NAISI is proud to be the recipient of a $750,000 Andrew W. Mellon Foundation grant to support the development of an undergraduate concentration in Native American and Indigenous Studies. In addition, the grant will also help to support further programming and community outreach, including the hosting of a Tribal Community Member in Residence.

Cover photo, from left to right: Laney Knudson ’22, Kelly O’Brien ’22, Raelee Fourkiller ’22.
The Native American and Indigenous Studies Initiative (NAISI) is an interdisciplinary initiative of faculty and students interested in teaching and research that explores, and increases the understanding of, the cultural traditions and political experiences of Indigenous Peoples (especially in the Western Hemisphere) through historical and contemporary lenses.

NAISI currently includes 29 faculty members and fellows in the departments of American Studies, English, History, Anthropology, Religion, Theatre Arts and Performance Studies, and Music, as well as the Haffenreffer Museum. Courses offered by NAISI affiliated faculty explore American Indian historic and contemporary lifeways; the history of contact between European and Native peoples; environmental health and research in Native communities; historic and contemporary peoples of Central and South America; indigenous knowledge and the sciences; and Native American religion, literature, and media.

What is NAISI?

Meet Our Steering Committee

Joseph Meisel
Joukowsky Family University Librarian, Adjunct Associate Professor of History

Geri Augusto
Senior Fellow in International and Public Affairs and Director of Undergraduate Development Studies, Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs

Paja Faudree
Associate Professor of Anthropology

A Sample of Recent NAIS Courses

Indigenous Resurgence: Roots, Reclamations, and Relations

Beginning & Intermediate Nahuatl

History and Resistance in Representations of Native Peoples

Indigenous Art, Issues, and Concepts

Vertical Civilization: South American Archaeology from Monte Verde to the Inkas

Whose Land? Tracing History and Memory in the Native Northeast

Religion Gone Wild: Spirituality and the Environment

Native American Language Loss, Revitalization, and Resiliency

Development's Visual Imaginaries: Still and Moving Images That Shaped the Field