

ONE INCLUSIVE THING

Supporting Indigenous People at GVSU

To support Indigenous people, you need a strong understanding of the ancestral land where you stand. To research your current locale, investigate the resources provided below:

- [Michigan Tribal Governments Website](#)
- [University Libraries Native American Michigan Resources database](#)

Indigenous People in Michigan 101

- The Three Fires Confederacy is an ancient alliance of
 - (Ojibwe / Ojibwa)/ Chippewa
 - Ottawa (Odawa)
 - Potawatomi / Pattawatomi (Bodéwadmi / Bodowadomi)
 - <https://libguides.gvsu.edu/natamericans/michigan>
 - [Michigan Tribal Governments website](#)
- The Ojibwe are known as the Keepers of Tradition, the Odawa as the Keepers of the Trade, and the Potawatomi as the Keepers of the Fire
- Tribal Nations in the Great Lakes region are also known as the Anishinaabe, Anishinaabeg, Anishnabek, Neshnibek, Nesnabek, Original or True People or Spontaneous Beings.
 - [Anishinaabemowin language resources](#)
- Michigan is home to **twelve federally-acknowledged** tribal nations.
- Federally acknowledged tribes are not merely organizations of citizens who happen to be of Native American descent, they are **sovereign governments** that exercise direct jurisdiction over their members and territory and, under some circumstances, over other citizens as well.
- [Michigan Tribal Government website](#)

To reduce Harm and Violence to Indigenous People, Don't Ask:

- **Do you get money from casinos?**
 - Some tribes have invested and built businesses, including casino's. These tribes share the revenues, beyond tribal government expenditures to insure the welfare of tribal members.
 - [The Myth of Indian Casino Riches](#) by Dwanna L. Robertson, Indian Country Today
- **Do you go to college for free?**
 - Michigan has had responsibilities for educating the state's American Indians since the Comstock Agreement of 1934. A 1976 legislative act and its subsequent revisions provided for state institutions of higher education to grant free tuition to certain American Indians through the Michigan Indian Tuition Waiver (ITW) program.
 - [Michigan Indian Tuition Waiver FAQ](#)—Michigan.gov
- **How much Indian are you?**
 - Blood quantum is a colonial tool, codified by law, defining race, complicated today by a variety of forces.
 - [So What Exactly is 'Blood Quantum'](#)—The Code Switch Podcast
- **Will you speak your language for me?**
 - Don't ask, it's just rude.
- **Will you explain what Indigenous people think about x, y, or z?**
 - Don't ask one person to represent the views, beliefs, experiences of an entire group of people. Instead, try a little research.
- **Did your parents go to a Native American Boarding School?**
 - While the last boarding school in Michigan did not close until 1983, the oppressive and traumatic history experienced by many indigenous people makes this question particularly intrusive, insensitive, and inappropriate.
 - [Indian Boarding Schools article](#) by Eric Hemingway on Michiganology website.
 - [Mutually Exclusive: We the Seventh](#) video clip by M. Avila on WGVU (2016).

Working with Indigenous People and Supporting Academic Success

- Begin with the understanding that you are always on settled, Indigenous land.
- Create nurturing relationships that support and create opportunities for Indigenous students.
- Develop and maintain relationships with Indigenous people that are not extractive, enabling improved understanding of the history and culturally sensitive support.
- Understand your own settler privilege and complicity.
 - For guidance, see [Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack of Settler Privilege](#) by Dina Gilio-Whitaker.

What Can I Do in my Classroom?

- Create a course curriculum that includes Indigenous representation and acknowledges the present existence of Indigenous people.
- Avoid tokenizing or offending Indigenous students, by adhering to the questions above and examining your curriculum for bias.
- Most curriculum is taught from a Euro-settler perspective. Develop curriculum that centers Indigenous experience and intellect. Carry out curriculum that serves outside of the settler experience.
- Study, read, and teach Indigenous authors in your discipline.

What Can My Offices and Departments Do or Change?

- Cluster hire Indigenous staff and faculty to support Indigenous students and diversity/culture at Grand Valley State University.
- Accountability when creating community events includes compensation, decision making and support.
- Allow space for the institutional hierarchy to be dismantled.

Want to Learn More?

- Absolon, K. E. (2011). *Kaandossiwin: How we come to know*. Halifax: Fernwood Pub.
- Atalay, S. (2012). *Community-Based Archaeology: Research with, by, and for Indigenous and Local Communities*. University of California Press. Retrieved February 25, 2021 from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/j.ctt1pn9dj>
- Avila, M. (2016). *Mutually Exclusive: We the Seventh*. WGVSU, Grand Rapids, MI. Retrieved from <https://video.wgvsu.org/video/mutually-inclusive-we-7th-part-1/>.
- Doerfler, J., Sinclair, N. J., & Stark, H. K. (2013). *Centering Anishinaabeg studies: Understanding the world through stories*. Michigan State University Press.
- Kimmerer, R. W. (2016). *Braiding sweetgrass: Indigenous wisdom, scientific knowledge and the teachings of plants*. Unabridged. [United States]: Tantor Audio
- King, L., Gubele, R., & Anderson, J. R. (2014). *Survivance, sovereignty, and story: teaching American Indian rhetorics*. Logan: Utah State University Press.
- Simpson, L. B. (2017). *As we have always done: Indigenous freedom through radical resistance*. Minneapolis: University Minnesota Press.
- Wilson, S. (2008). *Research is ceremony: Indigenous research methods*. Black Point, N.S.: Fernwood Publication.

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