

**University of North Carolina, Pembroke**  
**Office of Academic Affairs**  
**Teaching & Learning Center**

Focus of Shared Interest Group:

A Shared Interest Group is a faculty, staff, and student learning community focused on a question, theme, or approach in teaching and learning that matters to its members. SIGs shall be established on the basis of demonstrated interest, in consultation with the Teaching & Learning Center, to (1) identify the issue, problem, or approach on which it wishes to focus and (2) determine group expectations and outcomes. Upon establishment of the group, members of the SIG will commit themselves to the success of the group until the completion of the expectations and outcomes determined at its charter. As funding allows, the TLC will support SIGs with refreshments, resources, stipends, and/or travel funds. Once the group has achieved its expectations and outcomes, it will report on its accomplishments to the director of the Teaching & Learning Center.

SIGs may undertake the following activities:

- Reviewing and discussing current scholarship relevant to the SIG's focus,
- Sharing and reflecting on classroom experiences and successes,
- Team-teaching or visiting SIG members' classrooms,
- Creating or redesigning classes or curricula by incorporating high-impact teaching practices,
- Establishing and sharing best practices,
- Exploring policies or programs to improve teaching and learning,
- Traveling to conferences or professional development institutes, and/or
- Conducting and publishing research,
- Leading workshops or webinars that promote professional and/or scholarly development,
- Undertaking other activities as desired.

According to Napier and Gershenfeld (2001), successful group processes entail four critical components: "a clear understanding of the communication process; a clear mission, with goals and objectives; a strategy for accomplishing the group's work; and group membership and group decision-making" (qtd. Gini Doolittle, Maria Sudeck, and Peter Rattigan, "Creating Professional Learning Communities: The Work of Professional Development Schools," *Theory into Practice*, vol. 47, 2008, pp. 303-310).

Convener(s)/Leader(s): Dr. Jamie Myers Mize, History and American Indian Studies; Dr. Zachary Laminack, English, Theatre, and Foreign Languages and American Indian Studies

Scholarly Biography(ies) of Convener(s)/Leader(s):

Jamie Myers Mize is an assistant professor of history and American Indian Studies. Mize specializes in the history of American Indians of the Southeastern United States. She received

her BA in history from Truett-McConnell University, her MA from the University of North Georgia, and her PhD degree from the University of North Carolina-Greensboro. Her research focuses on Cherokee masculinity and how gender expectations informed Cherokee men's political decisions during an intense period of American colonialism in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries.

Zachary Laminack is an assistant professor of English and American Indian Studies. Laminack specializes in twentieth- and twenty-first-century literatures of Native peoples living within the contemporary U.S. He received his BA and MA in English from Western Carolina University and his PhD in English from the University of North Carolina-Greensboro. His research focuses on representations of settler masculinity in twentieth-century and contemporary Native-authored fiction.

Sponsors and Partners: UNCP Teaching and Learning Center (TLC), UNCP Native American Students Organization (NASO)

Description of Shared Interest Group: This special interest group aims to engage students in focused, guided discussions of critical perspectives in contemporary Indigenous studies in an effort to enrich students' understandings of the conversations, issues, and arguments that have and continue to shape the field.

Target Membership:

Initially we will target members of NASO but hope to eventually include any students with an interest in American Indian Studies.

Expectations for Interaction, Collaboration, and Action:

1. We are honest with each other, as it is as dishonest to "put up" with something we do not agree with as it is to speak untruthfully. In all interactions, we temper honesty with tact and empathy.
2. In order to manage conflicts concerning the group's work and activity, we will seek the counsel of each other, including our convener/leader, our sponsors and partners, and the TLC liaison.
3. We accept collective responsibility for the decisions of the group made in alignment with our expectations for collaboration and action, and we work together to advance these decisions collectively.
4. We maintain the confidentiality of all group discussions, refraining from articulating personal reservations or impressions of others that might be construed as gossip or sniping.
5. In discussion, we listen actively and attentively, ask for clarification when we are confused, challenge and critique ideas, not one another, and respectful ways; support our opinions with shared evidence; take responsibility for the quality of the discussion, building on one another's comments; work toward shared understanding; speak from our own experiences, without generalizing; and acknowledge immediately any concerns we feel.

6. We believe that every voice deserves to be heard, even if we do not initially agree with the point of view being expressed, and we value others' contributions to the group.
7. We each take on a fair share of the group's work, collectively determining our division of labor, and we believe that experts and novices alike can fulfill the tasks we wish to achieve.
8. We will share in the work of keeping good records and hold ourselves responsible to them, referring to them in the course of our work and accessing them using our Google site.
9. We adhere to group deadlines, for the principle, "You can let yourself down, but it's not OK to let the group down" underpins successful teamwork.
10. We accept that sometimes teamwork means that we will need to make personal needs and wishes subordinate to the goal of the group, and we affirm each other by acknowledging when we subordinate personal needs and wishes for the good of the whole.
11. We value creativity and off-the-wall ideas, and we seek a fair balance between progress and creativity.
12. We value and encourage each other even when—and because—the political landscape and special interests threaten to unglue us.
13. We commit ourselves to systematic working patterns in the interest of effective and productive group performance.
14. We consider ourselves a living body, and we reflect on our successes and shortcomings regularly so as to adjust for and enable greater accomplishment.

#### Goals and Objectives:

1. To introduce students to touchstone texts in scholarly conversations about Indigenous studies;
2. To engage students in thoughtful discussions of critical issues and perspectives in contemporary Indigenous studies;
3. To enrich or complement students' understandings of critical issues and perspectives gained through experience in other AIS/affiliate courses;
4. To create space and opportunity for reflection on connections between critical arguments in Indigenous studies and students' knowledge and lived experiences;

#### Timeline:

We will read and discuss one book during the academic year. The schedule for our first book, Vine Deloria Jr.'s *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* (1969) is as follows:

August – distribute books and reading schedule

September – discuss the Preface & Chapter 1

October – discuss Chapters 2 & 3

November – discuss Chapters 4 & 5

January – discuss Chapters 6 & 7

February – discuss Chapters 8 & 9

March – discuss Chapters 10 & 11

April – recap and discuss major themes present throughout the work

Communication Process:

Group discussions will be held as talking circles. The talking circle is a common strategy in indigenous pedagogies, and the methods can be traced back to the format of open discussion present in tribal councils.

“The purpose of the less formal talking circle, used as part of classroom instruction, is to create a safe environment in which students can share their point of view with others. In a Talking Circle, each one is equal and each one belongs. Participants in a Talking Circle learn to listen and respect the views of others. The intention is to open hearts to understand and connect with one another” (*Our Words, Our Ways: Teaching First Nations, Metis and Inuit Learners*, 163).

Discussion will move in a clockwise fashion, and each student will have an opportunity to speak. Silence is also an option, and students who do not wish to comment can simply say “pass.”

Strategy:

To facilitate discussion, or begin the talking circle, group leaders will prepare one question for each chapter.

Group Decisionmaking:

Leaders will make decisions with feedback from the leadership of group partners and the group members.

Notes: N/A

Commitment to Accessibility: UNC Pembroke is committed to having an accessible campus for individuals with disabilities. To request information regarding accessibility, or for an accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) please contact Scott Hicks at 910.775.4032 or [scott.hicks@uncp.edu](mailto:scott.hicks@uncp.edu) at least 10 business days prior to this event. A good faith effort will be made to provide accommodations for requests made less than 10 business days in advance.