



Course: Indigenous Fine Arts: New Horizons FP11013 F01

Semester: Summer

Credit Hours: 2

Class Meeting Times: Monday-Friday 5-6pm, Thursday-Friday 8:30-12:30, Daily Study Hall

Course Fee: \$0

Instructor: Athaliah Duby

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Office Hours: by appointment

Introduction to Drumming, Kuspuk Sewing and Beading, Fish Net Making

Course Syllabus

Summer 2025, 3-Week Intensive

Course Description

This immersive 3-week intensive introduces students to the rich cultural practices of Alaska Native arts, focusing on traditional drumming, kuspuk sewing and beading, and fish net making. Through hands-on activities, demonstrations, and cultural discussions, students will develop technical proficiency and deepen their understanding of Alaska Native cultural heritage. The course emphasizes active engagement with Indigenous aesthetics and storytelling, drawing from experiences from community cultural bearers.

No prior experience is required, and all are welcome to participate. All materials are provided at no cost to students. The course culminates in a final showcase where students present their crafted works and share their learning experiences in a supportive community setting. Expect to dedicate approximately 40 hours, including class time and independent work, to fully engage with the intensive format.

Learning Objectives

Through this course, students will:

- Develop technical skills in Alaska Native drumming, including traditional techniques, rhythm and patterns recognition, group drumming, and singing while drumming.
- Gain proficiency in kuspuk sewing and beading, creating a wearable garment with traditional designs.
- Learn fish net making techniques, producing a functional net and understanding its cultural significance.
- Deepen cultural knowledge of Alaska Native traditions through storytelling, discussions, and engagement with Indigenous aesthetics.



- Enhance critical thinking and creative expression by analyzing and discussing their own and peers' work in a culturally respectful context.

Active Learning

Active learning in this course involves hands-on practice, reflective discussions, and collaborative critiques to foster deep cultural and technical understanding. Students will engage in:

- Practicing drumming, sewing, beading, and net making under instructor and mentor guidance.
- Participating in group discussions about Alaska Native cultural contexts and artistic processes.
- Completing projects and presenting work in critiques to receive constructive feedback.
- Dedicating time outside of class to refine techniques and complete assignments.

Instructional/Delivery Methods

This course is delivered in person over a 3-week intensive period, with daily sessions combining demonstrations, hands-on practice, guest speakers, and cultural discussions. Instructors and cultural bearers will:

- Demonstrate techniques for drumming, kuspuk sewing, beading, and fish net making.
- Provide one-on-one guidance and group instruction to support skill development.
- Facilitate discussions on Alaska Native history, cultural significance, and contemporary practices.
- Conduct group and individual critiques to encourage reflection and growth.

Students will complete three major projects (one per art form) and participate in daily skill-building exercises. Projects will be presented in a final showcase, displayed with cultural context provided through artist statements. All work will be submitted physically during class sessions.

Required Texts, Readings, Materials

No required texts or purchases are necessary. All materials, including drums, sewing supplies, beads, netting tools, and related equipment, are provided by the course at no cost. Students are encouraged to bring a journal for notes and reflections.

Attendance & Participation

Attendance is mandatory for all sessions due to the intensive nature of the course. The course relies heavily on in-person participation, and absences will significantly impact skill development and project completion. Students are allowed one excused absence for emergencies (e.g., illness, religious observances) with prior notification. Additional unexcused absences will result in:

- 2 absences: Lowering of final grade by one letter grade.



- 3 or more absences: Potential course failure.

Tardiness or leaving early three times will count as one absence. Participation in critiques and the final showcase is equivalent to an exam and is mandatory. Missing a critique will result in a 50% reduction in the project grade. Full engagement in discussions, demonstrations, and hands-on activities is expected to maximize learning.

Communications Expectations

All official course communication will be sent via university email. Students are expected to check their email daily for updates, announcements, or feedback.

Technical Requirements & Support Services

- **IT Support:** For technical issues with university email or other systems, contact the IT Helpdesk at 907-564-8350 or ithelpdesk@alaskapacific.edu.
- **Library Resources:** The UAA/APU Consortium Library (<https://consortiumlibrary.org/>, 907-786-1871) supports research on Alaska Native arts. Activate library privileges through the IT Department.
- **Disability Support Services:** Students requiring accommodations should contact Kaili Martin, Assistant to the Dean of Students (kamartin@alaskapacific.edu, 907-564-8287), to arrange reasonable accommodations following university procedures.
- **Honor Policy:** Students must complete all work with integrity. Submitting others' work or using AI-generated content is prohibited and may result in course failure or expulsion.

Grades & Grading Policies

Grades reflect technical skill, cultural engagement, creativity, and participation. Late projects lose 10% per day unless pre-arranged. Assignments submitted on time may be revised for a higher grade.

Grading Scale:

- **A (92-100%):** Outstanding work exceeding expectations with superior technique and cultural depth.
- **B (82-91%):** Strong work meeting requirements with good technique and creativity.
- **C (72-81%):** Meets minimum requirements but needs refinement in technique or engagement.
- **D (60-71%):** Below expectations, incomplete, or lacking effort.
- **F (0-59%):** Fails to meet minimum requirements or not submitted.

Graded Assignments & Components:

- Attendance & Participation: 150 points
- Daily Skill Exercises (drumming, sewing, net making): 100 points
- Project 1: Alaska Native Drumming (rhythm performance): 150 points
- Project 2: Kuspuk Sewing & Beading (completed garment): 150 points



- Project 3: Fish Net Making (functional net): 150 points
 - Final Showcase & Artist Statement: 100 points
- Total: 750 points**

Course Calendar

- **Week 1:** Introduction to Alaska Native arts, kuspuk sewing fundamentals, fish net making techniques. Daily exercises and cultural discussions. Project 1& 2 (Fish Net and Kuspuk) assigned.
- **Week 2:** Introduction to drumming. Advanced techniques in Kuspuk making, group critiques, and project refinement. Project 3 (Drumming) assigned. Project 3 due
- **Week 3:** Final project work, fish net completion, and preparation for showcase. Project 1-2 due. Final showcase and artist statements presented on the last day.

A detailed daily schedule will be provided on the first day of class.

