

Raising Indigenous Voices in Academia and Society

Speakers' Abstracts

Savage Bear

Walls to Bridges: Creating a Pipeline from Prison to Post-Secondary

Indigenous Peoples are being incarcerated faster now than at any time in history, and Indigenous Peoples are overrepresented in every federal prison and provincial jail in this country. Within the Prairie provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba the Indigenous populations range between a horrifying 60-90% of the overall prison population. Considering Indigenous Peoples only represent 4.5% of the entire population of Canada, these numbers are unacceptable. Incarcerated Indigenous women often say that they might not be missing or murdered, but they are the forgotten ones. Raising Indigenous voices includes these forgotten Indigenous voices. Working with Walls to Bridges (a program bringing post-secondary education to incarcerated people) has demonstrated how one post-secondary education class reduces the recidivism rates drastically and allow Indigenous voices to rise. Through classes like 'Indigenous Women, Life-Writing and Autobiography', Indigenous women are empowering themselves and lifting their voices.

Damian Chase-Begay


American Indian traditional ceremonial practices as an integrative approach to physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual healing

American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) communities grapple with the effects of historical and intergenerational traumas, including observed high rates of disease burden, mental illness, and substance abuse. Traditionally, AIAN communities held ecological knowledge that supported wellness through medicines and ceremonies. Beginning around 1883, laws were established outlawing traditional ceremonial practices (TCPs) under threat of imprisonment. Many of these laws remained in effect until the passage of the American Indian Freedom of Religion Act (1978). Today, AIAN communities are revitalizing TCPs as an integrative approach to physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health. The holistic nature of TCPs allows for broad incorporation into medical, dental, and behavioral health services. However, healthcare administrators struggle to fund these interventions, as they are largely considered without an evidence base despite millennia of practice-based evidence. As AIAN community-informed and community-led gains momentum, data are becoming more widely available to support integration of TCPs into Western therapeutic approaches. Emerging studies draw on qualitative and quantitative methods, up to and including the gold standard of randomized control trials, to evaluate the effectiveness of TCPs.

Annie Belcourt

Matriarchal storytelling: Cultural educational practices in decolonized spaces

Dr. Belcourt (Otter Woman) is an American Indian Professor in the College of Health at the University of Montana's School of Public and Community Health Sciences Departments and Chair of the Native American Studies Department (enrolled tribal member of the Three Affiliated Tribes, Mandan, Hidatsa, Blackfeet, and Chippewa descent). She completed her doctoral and professional studies in at an APA accredited program in clinical psychology with advanced postdoctoral science training completed at the Centers for American Indian and Alaska Native Health. She has worked clinically with diverse populations focusing on Indigenous populations specializing in posttraumatic stress reactions and multiple psychiatric conditions. Her research and clinical priorities include mental health disparities, posttraumatic stress reactions, risk, resiliency, psychiatric disorder, ethics, and environmental public health within the cultural context of American Indian community.



Raising Indigenous Voices in Academia and Society Speakers' Abstracts

Rachelle Māēyawekēsekōkiw Besaw

Issues in Culture Heritage Studies and Anthropology: Reflecting on the Challenges Posed by the 'Inconvenient Indian'

As a descendant member of the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, raised in Phoenix, Arizona, I was culturally and geographically displaced from my Tribe while growing up. In this article, I explore the marginal space that I inhabit now as an adult and as a linguistic anthropologist. In this article, I describe my ambivalence at being indebted to the cruel and bloody history of anthropological and linguistic research perpetrated upon Indigenous nations throughout the last three hundred years. I analyze the moral and ethical implications of past social scientists' works, as well as how I navigate my journey through an academic system built on the oppression and subjugation of my people

Saya Bobick,

Using Indigeneity in Diversifying our Future within STEM

Incorporating Indigenous knowledge in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education in higher learning should be encouraged. Effective approaches need developed to improve diverse representation in the educators and practitioners in these fields. Indigenous methods come from a perspective of treating the whole person and that person as part of the community. Colonization and interference have challenged the respect and integration of traditional ways of knowing with western ideals. This has also influenced the lack of inclusiveness and representation in these professions. Higher education often privileges western or Eurocentric methods for acquiring knowledge. These epistemologies need challenged through exploration and reflection in current accepted practices in pharmacy, forensics and investigative sciences, and engineering, for example. We need to question this praxis and seek to leverage privilege that only leaves the work of change to those disenfranchised. Indigeneity can be integrated into STEM education to encourage participation from those that have be traditionally marginalized. It is imperative that these disciplines prioritize a more interdisciplinary approach and involvement for our future.

Joshua Brown

Lesser-known history and lived experiences of Salish people's foodways, dietary changes, and dietary change drivers and the possibilities of assisting contemporary Salish with re-Indigenizing their present food systems

Scholarship of Salish foodways, dietary changes, and related dietary change drivers are limited. Salish precontact and current dietary patterns research often lack nuance, perpetuating mischaracterization of complexity and agency. Salish peoples were not simple hunters and gatherers, solely benefiting from bountiful bioregions. They cultivated the countryside, managed resources, altered landscapes, and improved food availability and quality. Salish peoples' diets in the past were vast and diverse, including numerous plants, animals, and fungi. My talk draws from recent research within Salish communities, focusing on lesser-known Salish history and lived experiences, detailing foodways, dietary changes, and patterns, highlighting the prospects of findings to assist contemporary Salish communities with re-Indigenizing their food systems. It also features structural violence impacting dietary changes and patterns and the benefits of identifying, describing, and amplifying the consciousness of historical and present-day structural violence to assist with healing, improving health, and implementing positive changes to bolster environmental justice.



Raising Indigenous Voices in Academia and Society Speakers' Abstracts

Gregory R. Campbell

Forty Years of Starvation: The Politics of Water, Myth of Self-Sufficiency, and the Emergence of Sustained Ill-Health Among the Akimel O'odham, 1871-1910.

The Akimel O'odham (Pima) have a long history of encounters with European settler societies, but came under direct U.S. administrative control in the early 1850s. Throughout societal interactions with Spanish and Mexican colonial regimes, the Pima were able to successfully adapt to the changing circumstances, but the incorporation into the United States altered Akimel O'odham society as settlers actively appropriated land and resources, their most valuable resource, water from the upper Gila River. Once lauded by government officials as the most self-sufficient indigenous society in the Southwest, the Akimel O'odham subsistence economy eroded to near collapse. Contemporary elders refer to this era as “forty years of starvation,” an era of occasional starvation, sustained impoverishment, and the rise of ill-health, as government authorities continued to insist on self-sufficiency

CarolAnn Daniel

Pedagogy as decolonial praxis

My paper attempts to identify the conditions that support the emergence of a classroom climate in which analytic and affective experiences can facilitate shifts in consciousness leading to a decolonial attitude. A decolonial attitude signifies a turn toward the material restoration of the human and a call to action to create more just and equitable systems. Decolonial and indigenous pedagogies and principles offer a framework that can guide exploration of the affective dimensions of racial practices and beliefs. These pedagogies aim to cultivate a decolonial attitude by creating space for critical reflection and dialogue on colonial legacies and by offering opportunities to transgress our relationship to self and others. Students are guided in sharing their knowledge of social realities and together actively struggle to transform them using shared affects as resources. They are also supported in the development of critical self and social consciousness, both of which are needed to understand how coloniality becomes internalized and creates both psychic and social violence. In so doing decolonial pedagogies can become a praxis for rebuilding ourselves and our relationship to the world.

Rylan Higgins

Indigenous Rights Versus Settler Fantasy in Maritime Canada

For what feels like the umpteenth time in only a few years, in early June of 2024, the treaty rights of Indigenous fishers in Nova Scotia were violated. This incident and others like it reveal an increasingly troublingly situation wherein settlers strongly believe Indigenous people must operate according to settler conceived rules. Yet these rules are based largely on fantasy. This talk will open with a summary of how fishing for lobster in Nova Scotia is representative of broader and problematic tensions in settler-Indigenous relations. It will then invite listeners to engage in dialogue about a number of key questions, including but not limited to the following: Can reconciliation be achieved without reparations? If not, why is the latter so commonly ignored? What does the broader landscape look like regarding resource battles across Turtle Island? What lessons can we learn from examples where some resolution has been achieved? What can settlers who want to uphold Indigenous rights do to provide support for them? Where is academia in all of this?



Raising Indigenous Voices in Academia and Society Speakers' Abstracts

Kevin Inglesby


Linguistic Revitalization as a Chronotopic Paradigm

Linguistic revitalization efforts are contextual processes that require high levels of community engagement, cultural relevance, and practical embodiment. This study examines specific attributes that contribute to environments that effectively support revitalization. Drawing from Bakhtin's (1937) concept of chronotope, or the relationship between personhood, language and time-space invocation, I analyze elements that should be maintained for best practices during the United Nations Decade of Indigenous Languages. Discourse around the topic of linguistic revitalization is just as important as methods applied therein. Thus, applying sociolinguistic concepts to linguistic revitalization methods may provide useful recommendations for approaches to revitalization policy. I survey the relationship between chronotopic paradigms initiated through the UN, how the Sand Hill Band of Lenape and Cherokee Indians and the Federation of Aboriginal Nations of the Americas engage the UN's paradigm, and linguistic revitalization methods such as Accelerated Second Language Acquisition (ASLA). To maintain a successful environment for language reclamation, communities must act in solidarity and proceed through collaborative efforts. I suggest that linguistic revitalization is a chronotopic paradigm requiring high levels of engagement throughout the process of revitalization.

Micheal Kayne

Linguistic American Medicine and Innovation Summit

The Native American Medicine and Innovation Summit (NAMIS) is a groundbreaking event that brings together traditional indigenous knowledge and modern scientific advancements to expand holistic health. This summit serves as a platform for Native American healers, researchers, and innovators to share their wisdom and concerns with the next generation and collaborate on sustainable health solutions. The need for NAMIS arises from: the recognition that traditional Native American medicine is expansive, it offers invaluable insights into holistic health practices that have been honed over centuries, and that our current medical community omits spiritual healing. By integrating these practices with contemporary scientific research and medicine, we can address health disparities in Native communities arising from severe distrust of mainstream medicinal practices. The summit is designed to honor indigenous knowledge, ensuring it is passed down to future generations while being respected, validated, and appreciated in the broader scientific community producing a healthier, more inclusive world.



Raising Indigenous Voices in Academia and Society Speakers' Abstracts

David G. Lewis

Reconstructing Traditional Wetlands in the Willamette Valley

There are many questions about what has happened to the Willamette Valley, the traditional landscape where my people, the Kalapuyans, have lived for more than 16,000 years. Research reveals that they lived in a vast landscape of wetlands, the prairies expanding into shallow swales during any season. The wetlands of the valley give many clues as to what the original Kalapuyan culture was like, they had to collect foods, hunt, fish, dig roots, and set fall prairie fires despite the great amount of seasonal moisture. Generations of settlers have changed the land, drained off the water, and engineered the environment to be an arid agricultural expanse. The colonization of the valley itself is a significant occurrence and something we need to understand more completely as we work towards restoration of the people, tribes, lifeways and our lands. This talk will discuss how through the use of ethnographic reports, ethnological fieldwork, oral histories, settler accounts, and tribal intellectual knowledge the original environment of the valley is now being reconstructed to figure out what was the character of the land the Kalapuyan peoples lived within.

Patrick Lozar


Historicizing UNDRIP "Article 36" in Northwestern North America

Indigenous nations in northern North America have contended with the impositions of colonial borders for centuries. In the Pacific Northwest, the border that divided Canada and the United States also divided the communities and lands of multiple Indigenous nations. How have these Indigenous peoples ignored, undermined, resisted, or adjusted to the US-Canadian border's presence in their lives since 1846? Article 36 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples holds that nation-states must support the rights and efforts of bifurcated Indigenous nations to restore and develop their political, social, and cultural ties across international borders. What can or does this part of the Declaration look like in the Northwest and what are its historical roots in this region?

Delaney McNuity

The Right to Destroy Cultural Property and NAGPRA

I explore the right to destroy cultural property as an aspect of Native American cultural sovereignty embedded in the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). I argue that NAGPRA implicitly acknowledges Native Americans' well-established right to destroy property. Concerns arise, however, when such property is culturally or historically significant. I draw three conclusions on the destruction and preservation of cultural property by analyzing domestic and international perspectives. First, the Western-centric ethos of preservation overlooks the expressive and cathartic benefits of destruction. Second, acts of destruction, such as burial and intentional omission, assert Native Americans' control over their cultural property. Lastly, recognizing the right to destroy, particularly under NAGPRA, is an extreme exercise of the property rights of use, exclusion, and alienation. This understanding is crucial for Native Nations to leverage in international repatriation efforts. I challenge conventional narratives surrounding cultural property rights, urging a reevaluation of preservation-centric approaches to acknowledge and respect Native American agency and their right to destroy. This exploration contributes to the discourse on cultural sovereignty, repatriation efforts, and supporting Indigenous peoples.



Raising Indigenous Voices in Academia and Society

Speakers' Abstracts

Henry Norwood

Observations on ASLA as a method for language acquisition and instruction

Two of the biggest differences between ASLA and conventional education methods are the speed and comfortability in which target language usage is reached. This was most recently demonstrated with my teaching Dr. Greymorning to speak German. In less than ten hours of instruction, Dr. Greymorning is able to play with the language, similarly to how children learn language. This is shown by adding adjectives to describe images, describing what's not in images, incorporating other images to tell a story, and, as Dr. Greymorning describes, "getting off of the wall." This same early confidence in the language occurred between classmates and I in Dr. Greymorning's Arapaho language class. Other classmates and I were quickly able to describe our surroundings in a grammatically limited, yet understandable way; For example, instead of saying "I cut a tree down with a chainsaw," we were able to play with the language and say "I hold a metal wood eater, it eats the big stick." In my presentation, I will talk about my observations as a student learning and as a teacher through ASLA

Annapurna Devi Pandey

Unable to Attend

The Dangaria Kondh Women's Textile Reflects Their Leadership And Entrepreneurship

The Dangaria textile depicts the tradition and identity of the people (Dangaria Kondhs), who live on the Niyamagiri mountain. Women prominently wear the Dangaria shawl in all their religious rituals. The myths and legends woven into the textiles narrate the intrinsic relationship between the people and the Niyamagiri hills as their ancestors. The Dangarias, who call themselves the children of Niyam Raja (King), look at it as the creator, protector, and nurturer, and follow his rules' niyam Ku niyam' for their wellbeing. Women play a significant role in making this textile, by spinning, weaving, warping, and dyeing. Their role needs to be recognized for their contribution to the heirloom tradition. Unfortunately, this textile is replaced by the cheap synthetic white and red cloth sold by outside merchants in their haats (local market). In this paper, I will explain the conflicting role of the state's encroachment upon indigenous resources needed to get a GI tag for their traditional weave. I will also discuss Dangaria Kondh women's leadership as entrepreneurs in reviving their traditional skills in the face of the extraction economy encroaching on their land, rivers, and mountains.

Wisam Samarah

Gaza Genocide and a New economic Reality

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate how Israel being a colonial power is seeking to expand its control of natural resources in Gaza. In order to do that, Israel is willing to commit genocide in order to wipe out the indigenous people of the land and benefit from the acquisition of new resources. We will argue that the driving force behind the genocide that Israel is committing is to improve its economic resource base. It has no problems in dehumanizing its oppressed people of the land in order to get rid of them. The Hamas attack on October 7th of 2023, was a desperate reaction to the brutal economic and military siege that Israel had conducted for years in order to strip Gaza of any freedom and increase poverty. Hama was hoping to free its people and end the brutal Israeli occupation, unfortunately, approximately four percent of the population of Gaza had vanished. This is a clear indication of the need to create an independent Palestinian state that can meet the aspiration of its citizens.