

Five Critical Orientations

To Support Indigenous Studies Curriculum

Leilani Sabzalian (leilanis@uoregon.edu) and Alison Schmitke (schmitke@uoregon.edu)

PLACE

- ***You are always on Indigenous lands***
- Recognize Indigenous peoples and homelands of the place where you teach
- Include federally recognized tribal nations, unrecognized nations, traditional homelands, and urban Indigenous communities
- Seek out Native place names when possible



PRESENCE and the PRESENT

- ***Indigenous people are still here***
- Focus on Indigenous presence to challenge the myths and narratives of “progress” which imply Native people have disappeared
- Focus on the diversity of Native America today to disrupt generic ‘Indian’ stereotypes
- Focus on contemporary issues as a legacy of colonial histories



PERSPECTIVES

- ***Indigenous perspectives can challenge Eurocentric curriculum***
- Curriculum should always include multiple perspectives including Indigenous perspectives
- Utilize Indigenous perspectives, not just as a source for “Indigenous issues,” but as a source for other curricular topics (e.g., Winona LaDuke’s perspective on environmental or political issues)

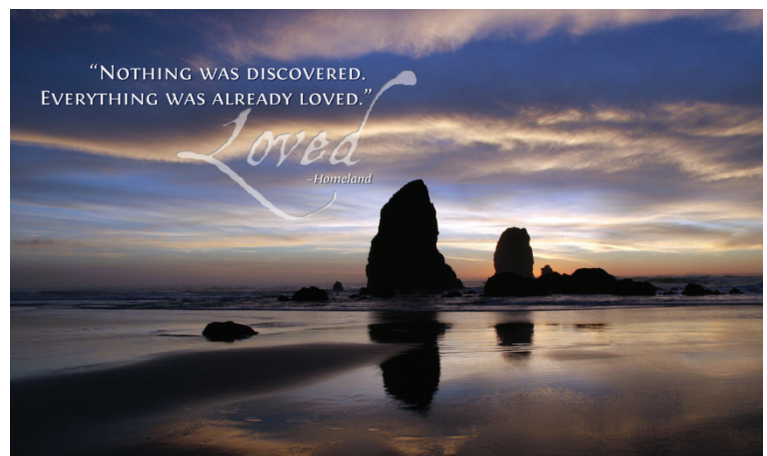


Figure 1: Karenne Wood, poet and citizen of the Tribal Council of the Monacan Indian Nation

POLITICS AND NATIONHOOD

- **“Indigenous Peoples are nations, not minorities” (Wilkins & Stark, 2010)**
- Native people have protected “civil rights,” but also *prior* “treaty rights”
- Focus on the *political status and rights of Native nations* and the *political rights of Native citizens* affirmed in the treaties, the US Constitution, Congressional legislation, and Supreme Court decisions



POWER

- **Challenge power dynamics within curricula**
- Beyond including Native perspectives, challenge colonial words and metaphors in curriculum (i.e., land was “free” or a “prize” to be won or settlers brought “change”)
- Focus also on collective Indigenous power and agency (Tuck, 2009; Vizenor, 2008) to recognize Indigenous creativity, agency, and possibilities and avoid framing Native peoples solely as victims of oppression



References:

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- Wood, K. (nd). Homeland. National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers. Retrieved from http://www.nathpo.org/Many_Nations/mn_fiction.html

Further readings:

- Chaat-Smith, P. (2009). *Everything You Know about Indians Is Wrong*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Dunbar-Ortiz, R. (2015). *An Indigenous peoples' history of the united states*. Boston, MA: Beacon.
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- National Museum of the American Indian. (2007). *Do all Indians live in tipis: Questions and answers from the National Museum of the American Indian*. New York, NY: Collins, in association with the National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution.