

# ETHN 0054 - AMERICAN INDIAN LANGUAGES

## Catalog Description

Hours: 54 lecture

Description: Survey of American Indian languages including linguistic prehistory, languages at first European contact, subsequent language loss, current efforts at language and cultural revitalization. Investigation of various subjects in contemporary and historical Native American Language Studies. (CSU, UC)

## Course Student Learning Outcomes

- CSLO #1: Analyze and articulate concepts such as race and racism, racialization, ethnicity, equity, ethno-centrism, eurocentrism, white supremacy, self determination, liberation, decolonization, imperialism, and anti-racism as analyzed in Native American Studies.
- CSLO #2: Identify the social, economic, political and cultural factors that have influenced and shaped the Native American experience.
- CSLO #3: Apply theory and knowledge produce by Native American Communities to describe critical events, histories, cultures, intellectual traditions, contributions, lived experiences and social struggles of those groups with a particular emphasis on agency, group affirmation, and language revitalization efforts.
- CSLO #4: Describe and actively engage with anti-racist and anti-colonial issues and the practices and movements in Native American communities as it pertains to cultural and linguistic justice.

## Effective Term

Fall 2026

## Course Type

Credit - Degree-applicable

## Contact Hours

54

## Outside of Class Hours

108

## Total Student Learning Hours

162

## Course Objectives

1. Identify and explain the diversity of cultures and languages in the Americas prior to colonization.
2. Create self-directed language learning techniques, goal setting and research strategies for learning American Indian Languages.
3. Explain language learning as part of cultural revitalization for American Indian communities.
4. Analyze and articulate concepts from linguistics to develop frameworks for language learning.

5. Apply theory and knowledge produced by tribal communities on language maintenance, revitalization, and reclamation efforts throughout the Americas.

6. Understand the policies and acts of colonization and imperialism that led to the destruction of American Indian languages.

7. Identify and understand California Indian tribes and language families using place based learning concepts.

## General Education Information

- Approved College Associate Degree GE Applicability
  - AA/AS - Social and Behavioral Sciences
  - AA/AS - Ethnic Studies
- CSU GE Applicability (Recommended-requires CSU approval)
- Cal-GETC Applicability (Recommended - Requires External Approval)
  - Cal-GETC 3B - Humanities
  - Cal-GETC 4 - Social and Behavioral Sciences
- IGETC Applicability (Recommended-requires CSU/UC approval)

## Articulation Information

- CSU Transferable
- UC Transferable

## Methods of Evaluation

- Classroom Discussions
  - Example: Students will watch a video on a Tribe that is actively using and/or revitalizing their language. Students will work with partners to reflect on the video and then report back to the class on what they found useful for their own journey of language learning and why.
- Objective Examinations
  - Example: Students will take weekly vocabulary exams - English to American Indian language and vice versa. Students will prepare their own exam to be taken based on the Instructor's assigned semantic domain (kinship, family, plants, animals, etc)
- Skill Demonstrations
  - Example: Students will do a monologue in their chosen language or a dialogue with another person who has worked on the same language. 3 minutes per monologue and 6 minutes per dialogue.

## Repeatable

No

## Methods of Instruction

- Lecture/Discussion
- Distance Learning

Lecture:

1. Instructor will provide a lecture on Boarding Schools and the other Federal Indian policies that made American Indian languages illegal and/or forbidden in the United States. Students will take notes during this lecture and then work with a partner to discuss the impacts of the legislation and importance of revitalizing languages. Students will report back to the whole class. Instructor will open up for questions, concerns, and critiques.
2. Instructor will lead activities on language learning and development. For example, the instructor will choose a language and demonstrate a

dialogue (using props or graphics) between two characters. Students will watch this dialogue and then work with a partner to create their own dialogue or work with props (dolls/stuffed animals) to practice and present this dialogue in the class.

#### Distance Learning

1. Instructor will post a recorded lecture on how languages reflect worldviews - For example, the Esselen word for "to peak" is the same as the word for "to pray." Instructor will explain how that reflects the importance of choosing words wisely in Esselen culture. Students will watch the lecture and then in a discussion board, share something similar from the language that they are studying

## Typical Out of Class Assignments Reading Assignments

Students will read out of the assigned textbook and prepare an outline of the material that they read for discussion in class and/or discussion board.

## Writing, Problem Solving or Performance

Students will maintain a journal/notebook for the course. This will include a written record of their work. This can include notes on readings and discussions, word lists, dialogues, bibliography, class presentation, poetry, as well as personal observations. Their journal will be examined mid-point in the quarter and in the last week of class. They should also bring their journal to office hour meetings.

## Other (Term projects, research papers, portfolios, etc.)

Students will need to research their chosen language and develop an annotated bibliography of materials for the language they are learning. Their list (minimum 7 sources) may include websites, books, tapes, CDs, or journal articles.

## Required Materials

- How to Keep Your Language Alive
  - Author: Leeanne Hinton with Matt Vera and Nancy Steele
  - Publisher: Heyday Press
  - Publication Date: May 1, 2002
  - Text Edition:
  - Classic Textbook?: Yes
  - OER Link:
  - OER:
- Bringing our Languages Home: Language Revitalization for Families
  - Author: Leanne Hinton
  - Publisher: Heyday
  - Publication Date: March 1, 2013
  - Text Edition:
  - Classic Textbook?:
  - OER Link:
  - OER:
- Indigenous Language Revitalization: From Boarding Schools and Code Talkers to Immersion Learning
  - Author: Katrina M. Phillips
  - Publisher: Lerner Publications
- Publication Date: January 1, 2025
- Text Edition:
- Classic Textbook?:
- OER Link:
- OER:
- The Language Warrior's Manifesto: How to Keep Our Languages Alive No Matter the Odds
  - Author: Anton Treuer
  - Publisher: Minnesota Historical Press
  - Publication Date: 2020
  - Text Edition:
  - Classic Textbook?:
  - OER Link:
  - OER:

## Other materials and-or supplies required of students that contribute to the cost of the course.

Students will need to access language dictionaries or resources for the language that they choose to learn. This can be hard copy books and/or online content. Some languages have apps that can be downloaded.