

F25.10: Indigenous Queer Urban Studies: (Re)Imagining Indigenous Urbanization (Re)Built By/For Queer, Trans, and Two-Spirit Peoples in Arizona

Overview

This study delves into the lived experiences of Indigenous Queer, Trans, and Two-Spirit individuals in urban areas of Arizona. In the United States, approximately 75% of Native Americans reside off reservations in urban settings, a consequence of federal policies displacing Indigenous people from our ancestral homelands to major urban centers. While these cities should ideally recognize and honor local Native American histories and nations, they do not. Additionally, the experiences of Indigenous Queer, Trans, and Two-Spirit individuals often go unnoticed within the broader narrative of Indigenous diaspora. This research questions: How do Native American Queer, Trans, and Two-Spirit peoples experience settler-colonial urbanization?

How does Native American Queer, Trans, and Two-Spirit resilience, resistance, agency, and self-determination reconceptualize urban space for Native American peoples and futures in Phoenix, Arizona? This analysis particularly emphasizes the unique experiences faced by Indigenous Queer, Trans, and Two-Spirit individuals in urban settings, shedding light on their often-overlooked narratives and stories amid the broader context of Indigenous migration and urbanization.

What the student will DO and LEARN

Throughout the year-long Interns to Scholars program, students will actively contribute to various facets of ongoing research projects, acquiring valuable skills through hands-on experience. The expected deliverables encompass a diverse range of research skills and opportunities for professional and research development. Students will be involved in the literature review and interview process for an academic book, gaining insights into the academic publishing process. The research methods and methodologies involve conducting semi-structured mixed-method qualitative focus groups in the three major cities in Arizona. Prior to initiating this research, establishing a proper Tribal Consultation and IRB is essential. Qualitative interviews are chosen for their ability to delve deeply into participants' experiences and perspectives, enabling a meaningful exploration of societal functions. This depth is crucial in understanding the intricate and intersectional identities of Indigenous Queer, Trans, and Two Spirit individuals, whose voices are often marginalized. Qualitative interviews, as noted by Kvale and Brinkmann (2015), provide access to the meanings, structures, and life-worlds of the interviewees. The mixed-method approach through the use of focus groups, proves ideal for comprehending how participants make sense of their multiple and intersecting identities with each other. As an insider and outsider of this work, focus groups foster open sharing of experiences, given participants' awareness that someone from within the community is conducting the research with while facilitating the growth of student researchers.

Additional benefits

Beyond imparting scholarly and research skills, my mentorship philosophy encompasses teaching students how to be good relatives. This entails fostering an environment where they collaboratively work with each other, intentionally build relationships within the research community, and extend this ethos to others working towards creating a better world. In my capacity as a professor in Women and

Gender Studies & Applied Indigenous Studies, this research cohort will engage in a critical analysis of social structures, intersectionality, and oppression. The exploration of various identities, including gender, class, race, sexuality, nationality, citizenship status, and disability, forms a crucial aspect of our inquiry. These aspects are pivotal not only in shaping our research but also in influencing student success, particularly for marginalized students on our campus. The experiential learning opportunities offered by this project are designed to provide hands-on experience with this diverse project, positioning students in statewide and local roles within their fields of interest. This initiative is oriented towards training the future generations of researchers, scholars, and activists, with a central emphasis on nurturing the essence of being good relatives. In Indigenous communities, being a good relative is fundamental to our overall well-being. As an Indigenous researcher, my aim is to equip all students, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, with the skills to build intentional relationships within and beyond the realm of research.

Additional qualifications

Highly recommend Indigenous and/or Queer/Trans students who are interested in the intersections of this work.

Time commitment

6 hrs/week for 30 weeks