



Washington State University
American Indian Studies

- Home
- Contact Us
- Tribal Liaison Office
- Native Student Center
- Native Grad Student Center
- Outreach & Recruitment
- Plateau Center
- Leadership Program
- Newsletter
- Events Calendar
- Resources

American Indian Studies Goes Digital

By Faith Price

Anyone wanting to earn a certificate in American Indian Studies, can now do so from the comfort of their own home. As of spring semester 2015, the WSU American Indian Studies certificate is completely online.

The online certificate is designed to allow individuals to increase their knowledge of Native peoples, without having to be on campus or in a degree program. The certificate is geared toward non-degree seeking students, such as working professionals.

"This is where the certificate really has potential," said Michael Holloman, a Colville tribal member and coordinator of WSU's American Indian Studies.

The idea for offering American Indian Studies coursework online was hatched several years back, said coordinator Michael Holloman. He and then-director of the WSU Museum of Anthropology, Mary Collins (now retired), had been asked to do a presentation for Avista Utilities on issues important for those working with tribal agencies.

"Afterward, people came up and said, 'Boy, I wish this was available in a formal course because this has been so helpful,'" said Holloman. "On our way back we talked about how an online degree could really be beneficial."

They started working with WSU's Global Campus, department chairs, and professors to get a couple classes online. After the success of those initial courses, with much collaboration, American Indian Studies has grown to offer students a choice of nine online courses. To earn the certificate, students must complete three core courses and three elective courses.

Taking classes online provides students a "fluid format," says coordinator Michael Holloman, noting, "A lot of people are working so maybe they'll do the reading in the evening and discussion boards and such on the weekend."

In addition to their flexibility, online courses can offer a very different learning experience than the traditional classroom.

"I can literally take an image of say, an elk tooth dress, and have questions pop up when they move their mouse over a certain part," says Holloman who teaches Fine Arts 301 'Arts of Native North America.' "There are tools that can be used that are very different than pen and paper, so I'm very excited about that. It's a different interaction."

For more info, please visit the [American Indian Studies page](#).



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