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To: Candidate for PhD in Indigenous Studies
From: Indigenous Studies PhD Steering Committee
Subject: Indigenous Studies PhD Comprehensive Exam

Enclosed you will find the instructions for the work you will do constituting the ***comprehensive exam*** for your PhD in Indigenous Studies. You will have three themes to address over a period of three months (approximately one month per theme) at the end of which you will be expected to submit three papers averaging 10 to 15 pages each plus a cover page for each theme (12 point type, 1.5 line spacing with appropriate APA citations). The themes listed below are intended to coincide with the focus of your PhD dissertation, so that if done properly, the papers you prepare for your comprehensive exam should also serve as chapters/sections in your dissertation. It is important therefore, that you have identified a focus for your dissertation research by the time you take on your comprehensive exam, and if possible, the exam papers should be completed the semester before you immerse your self in the writing of your dissertation. For credit purposes, you are encouraged to enroll in three or more credits of CCS 699, *Thesis*, the semester in which you take your comps, and then enroll in the final credits of CCS 699 the final semester when you complete your dissertation, though it is possible to complete all more than six credits of CCS 699 in one semester.

When you are finished with the three comp exam papers, please submit your responses to your committee chair and me as e-mail attachments—they will then be forwarded to and reviewed by your PhD committee members to determine if they are satisfactory or not. If any of the committee members have questions about any of the responses they will convey those to you, and an oral exam will be scheduled with your committee and an outside examiner to review your responses to the comp topics. Once the committee is satisfied with your responses, the appropriate paperwork will be submitted to the Graduate School signifying that you have completed your written and oral comprehensive exam for your PhD. This will be followed by submission of your Advancement to Candidacy as you come down the home stretch on your dissertation. Let me know if you have any questions along the way.

Following is a brief description of the three papers you are to prepare for your comprehensive exam. Your responses should roughly correspond to the introduction, literature review and research design associated with your PhD dissertation research. Good luck in your endeavors!

Theme # 1: Overview of Proposed PhD Dissertation Research Topic

In the work you did for the course, CCS 608, *Indigenous Knowledge Systems*, it was pointed out that Indigenous peoples have traditionally formed a strong bond with the land and environment in which they live, and this bond has shaped much of their ways of knowing, world views and forms of consciousness that make up their Indigenous knowledge system and underlie their cultural traditions and practices.

Based on the observations and issues raised in the courses you have taken for your PhD program, as well as your own experience, describe the topic you plan to address for your dissertation and discuss how it will contribute to the cultural practices, community well-being and/or quality of life of the people/community/organization to whom it is addressed. In other words, make the case for what you are planning to do and why, and provide illustrative examples to bolster your response.

Theme # 2: Literature Review on PhD Dissertation Topic

Given the research topic you have identified under Theme # 1, conduct a review/synopsis of existing literature related to the dominant idea, subject, principle or practice associated with your topic. Typically, the literature you cite should be from within the past ten years or so, and it should cover the major threads of prior work on the subject and locate your proposed contribution to the field (your contribution will be elaborated under Theme # 3). Provide appropriate citations (APA style) for the pertinent literature addressed in your review.

Theme # 3: Research Issues Related to PhD Dissertation Topic

Whereas the literature review under Theme # 2 highlights what is already known regarding your proposed dissertation topic, your response to Theme # 3 will describe the kind of information you will be assembling for your research building on the previous work, and the research/cultural documentation issues you anticipate as you proceed. How will you go about gathering the information you need to complete your dissertation, and what steps will you take to demonstrate respect for the cultural knowledge you will be drawing upon? Describe the kinds of information you will be seeking for your research, how you plan to go about it, and how you will attempt to make sense out of it in a culturally considerate way. You are encouraged to review the materials discussed in the CCS 604, *Documenting Indigenous Knowledge* course as you prepare your response to this theme. If your dissertation involves working with human subjects, this paper should be helpful in preparing your application to the Institutional Review Board as well.

If appropriate, you may also describe some of the issues that have arisen among Indigenous peoples regarding cultural and intellectual property rights as they relate to research, including the steps that have been taken by Indigenous peoples' to address these issues and to take into account indigenous knowledge systems, ways of knowing and world views.