**Description: Australian Indigenous Studies**

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<th>Subject</th>
<th>Cat-Nbr</th>
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**Academic Group:** FOEDU  
**Academic Org:** FOE002  
**HECS Band:** 1  
**ASCED Code:** 070303

**STAFFING**

Examiner: John McMaster  
Moderator: Phillip Dreise

**RATIONALE**

Education involves, in part, the transmission of the culture of a society. Australian society is fortunate in that it supports a variety of cultural groups, each with its own system of beliefs, ways of doing things and ways of communicating. (Department of Education, Queensland, 1:94) Furthermore, Australia has two cultural groups which can claim Indigenous status - the Australian Aboriginal and Australian Torres Strait Islander peoples. In order that all Australians receive a balanced education, the curriculum for all Australian schools should reflect, therefore, the existence of many cultures and societies living together on this continent. All teachers need to have an understanding and appreciation of the diversity of cultures within Australia and how they interact. A study of Australian Indigenous cultures and societies, because of their uniqueness and complexity, provides an avenue for the development and consolidation of an understanding and appreciation of all peoples, their cultures and societies. It is through a study of Australian Indigenous cultures and societies that attitudes can be challenged and a foundation set to address issues of cultural arrogance (i.e., belief in the superiority of one's own culture), ethnocentrism and ignorance facilitating progression towards mutual understanding and respect for each others' culture and society. The course is built around themes with a central core running throughout them. The central core is the presentation of knowledge and experiences through Australian Indigenous perspectives and viewpoints. In so doing concepts may be presented in a manner that differs from the learner's understanding. You may consequently conclude that the viewpoints expressed are political and are designed to cast blame on the learner as the oppressor. However the aim of presenting an Indigenous Australian perspective is to correct the imbalance in knowledge and understanding of Australia's history which has predominated since invasion. In the first half of the course, consideration is given to the concepts of culture, society and group and individual identity. An Australian Indigenous perspective on issues created by ignorance and misunderstandings about the sociological, technological
and ideological aspects as they relate to Indigenous cultures of the world, especially Australia, is presented. The rights of people from Indigenous cultures internationally, are also explored. Without a knowledge of the past one cannot appreciate the present or predict the future. The second half of the course investigates particular aspects of Australian Indigenous cultures including, kinship, languages, land affiliation, occupation and the Native Title debate. Government policies and projections for the future will also be presented. The third context will be an educational one presented during tutorials. Each tutorial session will consider the implication of a study of Australian Indigenous peoples for the classroom teacher. Tutorial activities will be undertaken to assist in making the course as pragmatic as possible. The Queensland Department of Education in 1996, trialed the P - 12 Guidelines for Teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies and a Board subject entitled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies, in Year 11 and 12. With the emphasis currently placed on having an understanding and appreciation of Australian Indigenous studies, comes the need for teachers to be skilled and to have an understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and societies and ways of introducing them in the classroom.

SYNOPSIS

The content and structure of this course is such that it is more than an historical/anthropological account of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australia. The content of the course will emphasise the need for teachers to adopt an educational stance which reflects a sound theoretical and philosophical understanding in the area of cultural education and difference in pedagogy and learning. The course seeks to confront the stereotypes that have been constructed around Australia's indigenous populations, and to reconstruct those images on a basis of knowledge and understanding of, and empathy towards, those people who are the original inhabitants of this country. Throughout the course, four major constructs will be explored. 1. Contested views of contemporary Australian Indigenous cultures, societies and identity; 2. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social and political structures; 3. Policies and practices in relation to education and schooling for Aborigines and Torres Strait Islander peoples; 4. Racism as a construct in policy and curriculum development.

OBJECTIVES

On completion of this course students will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity, culture and society within a contemporary culture.
- Develop a respect for and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's lifestyles and attitudes.
- Develop awareness and appreciation of the socio-cultural, political and economic position of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in contemporary society.
- Contribute to the enhancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' desires for access to, and participation in, education at all levels which does not deny their heritage.
- Consider strategies for increasing the involvement of community based Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers (i.e. knowledge providers).
- Develop an understanding and appreciation of current educational policies and practice in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
TOPICS

Description Weighting (%)
1. Introduction 4.00
2. Society, Cultures, Identity and Representation 8.00
3. World Indigenous Peoples and Change in Australian Indigenous Societies and Cultures - Australian Aborigines 8.00
4. World Indigenous Peoples and Change in Australian Indigenous Societies and Cultures - Australian Torres Strait Islanders 8.00
5. Australian Indigenous Organisations and Kinship 8.00
6. The Impact of Colonisation 8.00
8. The Occupation of Australia, Terra Nullis, Native Title 8.00
10. Australian Indigenous Peoples and Communications (languages, art, music, dance and literature) 8.00
11. Education for Indigenous Australians 12.00
12. Reconciliation - A New Partnership 8.00
13. Revision - Australia's Future and Indigenous Australians 4.00

TEXT and MATERIALS required to be PURCHASED or ACCESSED:
Books can be ordered by fax or telephone. For costs and further details use the ‘Book Search’ facility at http://bookshop.usq.edu.au by entering the author or title of the text.
Internal study pack is available from USQ Bookshop.

REFERENCE MATERIALS

Reference materials are materials that, if accessed by students, may improve their knowledge and understanding of the material in the course and enrich their learning experience.

Commonwealth of Australia 1997, Bringing Them Home: National inquiry into the separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, AGPS, Canberra.
Commonwealth of Australia 1994, Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, AGPS, Canberra.
STUDENT WORKLOAD REQUIREMENTS

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<th>ACTIVITY</th>
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<tr>
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ASSESSMENT DETAILS

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NOTES:

. Students please refer to the Introductory Book for information about assessments and assessment due dates.
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IMPORTANT ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

1 Attendance requirements:
   There are no attendance requirements for this course. However, it is the students' responsibility to study all material provided to them or required to be accessed by them to maximise their chance of meeting the objectives of the course and to be informed of course-related activities and administration.

2 Requirements for students to complete each assessment item satisfactorily:
   To complete each of the assignments satisfactorily, students must obtain at least 50% of the marks available (or at least a grade of C-) for each assessment item.

3 Penalties for late submission of required work:
   Students must negotiate with the Course Examiner for extensions to the due date of their assignments.

4 Requirements for student to be awarded a passing grade in the course:
   To be assured of receiving a passing grade a student must submit all of the summative assessment items, achieve at least 50% in the examination and at least 50% of the available weighted marks for the summative assessment items.

5 Method used to combine assessment results to attain final grade:
   The final grades for students will be assigned on the basis of the weighted aggregate of the marks (or grades) obtained for each of the summative assessment items in the course.
6 Examination information:
In a Take Home Examination, candidates may have access to any material during the examination.

7 Examination period when Deferred/Supplementary examinations will be held:
There will be no Deferred or Supplementary examinations in this course.

8 University Regulations:
Students should read USQ Regulations 5.1 Definitions, 5.6. Assessment, and 5.10 Academic Misconduct for further information and to avoid actions which might contravene University Regulations. These regulations can be found at the URL http://www.usq.edu.au/SECARIAT/calendar/Part5/ or in the printed version of the current USQ Handbook.

ASSESSMENT NOTES

1 Students must retain a copy of each item submitted for assessment. This must be produced within five days if required by the Examiner.

2 When there is more than one marker for a single item of assessment, the distributed patterns and means for the different markers will be compared and marks adjusted if necessary.

3 Marking criteria are provided in course material as mark sheets/guides or as part of assignment specifications.

4 All assessment items must be attempted/submitted and passed.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

1 See notes in Introductory Book for details regarding Take Home Examination.