

Fall 2022

WVU Native American Studies Program

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Recommended Citation

Brown, Sally; Stahlman, Joe; Brown, Bonnie M.; Toren, Beth; Sherwin, Michael; Anderson, Richard; and Zafar, Maryam Marne, "WVU Native American Studies Program" (2022). *Indigenous Appalachia*. 12. <https://researchrepository.wvu.edu/indigenous-exhibit/12>

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INDIGENOUS APPALACHIA



West Virginia University's



Native American Studies Program

WVU's Native American Studies Program has been a strong resource for developing a deeper understanding of Native history and culture on campus and in the community since the 1980s. Through this notable program, outstanding Native leaders have come to campus offering their insights and sharing their perspectives as elders, writers, scholars, artists, activists, teachers, and cultural preservationists. Native teachers from some of the hundreds of Native Nations have offered courses on campus, visited our classrooms as guest lecturers, and dialoged with students, faculty and community members.

As part of their regular coursework, students learn from films, artwork, scholarship, music, and literature produced by Native people and read Native news publications and tribal websites. Through classes and other opportunities facilitated by our program's faculty, students have traveled to visit and study in diverse indigenous communities such as the Navajo Nation, the Eastern Band of Cherokee, the Native Village of Tuntutuliak, Alaska, the Yankton Sioux Reservation, Pine Ridge (Oglala Sioux) Reservation, Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, Pueblo of Acoma, the San Carlos Apache Reservation, and Native Hawaiian communities on the island of Kaua'i. We have been honored with classroom presentations by lecturers from diverse tribal backgrounds, including: Blood Tribe, Wiyot, Mandan, Hidatsa, Choctaw, Apache, Lakota, Eastern Band of Cherokee, Cheyenne, Monacan, Shawnee, Seneca, Seneca-Cayuga, Onondaga, Wampanoag, Pascua Yaqui, Navajo, Hopi, Onocida, Ojibwe, Lumbee, Salish, Isleta Pueblo, Yup'ik, Chickasaw, Luiseno Band of Mission Indians, Delaware, Mohawk, Huron, Tuscarora, Modoc, Mohegan, Muscogee, Chippewa, Comanche, Inuk, Alutiiq, Pawnee, Yuchi, and so on.

In addition, faculty and students attend and participate in Native American cultural events in the region and beyond, enriching their cultural awareness and appreciation. NAS activities allow students to learn about and visit important nearby places such as the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, Grave Creek Mound Archaeological Complex in Moundsville, West Virginia, the Meadowcroft Rockshelter near Avella, Pennsylvania, dating back 16,000+ years, the Alcoa Foundation Hall of American Indians at Pittsburgh's Carnegie Museum of Natural History, Ohio's Great Serpent Mound, the Newark, Ohio Earthworks complex, and Fort Necessity National Battlefield, among others.

Our program has been represented at such important gatherings as the annual convention of the National Congress of American Indians, the American Indian Studies Consortium, the conferences of the American Indian Studies Association, the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association Conference, and the Native American Literature Symposium, USET-United South and Eastern Tribes meetings, as well as the 2004 grand opening ceremonies for the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian.

Text courtesy Bonnie M. Brown, NAS Program Coordinator



Top to Bottom:
Native American Studies Logo, designed by the late WVU Art Professor Emeritus Urban Couch. The four points of the medicine wheel represent the cardinal directions and the four great powers of the wheel.
Joy Harjo, 23rd U.S. Poet Laureate and Native American Studies Program Spring 2022 Guest of Honor, met with students and faculty and gave a public reading on April 5th. Photo courtesy of Joy Harjo, per Blue Flower Arts.
Marker at WVU Peace Tree, downtown campus: "Planted September 12, 1992 to commemorate the University's commitment to the Rediscovery of America's Indian Heritage" (an alternative to observing the Columbus Quincentenary).
Native American Studies Students with 2016 Elder-in-Residence, Ada Deer (Menominee), following her public lecture, "From Reservation Cabin to the Corridors of Power: Changing Our World from Within".



CLICK here to read more about WVU's Native American Studies program:

