

Towards an Australian First Nations' Senior Secondary Curriculum

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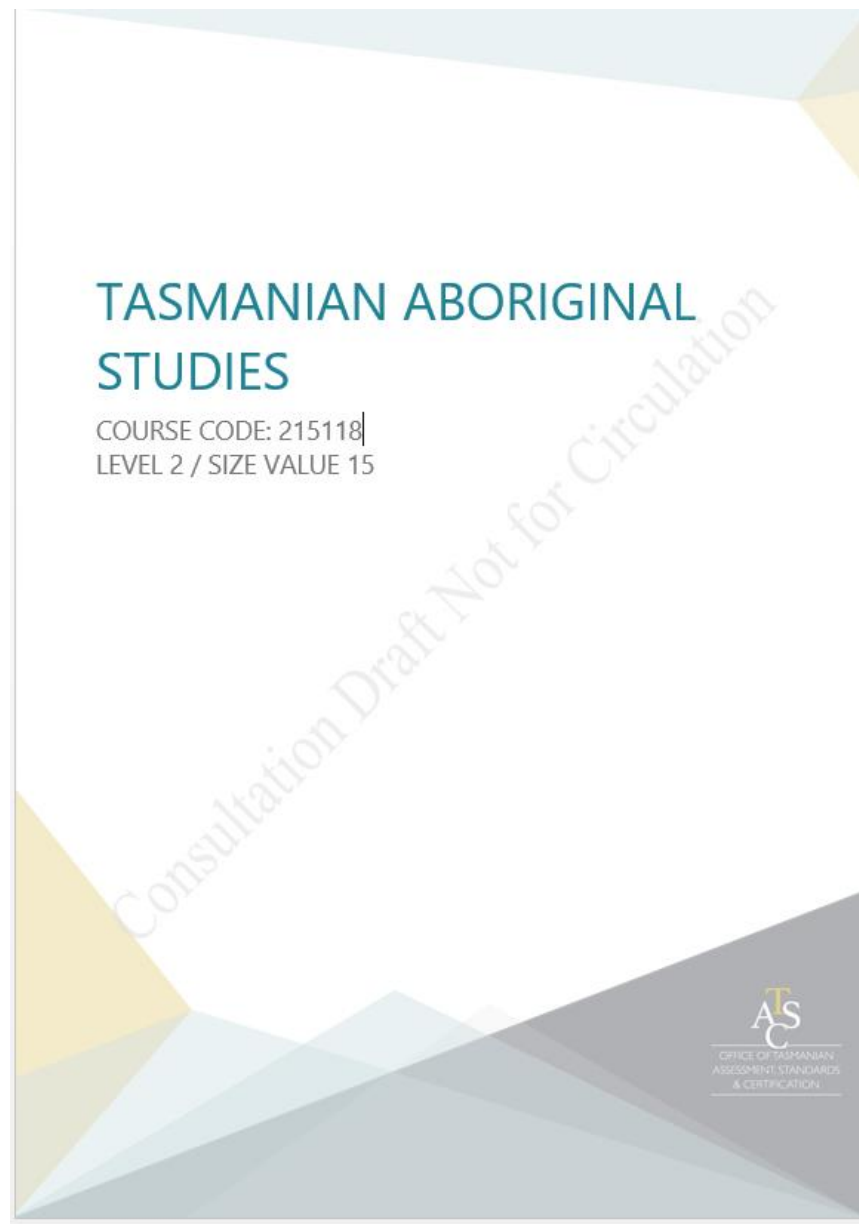
Let us begin...



But this is not enough

Tasmanian Aboriginal Studies 2 aims to develop the knowledge, dispositions and understanding necessary for learners to gain an awareness of Tasmanian Aboriginal historical & contemporary experiences as they apply to place, culture and people.

The course aims to develop learner understanding of the complexity and differing cultural perspectives of Tasmanian Aboriginal history and identity. It provides learners with the opportunity to develop reflective and culturally sensitive responses to the Tasmanian Aboriginal narrative. The course further provides all learners, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, with understandings which will benefit them by exploring shared histories and involve themselves in active reconciliation.



Tasmanian Aboriginal Studies Level 2

- Tasmanian Aboriginal Studies Level 2 provides learners with an opportunity to study the histories, cultures, values, beliefs, lifestyles and contributions of Tasmanian Aboriginal people in past and present contexts.

Tasmanian Aboriginal Studies Level 2 is significant as an affirmation of the rich cultural, political and social heritage of Tasmanian Aborigines, which in turn, relates strongly to the development of intercultural understanding, personal and social capabilities and ethical understanding of Tasmanian learners.

Tasmanian Aboriginal Studies Level 2

- Unit 1: Country and Place
- Unit 2: Culture
- Unit 3: People



Its form takes after the ACARA Conceptual framework for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures priority

Country and Place

The focus of this Unit is an investigation of Tasmanian Aborigines rich and continuing connection to Country and place.

It asks learners to investigate and understand how early Tasmanian Aborigines managed land and its resources. How early Tasmanian Aborigines successfully negotiated momentous changes in climate, vegetation and topography. It examines how Country provided shelter, sustenance and spiritual and communal meaning.

The unit closely examines European colonisation and the settlers' demand for natural resources which became the basis of conflict and war. It further considers the rich and diverse ways contemporary Tasmanian Aborigines live on and use Country today.

Culture

The focus of this Unit is the historical and contemporary expression of Tasmanian Aboriginal culture.

Tasmanian Aboriginal life was established by the creation ancestors and recorded in creation stories which became a moral blueprint that told people how to behave and how not to behave. Traditions and practices including the nightly campfire, body marking, hunting practices and funeral rites gave character to culture, and the kinship system; marriage rules and authority relations promoted order and social cohesion.

The unit examines the revival in Tasmanian Aboriginal culture in the performing and creative arts: in the production of artefacts; and in the restoration of cultural traditions such as mutton birding, language and through the repatriation of lands.

People

The focus of this Unit is an investigation of the origins, characteristics and qualities of the original Aboriginal nations which lived and thrived in Tasmania prior to European invasion.

The Unit further considers the tangible contributions of contemporary Aboriginal Tasmanians to the renewal and continuation of Tasmanian Aboriginal cultural, spiritual and political identity and life in contemporary times.

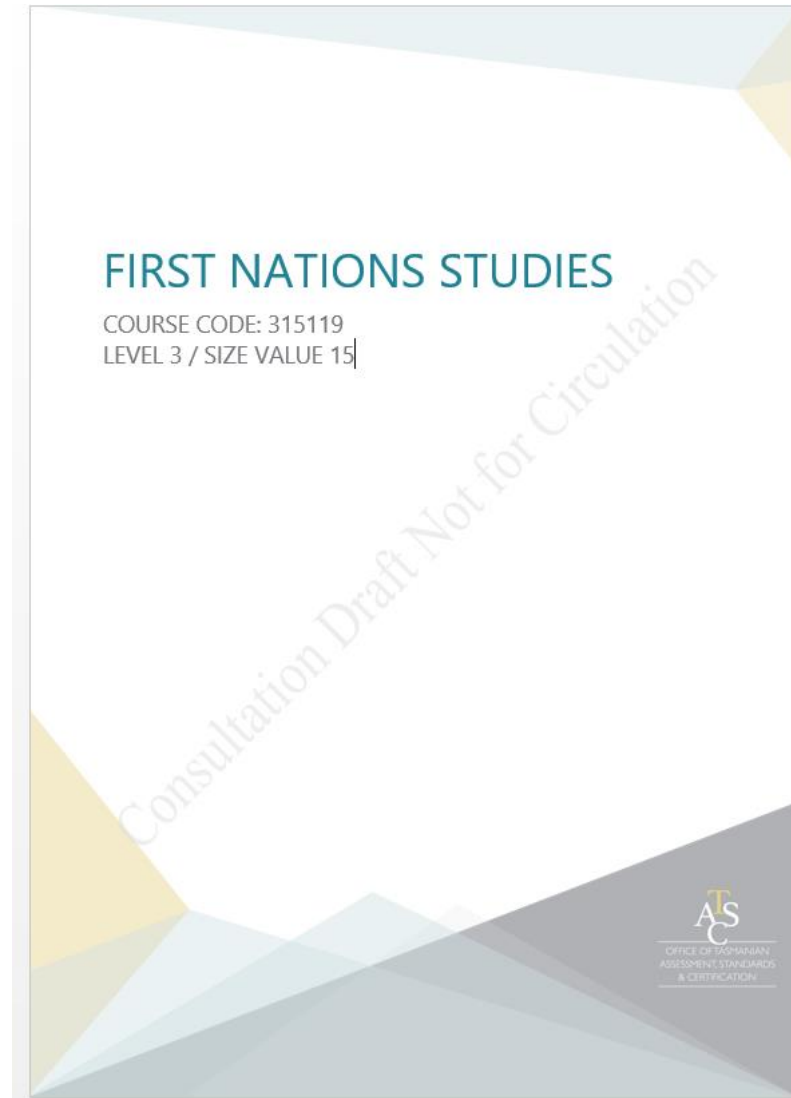
***However, even then our work was
incomplete***

The International Context

- New Zealand
- Canada
- Scandinavia

First Nations Studies 3 enables learners to understand and appreciate the culture and history of Australian and other First Nations from an internationally comparative perspective.

By engaging with this course learners will develop an understanding of the basis of First Nations identity, culture, ways of knowing and being, relationships and historical narratives as well as the causes and consequences of First Nations interactions with non-Aboriginal peoples, and the challenges and opportunities which such interaction led to. The course will further develop an awareness of the assertion of First Nations' rights and interrelationships globally.



First Nations Studies 3 – Course Content

Unit 1: An Introduction to First Nations Study

*Learners begin by developing an understanding of the relevance of First Nations Studies locally and internationally by an initial analysis of recent developments in Australia's First Nations call for recognition, reconciliation and political representation resulting from the 2017 **Uluru Statement from the Heart**.*

Learners define key terms used in the course including First Nations, First Peoples, nations, states and settler states, colonisation and decolonisation.

Learners consider the geographic distribution and linguistic diversity of First Nations globally.

First Nations Studies 3 – Course Content

Unit 2: Traditional First Nations Worlds

In Unit 2, learners identify and describe traditional forms and expression of First Nations worldviews, and aspects of culture including social ordering, communication and technology.

Learners develop an understanding of First Nations ways of knowing and being as well as cultural practices, skills, knowledge and belief systems, and describe the importance of worldview and culture as means of forming and sustaining individual and communal identity.

Learners demonstrate their understanding of the importance of traditional First Nations worldviews as an affirmation of the symbiotic relationship of First Nations culture to lands, seas and waterways. The unit is divided into four sub-parts; Worldviews, Technology, Society and Religion.

First Nations Studies 3 – Course Content

Unit 3: Contact, First Nations Resistance and Settler Colonisation

In the third Unit, learners examine the historical experiences of First Nations contact, colonisation and conflict with settler states.

Learners explore initial justifications for settler state contact and develop an understanding of the targeted, specific and intentional policies and practices utilised by colonisers to explicitly assimilate and diminish First Nations; their culture, history and their peoples.

Learners explain and analyse the effect of disease, and land appropriation, frontier conflict and warfare on First Nations as well as the initial Indigenous resistance to these practices.

First Nations Studies 3 – Course Content

Unit 4: First Nations Advocacy, Self-Determination and Global First Nations Politics

In Unit 4 learners explain and evaluate the progressive development of First Nations political movements in the context of First Nations finding voice in the contemporary period.

Learners are involved in an investigation into the processes and organisational strategies which gave rise to effective Indigenous influence and pan-Indigenous political solidarity and the resultant efforts of First Nations peoples to achieve recognition, rights to self-determination and sovereignty.

Learners explain the development of transnational First Nations political and cultural groups and organisations, and evaluate the efforts and successes of these groups to advance the rights of First Nations peoples in the international sphere through global institutions such as the United Nations.

Learners study the international legal instruments; the treaties, conventions and protocols which give effect to the international community's desire to affirm, protect and develop First Nations.

Learners develop a critical understanding of the significance of **First Nations agency** in progressing pivotal acts of truth telling, apologies and atonement.

First Nations Studies 3 – Course Content

Unit 5: Contemporary First Nations Identity, Community, Connection to Place and Cultural Resurgence

In the final content-based unit, Learners examine the contemporary resurgence of First Nations identity, community, culture and connection to place.

Learners identify and explain the active process of the reaffirmation of key elements of First Nations Identity, the indigenisation of state policy domains in response to First Nations initiatives and calls to action as well as the frequently successful efforts made by First Nations to regain control of lands and waterways.

Learners additionally examine the significant growth and diversity of contemporary First Nations cultural practices in the performing and creative arts; in the production of artefacts and in the restoration and reinvigoration of First Nations cultural traditions.

First Nations Studies 3 – Course Content

Unit 6: Student Directed Extended Research Inquiry

Learners undertake a student directed inquiry into the comparative experience of Aboriginal First Nations and any other two First Nations previously studied in the course.

Learners select a category of First Nations Studies and to develop a research question. In finalising the research question consideration must be given to the criteria being assessed and the standards within these to ensure the question allows for appropriate complexity and breadth.

Learners are to produce a 4000-6000 report which must incorporate primary and secondary sources, referenced appropriately, which will form the basis of final assessment.

First Nations Studies - Learning Outcomes

By undertaking this study learners, will:

- Better understand the world views, beliefs, values and aspirations of Australian First Nations, as well as those of other First Nations in a number of international settings
- Understand the significance of language to individual and group identity
- Appreciate the importance placed by First Nations in the maintenance of traditions, connection to place, and customs
- Reflect on what has been achieved internationally to achieve cultural renewal and reconciliation by First Nations
- Engage with the voices, views, aspirations and forms of artistic expression of First Nations across the globe
- Develop an understanding of the importance of collective action and advocacy by First Nations within International Law.

Having undertaken this course, learners will be effective and knowledgeable advocates for positive change in contemporary Australia.

First Nations Studies 3 – Intrinsically comparative

First Nations Studies 3 is at its heart, a comparative curriculum. This means learners are required to compare the different cultural, historical, and political experiences of and between different First Nations over time and in different places.

By drawing on the experiences, challenges and successes of First Nations in Australia and those elsewhere, this course seeks to improve our ability as Australians to achieve Makaratta; 'the coming together after a struggle'.

From learning about the struggles and success of others, we too can move forward.

The Decolonisation of Assessment in First Nations Studies

In the development of First Nations Studies, I was acutely aware of the necessity to the practical decolonisation of assessment practices. Accordingly I sought to develop a course which:

- Is respectful of Indigenous episteme and authentic assessment practices.
- Socially transformative and constructed as an explicit and active form of decolonisation and social transformation.
- Configured so as to be a mechanism for truth-telling.
- Strongly trans-disciplinary curriculum: not limited to a historical narrative.

Importantly it was recognised that getting the content of the curriculum right was one part of the process, however a recognition of the part of teaching practice – pedagogy - was critical as well.

The Relationship between Pedagogy, engagement, educational leadership, community and First Nations Education

Factors which underpin effective pedagogy in First Nations Studies include:

- an acknowledgement that issues of First Nations culture are inseparable from questions of economic and political power
- that a sense and affirmation of First Nations place and identity should be infused into every aspect of teaching practice
- that resistance, persistence and adaption are the norm in First Nations social, cultural, political and economic life
- education should not take learners away from their culture and identity, but should bring learners into closer contact with it
- education is not isolated from community and community is an integral part of First Nations learners educational participation and achievement.

In Conclusion

How can education overcome a contested past and create a more secure common future for all Australians?

References

Tasmanian Aboriginal Studies 2 – Course Document:

<https://www.tasc.tas.gov.au/students/courses/humanities-and-social-sciences/tas215118-1/>

First Nations Studies 3 – Course Document:

<https://www.tasc.tas.gov.au/students/courses/humanities-and-social-sciences/tas315119/>

The Orb:

<https://www.theorb.tas.gov.au/>

Adam Grover's Churchill Fellowship Report: *Creating a New Space to Learn and Walk Together - First Nations Curriculum and Pedagogy*:

<https://www.churchilltrust.com.au/fellows/detail/4238/Adam+Grover>