



UiT The Arctic University of Norway

Study Plan

Master in Indigenous Studies

120 ECTS credits / Tromsø

Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education

Centre for Sami Studies



Program Name

- Master's Programme in Indigenous Studies (MIS)
- Masterprogram i urfolksstudier

Degree obtained

Master in Indigenous Studies

Program size

120 Credits (ECTS)

Administrative Responsibility

The Master's Programme in Indigenous Studies administered by the Centre for Sami Studies at the Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education at UiT The Arctic University of Norway.

Target group

The MIS programme

- is particularly relevant for students interested in issues related to colonization, socio-economic development, cultural revitalization and empowerment, and decolonization. An additional core element in the programme is sustainable natural resource management as it pertains to ethnic minorities and Indigenous Peoples globally;
- recruits students internationally as well as from Norway and other Nordic countries. Students with an indigenous background are particularly invited to apply.

Admission requirements**General academic admission requirements**

Admission to the master's programme in Indigenous Studies requires a bachelor's degree (180 ECTS), or an equivalent qualification, with a minimum of 80 ECTS within social sciences, humanities, education, or the social practice of law. Applicants must have a minimum grade average comparable to a Norwegian C (2,5 or 3,0) in the ECTS scale.

Specific academic admission requirements

A special interest in indigenous issues is a precondition. Experience from work related to Indigenous Peoples and/ or studies will be an advantage.

The programme aims to recruit both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students from all parts of the world. A mixed group of students will strengthen the comparative aspects of the programme and will contribute to international network building. The admission of students from different countries and regions will be emphasized to ensure a varied student group.

Language requirement

The programme is English-taught and applicants must document adequate proficiency in English. https://en.uit.no/education/admissions/art?p_document_id=594494

This requirement does not apply to students who qualify for a Norwegian Higher Education Entrance Qualification (*Generell studiekompetanse, GSK*).

Learning outcomes

Knowledge

The students will have:

- advanced knowledge of Indigenous issues, including similarities and differences based on the different cultural contexts;
- advanced knowledge of the concepts of indigenous peoples as used in areas of research and politics on global and local levels, and the scholarly and political debate on these issues;
- thorough knowledge of different scholarly theories and methods in the field of Indigenous Studies, including the challenges posed by indigenous methodology;
- competence to analyse relevant academic problems in the field of academic Indigenous research;
- thorough knowledge of the history of the global Indigenous movement and the current situation of the Sami and other Indigenous Peoples;
- basic knowledge of research ethics and the responsibility of the researcher

Skills

The students will be able to:

- critically analyse the situation of indigenous peoples based on the interdisciplinary approach to Indigenous Studies;
- deal with challenges that culturally diverse societies and their institutions are facing;
- analyse existing and relevant theories from the humanities and social sciences and use these theories independently;
- find and use relevant research methods to produce the data for an independently designed project;
- carry out an independent, limited research project under supervision;
- compare the situation of Indigenous Peoples in different historical and contemporary contexts;
- Make oral presentations at seminars and other official settings.

General competence

The students will be able to:

- analyse professional and research ethical challenges related to Indigenous issues;
- apply knowledge and skills on indigenous issues in order to carry out advanced assignments and projects in similar areas;
- use the terminology of Indigenous Studies and communicate extensively on their academic work both to specialists and to the general public;
- combine different scholarly approaches to produce new knowledge;
- contribute to new thinking and innovation processes regarding Indigenous Peoples and minorities.

Academic content and description of the study program

Academic content

The Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education at UiT The Arctic University of Norway offers an international two-year graduate programme in comparative indigenous studies. The programme is taught in English and based on research conducted at UiT the Arctic

University of Norway regarding the Sami and other indigenous peoples within the social sciences, humanities and law. Admission is limited to 20 students.

Rationale

The UN International Decades of the World's Indigenous People (1995-2004 and 2005 – 2014) brought Indigenous Peoples on the world map as never before. Globally, their voice is gaining strength and an international movement of indigenous peoples is getting momentum. The Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2007 further supports this cause. Despite these positive developments, many Indigenous Peoples are still marginalised minorities in need of political recognition and empowerment. Moreover, the natural resources on which they base their livelihoods are threatened. These developments, the historical experiences, and the contemporary context that indigenous people experience across the globe are the thematic focus of this master's programme. The Sami context is the point of departure for the programme.

The programme provides students with a thorough understanding of:

- the main dimensions constituting life in Indigenous Societies in the past and today; the challenges of their future, including culture and ethnicity; colonialism and the history of indigenous peoples; and indigenous resource management and environmental change;
- the emergence of indigenous civic organisations, their present operation as formal and informal systems, including their strategies for self-representation in political processes at different levels—from the local community to the global level;
- the relationship between nation-state and Indigenous minorities, including the role of pan-national organisations (UN, ILO); the formulation of legal/land and resource claims with reference to customary international law; and the debates regarding how internationally recognized human rights, such as the right to self-determination pertaining to indigenous peoples, can be interpreted and implemented.

The MIS programme prepares the students to:

- apply analytical skills to understand the social and cultural contexts of Indigenous Peoples, their organisations and rights;
- apply analytical skills to study empirically indigenous issues cross-culturally and within the frameworks established by their nation-states;
- design and carry out a research project by applying independent data collection through the use of fieldwork methods and/or written sources;
- qualify for work within promotion and implementation of Indigenous issues internationally; government and public sector; civil society organization; project management; teaching and education; and further research and studies in Indigenous issues.

The Master's thesis provides an opportunity for in-depth research within a chosen field. The topic of the thesis is chosen on the basis of the interests of the student and of issues relevant to Indigenous Studies. The thesis should highlight the student's ability to reflect and write independently on indigenous-related issues, drawing broadly on the courses and seminars offered in the course of the MIS-programme.

The collection of data is included in the course and can be carried out through fieldwork, or through the collection of archive materials, secondary data or literature studies. Data collection for the master thesis should be carried out in the period between May 15th and September 1st. After the main data collection period, the student should present a progress report. The report is expected to give an outline of the studied setting; a discussion of the methodological challenges; and some preliminary findings. This report is to be given as a presentation in class before the end of September.

Throughout the course the students are to take part in seminars, presenting their own texts and giving feedback to each other's texts. The following coursework requirements must be completed and approved in order to take the final exam:

- Attendance of 75 % of all seminars and lectures offered in third and fourth semesters are mandatory. During the third semester, a draft of one chapter containing material from the data gathering period (max. 3500 words, 10-15 pages, deadline beginning of October), and an oral presentation of their data gathering period mandatory (during first week).
- Before the end of the third semester, students are expected to present a chapter of their thesis. In the fourth semester, students are expected to present a written thesis chapter. Chapter seminars are offered to practice how to respond and comment on an academic text presented by others (feedback and review process).
- A draft of the thesis should be ready by 15 April to ensure time for language editing and proofing.
- The thesis must be submitted by 15 May. The oral examination will be held within 6 weeks after submission of the thesis. After the thesis is assessed a final oral will be held. The final grade is a combination of an assessment of the thesis and an oral defence. The grade is based on a grading scale from A to F, where A is the highest grade and E the lowest passing grade. F stands for "failed". Retake is offered by November 1st.

Learning Activities and Assessment

During the two years of studies, students will take courses totalling 120 study points (ECTS-credits): In the first year, seven mandatory courses totaling 60 credits, in the second year a master's thesis totalling 60 credits. The topic of the thesis is chosen on the basis of the interests of the student and within the framework of the topics taught in the first year. Every student will be assigned a thesis supervisor in the first year of study. Supervision is given through seminars and individual tutorials. Syllabus and reading list will be prepared for each individual course and presented at the start of studies.

The type of examination is specified in each course description. The evaluation is based on the A-F grading system where F stands for "fail", or the pass/fail grading system.

First year of study

IND-3025: Introduction to Indigenous Studies

Centre for Sami Studies, Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education

The course offers an introduction to Indigenous Studies. It takes as a starting point the university's location in arctic Sapmi, and introduces Indigenous Studies from a comparative global perspective. In addition, the course addresses the emergence and spread of the international indigenous movement and society.

The course starts with an overview and a thematic conceptualization of the study field. The lectures introduce indigenous people's diverse realities and historical experiences from a comparative perspective. They also introduce different ways of doing Indigenous research, theoretically and methodologically. The multidisciplinary basis of the programme is reflected in the course.

An exercise in practical fieldwork methods is required in the beginning of the course. The course is offered in the first semester of the Master's Programme in Indigenous Studies. The teaching combines lectures and seminars. The learning outcomes are achieved through active student participation. Early in the semester the students are expected to submit an individual paper of max. 600 words and to participate in practical fieldwork methods exercises. The paper must be accepted before submission for the final examination. A minimum of 75% attendance of lectures and seminars is mandatory.

The fieldwork exercise is evaluated on a pass/fail basis. In the final examination, the students are to submit an individual paper of max. 3500 words (plus, minus 10%). Grades are awarded according to a grading scale from A to F; where A is the highest possible grade, and F stands for fail. In the case of an F grade (fail), a re-sit examination is offered at the beginning of the next semester.

HIS-3005: History of Indigenous Peoples: Indigenous People, ethnic minorities and the multi-cultural society in the North

Department of Archeology, History, Religious Studies and Theology, Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education

The course comprises theoretical and empirical aspects related to the history of indigenous peoples. The empirical focus will be on the history of the Sami peoples from the Middle Ages to the political revival of indigenous peoples during the later part of the 20th century. It will also look at multi-cultural societies in North-Western Europe and aspects in connection with the relation between majority/minority and nation. The history of the Sami will be compared with the history of colonialism and the revival of some indigenous societies around the world. The course ends by focusing on the development of indigenous peoples and other ethnic groups' revival movements at the local, national and global level.

The course will have multiple teaching approaches; lectures, discussions, and collective and individual guidance.

Students are expected to write one mandatory assignment during the course, approx. 2-3 pages (approx. 1000 words) which must be approved before they can attend the exams. Students will write one 8-10 page home exam (approx. 4000 words). The home exam is to be submitted within a seven days/one week deadline. The exam will be assessed on an A-F grades scale. Grades are A-E for passed and F for failed.

HIF-3620: Indigenous revitalization–Language, Literature and Arts

Department of Language and Culture, Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education

The course will focus on the important role of language and cultural expressions in the revitalization process of indigenous cultures that has taken place over the last four decades. Emphasis will be placed on one or more of the following areas during a particular semester:

- Indigenous languages and linguistic rights
- Traditional knowledge and the arts
- Literature, the arts, and new symbols for self-expression.

Depending on the focus on language, arts, and/or literature, students learn how to use theory and methods appropriate for the analysis of indigenous literature, visual arts and other media, and/or the analysis of compelling linguistic issues (complementing IND-3025 and IND-3026). This understanding provides students with insight into the important role played by language and cultural expressions in the revitalization process of indigenous cultures over the last four decades. We consider expressions specific to Sami and other indigenous people shared in a larger global perspective.

The course is interdisciplinary and taught by instructors with specialties in literature, art science, linguistics, film, and/or culture studies. By the end of the course, therefore, students will have demonstrated, orally and in writing, during lectures and seminar discussions, the ability to analyse a range of linguistic and cultural expressions using recent analytical approaches to the study of indigenous cultures.

All students must write a six-hour school exam that counts as 100% of the final grade. As a prerequisite for the exam, they must complete two coursework requirements: (1) One essay (1200-1500 words) that focuses on one or more of the texts on the reading list. This requirement is evaluated approved/not approved; (2) Participation in a round table discussion held at the end of the semester (for one double hour).

Performance in the course will be assessed with the grades A-F. Grades are A-E for passed and F for failed.

IND-3026: Methodology and methods in Indigenous Studies

Centre for Sami Studies, Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education

This course follows up on the perspectives introduced in the IND-3025 course and aims to start a reflection on the methodology and methods in indigenous studies as well as in social sciences and humanities in general. It provides knowledge about and insight into the main methods of Indigenous Studies and offers a basis for the choice of method in the research project. The focus falls partially on the practical aspects of multidisciplinary research based on social sciences and humanities. Hence, the course prepares the students for the different stages of the research process related to the individual master's projects and give them an overview of the basic methodological tools as a preparation for collecting data.

The course presents the challenges raised by indigenous methodology, especially those related to aspects of the decolonization of research and methodology. Ethical considerations and reflexivity are emphasized in particular. The teaching will provide the students with a basis for carrying out the research process related to the individual master's thesis, IND-3904. Students shall complete and submit all coursework assignments to gain access to the final examination. A minimum of 75% attendance of lectures and seminars is mandatory.

The student must give a 20-minute oral presentation in class and present a written draft of the project proposal including a preliminary chapter outline and a short description of the master's thesis. Early in the semester the students are expected to submit an individual paper of max. 600 words. The paper must be accepted before submission of the final exam.

The final exam is a draft project proposal of max. 3500 words (approximately 10 – 15 pages) and must include the relevant aspects of a project proposal, such as research questions, methodological and theoretical approaches, literature review, and a work plan and budget. Documentation that the project has been reported to the Data Protection Official for Research in Norway (NSD) must be enclosed if personal data is collected as part of the project. The project proposal must be approved before the student can embark upon data gathering/field work.

Grading is made according to a grading scale from A to F, where F is fail. A passing grade is required before the student can start the course IND-3904. In case of an F grade (fail), a new examination is offered. A reworked version of the project proposal should be submitted two weeks after the result of the original exam.

SOA-3006: Indigenous Culture, Resource Management and Human Rights

Department of Social Sciences, Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education

The course provides an overview of traditional resource management practices among Indigenous peoples, with particular focus on small-scale economies including hunting and gathering, fishing, shifting cultivation, and pastoralism. We explore the connection between these land- (and sea-) based subsistence strategies and other aspects of culture

and identity, including social and political structures, traditional knowledge systems, education, language, and cosmology.

Today, these lifeways and cultures are under threat from a number of sources including: intensive resource extraction (mining, logging, oil), large-scale development projects (dams, transportation), environmental issues (pollution, climate change, conservation efforts), and resource competition from neighboring groups. In this course we will identify global processes affecting Indigenous lands and livelihood, including political-economic trends and the Indigenous rights movement. We will look at how these processes take shape locally, through study of relevant UN mechanisms, regional courts and commissions, and specific local case studies.

The main part of the grade will be based on a final home essay, where students will choose from one of three topics (10 pages / 3500 words), and an oral exam. Other assignments based on the readings (including a presentation and/or a short writing assignment) will also be a part of the course. The grading follows a scale from A to F, where F stands for "fail".

STV-3020: Indigenous Peoples - Politics and Institution building

Department of Social Sciences, Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education

The course departs from the current debate over indigenous peoples' possibilities for self-determination within nation states. The Sami people in Norway serve as a point of departure for the focus on indigenous institutions, like parliaments, consultations and other tools for decision-making between indigenous peoples and nation state authorities, and tools indigenous peoples can use in interaction with market actors.

The course consist of three sections. The first is on indigenous peoples' political challenges, and how international law prescribe indigenous participation and involvement vis a vis the nation state and how national regulations attempt to implement these commitments. A second part look at challenges for management of land and water, and how indigenous peoples work with challenges facing their traditional livelihoods, like tensions between these and industrial development. The third part provides an in-depth focus on institutionalization of indigenous self-determination by scrutinizing the model of the Sami parliament while simultaneously addressing the differences in institutional development in the Nordic countries.

Students must write an essay on a given topic during a period of five days. The maximum limit for the essay is 2500 words.

The exam will be assessed on an A-F grades scale. Grades are A-E for passed and F for failed.

JUR-3624: Indigenous Rights, Politics and Institution Building

Faculty of Law

The course provides a general overview over the rights Indigenous peoples, communities and individuals are beneficiaries of under the international legal system, with a particular focus on the right to self-determination and land and resource rights. The course includes

elements of history of international law and political philosophy, as a background to properly understanding the international indigenous rights regime.

The teaching is provided through a mixture of lectures and seminars, in total 10h. The students are expected to be prepared and active during the seminars in discussing legal approaches to the issues at hand. Students are expected to study independently in periods of no seminars or lectures.

The course is assessed through a written home exam (ten days), written in English. The exam includes theoretical and/or scenario questions.

The grading scale of A to F is applied, where F constitutes fail

Second year of study

IND-3904: Master's thesis in Indigenous Studies

Centre for Sami Studies, Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education

The core of this course is the master's thesis. The students are expected to write a master thesis between 25.000 and 30.000 words of length (approximately 60 - 80 pages).

The Master's thesis provides an opportunity for in-depth research within a chosen field. The topic of the thesis is chosen on the basis of the interests of the student and of issues relevant to Indigenous Studies. The thesis should highlight the student's ability to reflect and write independently on indigenous-related issues, drawing broadly on the courses and seminars offered in the course of the MIS-programme.

The collection of data is included in the course and can be carried out through fieldwork, or through the collection of archive materials, secondary data or literature studies. Data collection for the master thesis should be carried out in the period between May 15th and September 1st. After the main data collection period, the student should present a progress report. The report is expected to give an outline of the studied setting; a discussion of the methodological challenges; and some preliminary findings. This report is to be given as a presentation in class before the end of September.

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- Before the end of the third semester, students are expected to present a chapter of their thesis. In the fourth semester, students are expected to present a written thesis chapter. Chapter seminars are offered to practice how to respond and comment on an academic text presented by others (feedback and review process).

- A draft of the thesis should be ready by April 15th to ensure time for language editing and proofing.

The thesis must be submitted by May 15th. The oral examination will be held within 6 weeks after submission of the thesis. After the thesis is assessed a final oral will be held. The final grade is a combination of an assessment of the thesis and an oral defence. The grade is based on a grading scale from A to F, where A is the highest grade and E the lowest passing grade. F stands for "failed". Retake is offered by 1 November.

Summarised plan of study

Course programme:

Year 1: IND-3025, HIS-3005, HIF-3620, IND-3026, SOA-3006, STV-3020, JUR-3624

Year 2: IND-3904 (Master's thesis)

Code	Course name	Credits	Type of exam/ Grading system	Semester
IND-3025	<i>Introduction to Indigenous Studies</i>	10	<i>Final take home essay, grades A-F. Mandatory field exercise with paper</i>	1
HIS-3005	<i>History of Indigenous Peoples: Indigenous people, ethnic minorities and the multi-cultural society in the North</i>	10	<i>Final essay, grades A-F. Mandatory course work</i>	1
HIF-3620	<i>Indigenous Revitalization - Language, Literature and Arts</i>	10	<i>Final essay, grades A-F. Mandatory paper and round table participation.</i>	1
IND-3026	<i>Methodology and Methods in Indigenous Studies</i>	10	<i>Final project description for the Master's thesis, grades A-F. Mandatory Term paper.</i>	2
JUR-3624	<i>The Rights of Indigenous Peoples</i>	5	<i>Final take-home essay, grades A-F.</i>	2
STV-3020	<i>Indigenous Peoples – Politics, Institutions and Tools</i>	5	<i>Final take-home essay, grades A-F.</i>	2
SOA-3006	<i>Indigenous Culture, Resource Management and Human Rights.</i>	10	<i>Final essay + oral examination, grades A-F.</i>	2
IND-3904	<i>Master's Thesis in Indigenous Studies</i>	60	<i>Master's thesis + oral examination, grades A-F.</i>	3 and 4

Program language

The program is delivered in English, including all lectures, and all student assessments and examinations. This is further specified in each course description.

Internationalization

The master's programme is international in its content and structure. All core courses include international/comparative content.

Student Exchange

Exchange studies abroad will make you more attractive on the job market. Studies abroad will increase your learning outcomes, improve your language skills, give you unique adventures and international experience.

The master degree programme in Indigenous Studies has bilateral exchange agreements with universities abroad where the student may take modules that will subsequently be approved as part of the degree. In this degree programme, we recommend exchange studies abroad in the second or third semester. There are certain reservations concerning what modules the exchange university has to offer. Prior to going abroad, the student should have a preliminary approval. A faculty member from the degree programme will assist the student in choosing modules that will be approved as part of the degree. Final approval at UiT will be given upon application with documentation of passed exams in the recommended modules abroad. For an updated overview of exchange universities we refer to UiT's webpage on internationalisation, or you may contact our international coordinator.

Quality assurance and program evaluation

The programme is evaluated every year according to the university's assurance system. More information about the system is available at the UiT website.