Wabanaki

onfederacy Mi'kmag

sseton

Mdewakanton

Assiniboir

Snohomish Schitsu'umsh

(Coeur d'Alene)

### INTERACTIVE LEARNING FOR REAL-WORLD CHANGE

Writing Land Acknowledgements in ENG/HIS 380: American Indian Film & Literature

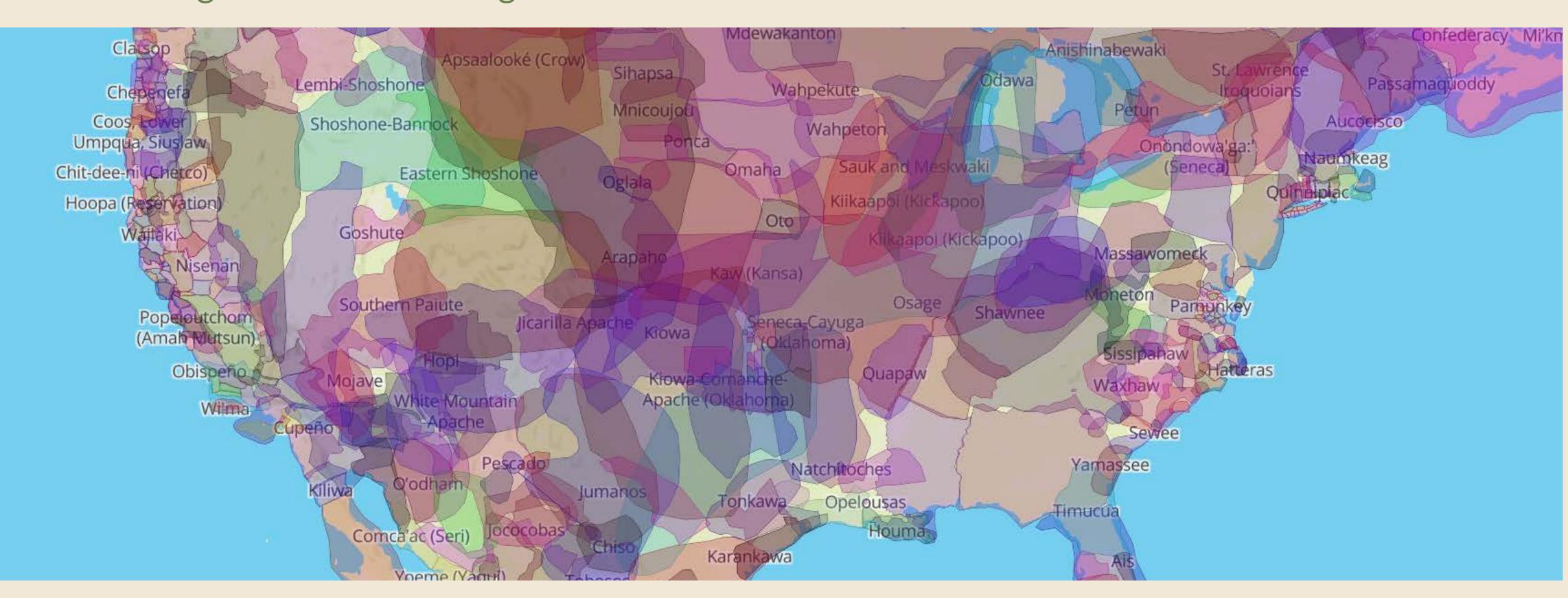


Figure 1. Native Land Map. Image courtesy of conservation co.org.

CONTEXT: A land acknowledgment is a short but informative statement that educates others about Native presence in a specific location. The genre has recently become more widespread. For instance, you might notice land acknowledgements on websites for sports teams (Chicago Blackhawks) and universities (IUPUI), or you might hear one vocalized before a public event.

- In ENG/HIS 380, students compose a **4-6 page land acknowledgement paper** as their first major research/writing assignment of the semester.
- Students must incorporate at least **5 sources** in this interdisciplinary project (linking history, literature, and Native studies). Two sources must represent the direct perspectives of **Native American tribes**.
- **To prepare** for their papers, students first read several how-to articles (including the Smithsonian's "Honoring Indigenous Inhabitants") and then identify the tribe(s) who originally occupied their hometowns using the **texting activity** I describe at the bottom of this poster.

GOALS: The institutional learning outcomes of this paper are 1) to exhibit curiosity in understanding other cultures and 2) to articulate insights into our own cultural biases. The course objectives associated with this project are 1) to build public awareness of Native American cultures and histories and 2) to provide Marian's students with real-world tools, strategies, and connections they can use to better advocate for Native American tribes.

## **REAL-WORLD IMPACT:** Students have already integrated this paper's crucial lessons on Native American sources and communities by:

- drafting Marian University land acknowledgements that faculty, staff, and students can copy/paste into email signatures, syllabi, and websites (please email rbrown@marian.edu if you would like a copy).
- composing and displaying a two-paragraph land acknowledgement in **US Senator Todd Christopher Young's Indianapolis office** (thanks to a Fall 2021 ENG/HIS 380 student with a legislative internship).
- sharing what they learn in ENG/HIS 380 with **friends**, **coworkers**, **and family**, including how to locate tribes on the Native Land Map (shown above), acknowledge Native presence, and help protect Native culture.

#### Example Acknowledgement

"Hello, everyone! My name is Rachel Linnea Brown, and I am an Assistant Professor of English at Marian University in Indianapolis, Indiana—the traditional homeland of the Delaware, Kickapoo, and Miami. Although treaties with the US government forced many of these tribes into present-day Kansas in the 1830s and 1840s, the Miami Nation of Indiana remained and is currently headquartered in present-day Peru, Indiana. You can learn more about the Indiana Miami at http://www.miamiindians.org/. Thank you for your time!"

#### ENG/HIS 3XO PAPER PROMPT

- 1.Choose a **meaningful** place for you. It might be your childhood home, Marian University, Indianapolis Motor Speedway, Disneyland, etc.
- 2. Type your location into the search bar at https://native-land.ca.
- 3. Select ONE of the listed Native tribes for your location to study further.
- 4. Research the history, oral literature, and present location of the Native American tribe you've chosen (5 sources required; 2 must be tribal).
- 5. Begin drafting your 4-6 page land acknowledgement paper:
  - a. In your **introduction**, explain your ties to the place you've chosen, identify all the Native American tribes in this area, and name the specific tribe you're going to focus on for the rest of your paper.
  - b. Develop **supporting paragraphs** that share what you've learned about your chosen tribe's history, including any relevant origin or trickster stories (two early genres seen in Native oral literature).
  - c. Include a section in your paper that addresses **where the tribe you have chosen is today**, what their needs are, how they are engaging with tribal or public outreach, education, environmentalism, etc.
  - d. End by explaining how this land acknowledgement assignment has shaped your relationship to the specific place you've chosen and what your readers should do in response to your research.

# Curious to know more about Native American heritage in YOUR hometown?

- Text any city and state (ex. Indianapolis, IN) to 907-312-5085.
- Consider the following when you receive your reply:
  - What is your immediate reaction to seeing this text message?
  - What will you do with your new knowledge?

Enjoy this activity? Then visit

https://native-land.ca

for more interactive tribal and

treaty information from

around the world!