Importance refers to the relative emphasis or weight of the assignment to the entire course. For each dimension, please specify the expected success rate for students completing the course that meet the proficiency level and explain your reasoning. Please refer to the Critical Thinking Rubric for more information on student performance/proficiency in this area. Note that courses are expected to meaningfully address all dimensions of the learning outcome.*

DIMENSION	WHAT IS BEING ASSESSED	PLAN FOR ASSESSMENT
<b>Evidence</b>	Assesses quality of information that may be integrated into an argument	<p><b>Task type:</b> Graded Group Analyses</p> <p><b>Description:</b> As part of developing an understanding of the depictions of Indigenous environmental values in popular culture, students will engage in graded small group discussions based on five multidisciplinary analytical categories: historical, philosophical/anthropological, environmental, representational, and political. Students will meet in assigned small groups both in and outside of class meeting times. Each student is required to turn in a small group discussion sheet with group statements in each of the five analytical categories (see sample sheet in syllabus). These small group discussions will then provide a launch board for whole class discussions assessing the works assigned for class. Students are thus able to utilize the small group discussion involved in completing the Graded Group Analyses to present their assessments of works in the course and test the viabilities of their arguments about their assessments of the works in the course. These arguments will receive further analytical testing when aired in whole class discussions.</p> <p><b>Typical grading weight:</b> 20%</p> <p><b>Expected Proficiency Rate:</b> The criterion level for proficient is at 80% as students are expected to seriously engage in scholarly discussion and thoroughly analyze the ideas depicted in the popular culture works assigned in class.</p> <p><b>Frequency:</b> Typically assigned on a weekly basis.</p> <p><b>Task type:</b> Final Project</p> <p><b>Description:</b> For their Final Project, each student is required to develop political policies that could, theoretically, be applied to “the real world” to help create an environmentally sustainable society. These political policies need to derive from the Indigenous environmental philosophies discussed in the course. Students need to assess the depictions of Indigenous environmental philosophies in the assigned works</p>

		<p>throughout the course, based on the Five Analytical Categories, to develop these policies and make an argument for why these policies would help create an environmentally sustainable society. Each student is also required to apply their political policies to a creative depiction of a theoretical society that utilizes the policies they developed to demonstrate the viability/sustainability of their political policies. Thus students need not only to assess the assigned works' depictions of Indigenous environmental values but also make an argument for the viability of those values through the development and theoretical application of their uniquely developed environmentally sustainable political policy.</p> <p><b>Typical grading weight:</b> 35%</p> <p><b>Expected Proficiency Rate:</b> The criterion level for proficient is at 75% as this course is for lowerclassmen and many students are often from disciplines other than NAS.</p> <p><b>Frequency:</b> This is a one-time assignment.</p>
<p><b>Integrate</b></p>	<p>Integrates insight and or reasoning with existing understanding to reach informed conclusions and/or understanding</p>	<p><b>Task type:</b> Final Project</p> <p><b>Description:</b> For their Final Project, each student is required to develop political policies that could, theoretically, be applied to “the real world” to help create an environmentally sustainable society. These political policies need to derive from the Indigenous environmental philosophies discussed in the course. Students need to assess the depictions of Indigenous environmental philosophies in the assigned works throughout the course, based on the Five Analytical Categories, to develop these policies and make an argument for why these policies would help create an environmentally sustainable society.</p> <p>Each student is also required to apply their political policies to a creative depiction of a theoretical society that utilizes the policies they developed to demonstrate the viability/sustainability of their political policies.</p> <p>In theoretically applying their political policies derived from multidisciplinary analyses of depictions of Indigenous environmental values in various works of popular culture, students demonstrate an informed understanding of Indigenous environmental values and their ramifications. Students are able to explore the theoretical impacts on a society that the application of various Indigenous environmental values may have. Thus students intellectually grow from analysis of depictions to active application of Indigenous environmental values and ideas to a theoretical “real world” situation using the insights they’ve gained through course discussions. The Final Project requires students present an informed and supported argument for the application of their insights from course discussions to the development of political policies based on course theme. The Final Project also requires students present logical reasoning to support their claim that integration of their political policies into a theoretical society is likely to result in shaping an environmentally sustainable society.</p>

		<p><b>Typical grading weight:</b> 35%</p> <p><b>Expected Proficiency Rate:</b> The criterion level for proficient is at 75% as this course is for lowerclassmen and many students are often from disciplines other than NAS.</p> <p><b>Frequency:</b> This is a one-time assignment.</p>
<p><b>Evaluate</b></p>	<p>Evaluates information, ideas, and activities according to established principles and guidelines</p>	<p><b>Task type:</b> Graded Group Analyses</p> <p><b>Description:</b> As part of developing an understanding of the depictions of Indigenous environmental values in popular culture, students will engage in graded small group discussions based on five multidisciplinary analytical categories, <b>each with their own set of established questions:</b> historical, philosophical / anthropological, environmental, representational, and political. Students will meet in assigned small groups both in and outside of class meeting times. Each student is required to turn in a small group discussion sheet with group statements in each of the five analytical categories (see sample sheet in syllabus). These small group discussions will then provide a launch board for whole class discussions assessing the works assigned for class.</p> <p><b>Typical grading weight:</b> 20%</p> <p><b>Expected Proficiency Rate:</b> The criterion level for proficient is at 80% as students are expected to seriously engage in scholarly discussion and thoroughly analyze the ideas depicted in the popular culture works assigned in class.</p> <p><b>Frequency:</b> Typically assigned on a weekly basis.</p>

**PLAN FOR LEARNING OUTCOMES  
INTEGRATIVE THINKING**

*Attainment of the INTEGRATIVE THINKING Learning Outcome is required for courses in this component. There are several dimensions to this learning outcome. Please complete the following Plan for Assessment with information regarding course assignments (type, frequency, importance) that will be used by the department to assess the attainment of students in each of the dimensions of the learning outcome. Type refers to the types of assignments used for assessment such as written work, presentations, etc. Frequency refers to the number of assignments included such as a single paper or multiple papers. Importance refers to the relative emphasis or weight of the assignment to the entire course. For each dimension, please specify the expected success rate for students completing the course that meet the proficiency level and explain your reasoning. Please refer to the Rubric for more information on student performance/proficiency in this learning outcome. Note that courses are expected to meaningfully address all dimensions of the learning outcome.*

DIMENSION	WHAT IS BEING ASSESSED	PLAN FOR ASSESSMENT
<p><b>Connections to Experience</b></p> <p><i>OR</i></p> <p><b>Connections to Discipline</b></p>	<p>Connects academic knowledge to experiences</p> <hr style="border-top: 1px dashed black;"/> <p>Makes connections across disciplines</p>	<p><b>Task type:</b> Graded Group Analyses</p> <p><b>Description:</b> As part of developing an understanding of the depictions of Indigenous environmental values in popular culture, students will engage in graded small group discussions based on five multidisciplinary analytical categories: historical, philosophical/anthropological, environmental, representational, and political. Students will meet in assigned small groups both in and outside of class meeting times. Each student is required to turn in a small group discussion sheet with group statements in each of the five analytical categories (see sample sheet in syllabus). These small group discussions will then provide a launch board for whole class discussions assessing the works assigned for class from a multidisciplinary perspective.</p> <p><b>Typical grading weight:</b> 20%</p> <p><b>Expected Proficiency Rate:</b> The criterion level for proficient is at 80% as students are expected to seriously engage in scholarly discussion and thoroughly analyze the ideas depicted in the popular culture works assigned in class.</p> <p><b>Frequency:</b> Typically assigned on a weekly basis.</p>
<p><b>Transfer</b></p>	<p>Adapts and applies skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation to new situations</p>	<p><b>Task type:</b> Final Project</p> <p><b>Description:</b> For their Final Project, each student is required to develop political policies that could, theoretically, be applied to “the real world” to help create an environmentally sustainable</p>

		<p>society. These political policies need to derive from the Indigenous environmental philosophies discussed in the course. Students need to assess the depictions of Indigenous environmental philosophies in the assigned works throughout the course, based on the Five Analytical Categories, to develop these policies and make an argument for why these policies would help create an environmentally sustainable society.</p> <p>Each student is also required to apply their political policies to a creative depiction of a theoretical society that utilizes the policies they developed to demonstrate the viability/sustainability of their political policies.</p> <p>In this way, students will utilize the assessments of the assigned works they have made throughout the course (based on the Five Analytical Categories and whole class discussions) and apply their understandings of Indigenous environmental values and popular culture’s depiction of these, to the creation of their Final Project. Part of the discussions throughout the course also will include writings from Indigenous cultural studies theorists and critics. Students will apply the understandings they glean from these writings to help assess the validity of the “Indigenous” environmental values and philosophies they wish to utilize in their Final Project.</p> <p><b>Typical grading weight:</b> 35%</p> <p><b>Expected Proficiency Rate:</b> The criterion level for proficient is at 75% as this course is for lowerclassmen and many students are often from disciplines other than NAS.</p> <p><b>Frequency:</b> This is a one-time assignment.</p>
<p><b>Integrated Communication</b></p>	<p>Communicates complex concepts by choosing appropriate content and form</p>	<p><b>Task type:</b> Final Project</p> <p><b>Description:</b> For their Final Project, each student is required to develop political policies that could, theoretically, be applied to “the real world” to help create an environmentally sustainable society. These political policies need to derive from the Indigenous environmental philosophies discussed in the course. Students need to assess the depictions of Indigenous environmental philosophies in the assigned works throughout the course, based on the Five Analytical Categories, to develop these policies and make an argument for why these policies would help create an environmentally sustainable society.</p> <p>Each student is also required to apply their political policies to a creative depiction of a theoretical society that utilizes the policies they developed to demonstrate the viability/sustainability of their political policies.</p> <p>Students choose the form their creative depiction of this</p>

		<p>theoretical society will take: painting, beadwork, sculpture, poetry, film short, short story, music, collage, oral story architectural model, etc.</p> <p><b>Typical grading weight:</b> 35%</p> <p><b>Expected Proficiency Rate:</b> The criterion level for proficient is at 75% as this course is for lowerclassmen and many students are often from disciplines other than NAS.</p> <p><b>Frequency:</b> This is a one-time assignment.</p>
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