



NATIONAL  
ENDOWMENT  
FOR THE  
HUMANITIES

## **Narrative Section of a Successful Application**

The attached document contains the grant narrative and selected portions of a previously-funded grant application. It is not intended to serve as a model, but to give you a sense of how a successful application may be crafted. Every successful application is different, and each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects its unique project and aspirations. Prospective applicants should consult the current Institutes guidelines, which reflect the most recent information and instructions, at <https://www.neh.gov/grants/education/institutes-higher-education-faculty>

Applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with the NEH Division of Education Programs staff well before a grant deadline.

Note: The attachment only contains the grant narrative and selected portions, not the entire funded application. In addition, certain portions may have been redacted to protect the privacy interests of an individual and/or to protect confidential commercial and financial information and/or to protect copyrighted materials.

Project Title: *The Native American West: A Case Study of the Columbia Plateau*

Institution: Whitman College

Project Directors: Laurie Arnold and Christopher Leise

Grant Program: Institutes for Higher Education Faculty

**The Native American West: A Case Study of the Columbia Plateau**  
Summer Institute for College and University Teachers

**Introduction:** Whitman College requests funding for an NEH Summer Institute for higher education faculty, including up to twenty-five faculty from community and tribal colleges and other two- and four-year colleges and universities, and at least five non-tenure track or adjunct faculty. The two-week Institute, “The Native American West: A Case Study of the Columbia Plateau,” will convene at Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington from June 17 through July 1, 2018. The Institute will explore a variety of perspectives on the Native American West, the Columbia Plateau, and U.S. history. Just as Plateau peoples’ religion, subsistence practices, politics, and aesthetics were inextricably intertwined, programming will emphasize an interdisciplinary approach required to fully comprehend Indigenous experiences and perspectives on American history. To help participants create syllabi and/or modules for undergraduate history courses, morning activities will typically emphasize discussion of new content and afternoons will blend discussion of content with classroom implementation strategies inspired by participants’ questions and observations. Site visits will punctuate the programming throughout the Institute, in order to meaningfully locate this Institute in this place and to highlight place-based learning. Participants will leave with new ideas about Western and American Indian history, enhanced theoretical and methodological skills, and new syllabi and/or modules for immediate adoption at their home institutions. The co-directors and faculty will work with participants to create a broadly accessible web-based repository of resources.

**Intellectual Rationale:** Framed by scholarly historical works about Native Americans, the Lewis and Clark expedition, land, religion, conflict, and ongoing tribal and personal self-determination, the Institute seeks to expand, complicate, and sometimes contradict accepted U.S.

history narratives about the West. To offer more nuanced interpretations of the Columbia Plateau region, we will draw upon both published and oral accounts by members of local Native American communities. This content will reveal spiritual and cultural practices in the eras prior to American and European immigration, and will contextualize Indigenous and American responses to each encountering the “other.”

Homeland is vital to Native American lifeways and cultural perspectives. This place-based Institute will not only educate participants about recent exciting developments in scholarship about the Plateau, it will also demonstrate how participants can apply lessons learned through this Institute in the Native American homelands where they live and teach, while pointing to resources and questions ripe for further research. Whitman College is an ideal location for this Institute because of its access to tribal partners and tribal historic sites in and around Walla Walla—the Yakama Treaty of 1855 was signed on a spot within today’s Whitman College campus—and because of its central location between Celilo Falls on the Columbia River in Oregon and the Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture (MAC) in Spokane, Washington, both of which are included in the Institute’s intellectual design and schedule.

The Columbia Plateau begins in British Columbia and extends across eastern portions of Washington and Oregon, and western portions of Idaho and Montana. Roughly the same size as France, this region is often referred to as being “interior” because it is several hundred miles from a coastline and much of it was also beyond American overland migration routes (see Appendix E, p. 72). Lewis and Clark famously traveled across the southern Plateau in 1805, and British fur traders began to make incursions on the northern Plateau in the 1810s, but missionaries did not arrive to the region until the 1830s and they did not make serious cultural inroads until the 1840s and beyond. So while eastern and Midwestern tribes had experienced

displacement by colonial immigrants for as long as two centuries prior to formal Indian removal in the 1830s, the Columbia Plateau remained primarily an Indigenous space into the mid-nineteenth century. Further, because Native tribes and bands of the Plateau never left this place, it persists as an Indigenous space co-occupied by non-Native people.

Because the Plateau was left largely undisrupted into the nineteenth century, when expansion—economic, cultural, or residential—occurred, colonial processes moved at a much more accelerated pace than in other regions of the U.S. For example, a mere fifty years after Lewis and Clark entered the region, territorial governor Isaac Stevens coerced fourteen bands and tribes to sign the Yakama Treaty, a document that ceded nine million acres of ancestral homelands to the United States. The Nez Perce Treaty, also negotiated in 1855, ceded 7.5 million acres of ancestral homelands to the U.S. To quash tribal unrest resulting from these treaties, Stevens engaged a volunteer army; these “soldiers” harassed and killed Native peoples in the region, and their actions went unchecked. A few years later, Colonel George Wright overwhelmed Plateau tribes and bands during the 1858 Plateau War, a conflict that began in answer to an Indian ambush of an army scouting party, and ended with the slaughter of 800 horses and the hangings of a dozen Indian men.

While Plateau tribes that negotiated treaties did not win many concessions—and in 1863 the Nez Perce Treaty was changed to further reduce the Nez Perce lands by more than five million acres—Plateau tribes that did not participate in negotiations were deemed “non-treaty tribes.” Eventually Executive Order reservations were created for these bands and tribes in the 1870s and 1880s, without tribal consultation or consent. During this same era, the Wheeler-Howard General Allotment Act was designed to surround Native American communities by White Christian neighbors, in order to accelerate Native American assimilation into the dominant

U.S. culture. Allotment reduced Plateau reservation land bases by at least an additional two million acres. After the process of loss and change, the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 promised to revitalize the tribal self-determination that had never disappeared. Columbia Plateau tribes fought legal battles to restore lands, to receive promised government benefits, and to restore fishing and hunting rights compromised through settlement and hydropower. Because many contemporary Plateau tribal members still live on or adjacent to their ancestral homelands, cultures and cultural practices remain intact and have once again become part of everyday community lifeways.

In the past, many U.S. history courses failed to advance narratives of Native peoples beyond the nineteenth century, which has led to Americans imagining Native peoples as historical peoples rather than as vibrant communities consisting of more than 560 federally recognized tribes that still exist. If people know about the Columbia Plateau at all, their knowledge is typically limited to Lewis and Clark and Chief Joseph (Nez Perce). In fact, because the Corps of Discovery was initiated in part as an exploration of the Louisiana Territory, people frequently view the Columbia Plateau as part of the Louisiana Purchase. It was not. The Plateau was jointly occupied by the British and the Americans as a contested territory until 1846 when the boundary was established. Owing partly to the region's remoteness from large urban centers and coastal trade hubs, colonization encircled the so-called "Inland Empire," a lived reality that is inconsistent with the story about straightforward westward expansion of white hegemony over the West.

As distant from dense population centers as from Francis Parkman's and John Wayne's popularized accounts of the American West, Native peoples of this region were largely overlooked by scholars until very recently. Including their stories in a more nuanced

undergraduate curriculum is long overdue. In recognition of the necessarily interdisciplinary approaches to understanding this history, this program integrates literature, film, fine arts, museum interpretation, and material culture into the Institute, and we invite scholars from those disciplines to connect their fields to history. Of equal importance, we invite tribal scholars and tribal interpretative professionals to limn their narratives and practices for participants as well.

The sharp regional focus of the case study approach belies the breadth of contributions the Institute content can make to college courses, including: Native American history and studies, federal Indian policy, U.S. history surveys, Western history, public history, military history, environmental history and studies, literature, and visual and material culture. This interdisciplinary approach reflects trends in teaching and learning, national humanities conversations about creating broader opportunities for engagement, and approaches to Native Studies that increasingly emphasize national and tribal distinctiveness. In addition, the primary source workshop offered in the Institute highlights best practices in teaching U.S. history with documents. The project co-directors anticipate that conversations about digital tools and primary source interpretation will pervade workshop discussions, especially as the co-directors and the visiting scholars broaden definitions of “text” to include images, maps, and oral accounts.

Our schedule is ambitious for two weeks, but because the co-directors and the visiting scholars know the content so well, we are confident that participants will leave the Institute with new content knowledge, enhanced theoretical approaches to content interpretation, new methods for integrating digital and primary source tools into their syllabi and classrooms, and new directions for research programs. We also believe that discussions of place-based content and methods will translate easily from our model, to be adapted by participants on topics pertinent to their own regions. Additionally, we are sensitive to the schedules of tribal and community

college faculty, as well as to non-tenure track and adjunct faculty, who may not have access to the same kind of summer teaching breaks as do four-year college and university faculty.

**Program of Study:** This Institute explores how Plateau peoples understand their homelands as their spiritual, cultural, and personal identities. Further, it explores how Indigenous lifeways remained vital in the face of colonialism's existential threat, and also how these lifeways persist dynamically in the present, offering a distinctive viewpoint on Western history that is too frequently elided in conversations and courses about the West. Faculty members will ground each discussion with three shared principles in mind. First, each reading offers mere inroads into a given subject (see Reading List, Appendix B, p. 20); consequently, faculty members will offer lists of resources for further study to post on the Institute website. Second, this content is to be teachable to undergraduates, often in modules and not in whole courses. Finally, faculty will encourage participants to drive conversations about how best to contextualize their presentations broadly and also urge participants to consider how they can fit the content into their extant courses or, when possible, how they might modify their curriculum to emphasize Native perspectives on (Western) U.S. history. Conversations will be lively, dynamic, and focused as best possible on participants' needs, interests, and contributions.

After getting to know each other on Sunday evening at a social gathering (see Syllabus, Appendix A, p. 18), participants will spend the first Monday considering the Western European historical tradition, then consider an Indigenous alternative to it. Faculty members Laurie Arnold and Christopher Leise will present on Hayden White's foundational historiographical scholarship, which highlights the effects of historians' writerly choices. Susan A. Miller's overview of Indigenous historiography provides an overview of her nascent field, pointing out features of Native American thinking that require serious consideration to accurately capture the

nuances of the past.

Many of the nuances of the Indigenous Plateau issue from what Sahaptian speakers call *tamánwit*, or the natural law of their national land. The Tamástslíkt Cultural Institute (TCI) in Pendleton, OR, a tribal interpretive center founded on cutting-edge ideas about museology, brings this concept to life for visitors of this region (see Appendix F, p. 73). There, on Tuesday, faculty member Roberta Conner (Cayuse) will explain how *tamánwit* shaped Plateau peoples' religions, subsistence practices, land-management strategies, kinship networks, and politics. She will then walk participants through the surprising narrative of how British and American traders forged mutually beneficial relationships—ties that turned violent after myths of the Whitmans changed the public image of Plateau Indians, spurring violent incursions and driving the implementations of such policies as the reservation system and boarding schools. Participants read *They Are Not Forgotten*, a Sahaptian place-names atlas recently published by affiliates of TCI, which offers an Indigenous understanding of the Columbia Plateau.

Wednesday will feature a morning-long interactive discussion of how faculty teach the mid-to-late nineteenth century in their courses, particularly through the lens of the West. We want these teachers to share both their successful experiences as well as their anxieties to help determine the group's needs and interests. Having introduced participants to intellectual theory and community-informed narratives, this day will provide an introduction to the processes of change on the Columbia Plateau. Larry Cebula's *Plateau Indians and the Quest for Spiritual Power* frames Plateau colonization as a process begun through inter-tribal trade, even before the arrival of outsiders to this place. Cebula will discuss how trade wealth was viewed by Plateau peoples as a manifestation of a kind of unique spirit power, and how that perspective led to development of a syncretic Indigenous/Christian spirituality on the Plateau. That spirituality



faltered during the inevitable competition for resources caused by expansion to the region, and by the 1840s, political power on the Plateau had been restructured, diminishing Indigenous peoples' authority in the process. Resistance was marked by the Whitman killings in 1847, U.S. authority was reasserted through the 1855 treaties, and resistance rose again in the Plateau Wars of 1858. In leading these conversations about the dynamic first decades of the nineteenth century, Cebula will also draw from and model the use of digital tools, and discuss public humanities approaches to disseminating historical knowledge.

Developing the narrative of the dynamic nineteenth century Plateau, Chad Hamill (Spokane) will lead Thursday's conversations regarding how song served the purpose of reconfiguring and maintaining Indigenous spiritual power as Christian Missionaries changed the political and religious makeup of the inland Northwest. Engaging with *Songs of Power and Prayer in the Columbia Plateau*, participants will consider and discuss ways Jesuit priests effectively used song as an entry-point for conversion among Columbia Plateau tribes and how, during that process of transformation, the priests themselves were changed. These discussions will reinforce the mutual nature of knowledge exchange on the Plateau and will highlight tribes' cultural and spiritual continuity.

Even more than missionary work, nothing fundamentally changed the inland Northwest as much as the reservation system, for treaty tribes and bands, non-treaty peoples, and U.S. citizens alike. On Friday Alexandra Harmon will take the group through treaties, executive orders, and litigation against the federal government. She will discuss the numerous ways these federal documents continue to define what tribal sovereignty means as well as the day-to-day impacts on tribal lives. Harmon's *The Power of Promises* will undergird Friday's programming on how participants could frame the role of reservations in making the modern West.

Acknowledging that time and energy are precious for Institute participants, the weekend schedule will be leisurely but stimulating. On Saturday morning participants will have time to reflect on what they've learned and to imagine how they can use their newly acquired content and perspectives in their courses. In the afternoon, archivists from Whitman College and Washington State University will offer introductions to their archival collections and to online tools about the Plateau that participants can utilize in building and teaching their courses. Sunday will be a day off, though the co-directors will create options for loosely structured activities that will allow participants to explore the region and convene informally if they choose.

We will open Week Two by considering the effects of Columbia River dams, another instrument of U.S. expansion that literally reshaped the American West. These discussions will serve as a transition into modern technological and economic conditions of the contemporary Plateau. We will take the Institute to The Dalles, Oregon, a two-hour trip on a chartered coach. The purpose of this trip is both to view The Dalles Dam in context of mechanizing the Columbia River and also to visit the site where the great Celilo Fishery stood as a cultural and economic gathering place for centuries. On the way, National Park Service Ranger Roger Amerman (Choctaw) will offer ethno-geological insights into how Plateau peoples understand their homelands. Once in The Dalles, Katrine Barber will discuss the cultural implications and modern complexities of damming the Columbia and Snake rivers. The dams aided in irrigating and electrifying the West, and they also destroyed critical ancestral sites of spiritual and economic activity, including Celilo Falls. Salmon are central to Plateau peoples' religious, cultural, and physical well-being, and they will feature centrally in these discussions, guided by selections from *Salmon and His People* and *The Death of Celilo Falls*.

Grand Coulee Dam is another among the 14 dams on the Columbia River, and the bands

of the Colville Confederated Tribes experienced similar losses when their ancestral fishing grounds at Kettle Falls were flooded after Grand Coulee's completion. Colville Reservation history and politics offers a distinctive but representative glimpse into twentieth-century Plateau history. On Tuesday, Laurie Arnold (Colville) will introduce participants to the Reservation through the lens of federal Indian policies applied to the Colville Indians and also through the experiences of one of the tribe's leaders, author Christine Quintasket. Colville societies have always been gender-equal, and Colville women have played powerful leadership roles in protecting and preserving the community. Christine Quintasket, pen name Mourning Dove, lived through and contributed to many of the Colville peoples' most complicated political issues in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Studying her biography in combination with Arnold's *Bartering with the Bones of Their Dead* will expose participants to the Colville peoples' remarkable capacity to withstand potentially community-dissolving federal policies.

On Wednesday, Christopher Leise will connect Quintasket's overlapping artistic and political roles to Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and Sherman Alexie's film *Smoke Signals*. Though often read as a document criticizing the mid-century impulse to cultural conformity, Kesey's novel also documents the effects of community dissolution and land-loss as a consequence of damming the Columbia. Alexie's film similarly explores the effects of historical trauma in the life of two maturing young men on the Coeur d'Alene reservation in Idaho. The day's content will also consider the distinction between historical trauma and traumatic loss, and how those two concepts are so important in understanding the Indigenous West.

Maintaining the thread of Arts and American Indian political and cultural sovereignty, the Institute will travel to Spokane on Thursday. As with the trip to The Dalles, this site visit will

give participants a sense of the Columbia Plateau's enormity—though traveling from Walla Walla to Spokane in a chartered coach will take roughly three hours each way, that journey traverses less than one-third of the region's north-south extent. In Spokane, participants will visit the Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture. Led by Michael Holloman (Colville) and Scott Manning Stevens (Mohawk), participants will get an overview of Plateau peoples' artistic production from pre-Contact basketry and architecture, through Iroquois-influenced figurative beadwork, into contemporary media of all types. We will also consider the changing visual representation of Native peoples of the region, from earlier paintings and photography into modern media.

To continue thinking about how institutions tell the stories of inland Northwest Native peoples, the Institute will visit the Whitman Mission National Historic Site on Friday. Faculty members Amy Lonetree (Ho-Chunk) and Superintendent Timothy Nitz (Nez Perce) will discuss theoretical problems and practical solutions for Indigenizing sites of public memory. Lonetree will lead participants in a discussion comparing Tamástslikt's architectural and representational strategies in comparison with the current Whitman Mission museum space, and Nitz will discuss the challenges of offering a balance between Cayuse and mainstream U.S. perspectives on the Mission site, especially in light of the Congressional mandate to which the Park is responsible. We will also analyze how the Mission Site has changed over time, and what the Park's staff is doing to forge a future for Native perspectives in the space.

Friday afternoon, Lonetree will join Arnold and Leise to recap the Institute's opening-day consideration of various theoretical approaches, whether they be through ideas about Indigenous intellectual sovereignty, borderlands thinking, trauma studies, decolonizing settler-colonialism, or other lenses. We will focus on respecting Plateau peoples' interpretations while also

recognizing the patterns of British settler-colonialism's footprint, in order to consider how the Plateau's experience was distinctive but not entirely unique. This synthetic conversation will also prepare participants for Saturday's culminating activity, a syllabus design workshop. Beginning mid-morning, historian Brian Collier will discuss methods and approaches to integrating Plateau content within participants' existing courses. Arnold, Leise, and Lonetree will also participate in this workshop, as resources for participants as they explore options for syllabus design and revision.

**Project Faculty and Staff:** Laurie Arnold (Colville), director of Native American Studies and assistant professor of history at Gonzaga University in Spokane, and Christopher Leise, associate professor of English at Whitman College in Walla Walla, will co-direct the Institute. Arnold is an enrolled member of the Sinixt band of the Colville Confederated Tribes and grew up on the Colville Reservation. Her monograph, *Bartering with the Bones of Their Dead: The Colville Confederated Tribes and Termination*, is a federal Indian policy history written from a community orientation. As director of Native American Studies at Gonzaga, Arnold teaches about Plateau tribes and U.S. and Native American history, and also develops programs and partnerships to enhance knowledge about the Columbia Plateau, particularly the Indigenous Plateau. Arnold's previous appointments include the University of Notre Dame and the Newberry Library's D'Arcy McNickle Center for American Indian and Indigenous Studies. As Associate Director at the McNickle Center, Arnold co-organized the Lannan Summer Institute for Tribal College Teachers, a two-week session that focused on research and content development for Native American topic courses. Arnold also visited several of the NEH Summer Seminars and Institutes operated by the Newberry Library each year during her tenure there.

Leise teaches multi-ethnic literatures of the U.S., including American Indian literatures.

His scholarly work focuses on origin myths and nationalist discourses; a recent book examining popular misconceptions of colonial New England in modern America, *The Story upon a Hill: Myths of Puritanism in Contemporary American Fiction*, is forthcoming from the University of Alabama Press in Spring 2017. He has organized numerous events on campus and the Walla Walla region focused on drawing greater attention to Native American voices in the telling of Columbia Plateau history. His research and teaching on Anglophone Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Literature won a \$12,000 Graves Award in the Humanities; this experience of teaching Northeastern Native Studies on the Indigenous Plateau will prove a useful resource for teachers who want to modify the Institute's theories and methods for areas outside the Inland Northwest.

Katrine Barber is Associate Professor of History at Portland State University, specializing in the Pacific Northwest, the Columbia River, and public history.

Brian Collier is a historian and faculty member in the Alliance for Catholic Education at University of Notre Dame, teaching the history of education and American Indian Education. He also chairs the Western History Association's Committee on Teaching.

Larry Cebula is Professor of History at Eastern Washington University, specializing in American Indian History, the history of the U.S. West, and public history.

Roberta Conner (Cayuse) is Director of Tamástslikt Cultural Institute. She is the former Chair of the Board of Directors of the National Museum of the American Indian and a contributor to *Lewis and Clark Through Indian Eyes*.

Cheryl Gunselman is Manuscripts Librarian at the Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections at the Washington State University Libraries, Pullman.

Chad Hamill (Spokan) is Associate Professor of Applied Indigenous Studies and Vice President of Native American Initiatives at Northern Arizona University, where he specializes in

music and sovereignty, music and spirituality, and Indigenous ecological knowledge.

Alexandra Harmon is Professor Emerita of American Indian Studies and History at the University of Washington, specializing in History, Law and Political Thought, and Race and Ethnicity.

Michael Holloman (Colville) is Associate Professor of Art History and Fine Arts at Washington State University, specializing in contemporary art and contemporary Indigenous art. He is also the former director of Plateau Cultural Studies at the Northwest Museum of Art and Culture (MAC).

Amy Lonetree (Ho-Chunk) is Associate Professor of History at UC-Santa Cruz, specializing in Indigenous history, Museum Studies, commemoration and public memory, Native American cultural production, and Ho-Chunk Tribal history.

Timothy Nitz (Nez Perce) is Superintendent of Whitman Mission National Historic Site.

Melissa Salrin is Archivist and Librarian at Penrose Library at Whitman College.

Scott Manning Stevens (Mohawk) is Associate Professor and Director of Native American Studies at Syracuse University, specializing in visual culture, museum studies, and Native American literatures.

**Participant Selection:** While this Institute would naturally be of special interest to any faculty members already engaged in the field of Native American Studies and Pacific Northwest history, the Institute is designed to foster broader comprehension of the Indigenous Columbia Plateau in faculty outside the region, and to illustrate the numerous contributions knowledge of Columbia Plateau history can make across U.S. history fields. In accordance with NEH policies, the selection committee will reserve at least five spots for non-tenure track/adjunct faculty. While humanities faculty members from any institution of higher education are eligible, we will

make a special outreach to target tribal colleges and community colleges. Participants will be selected on the competitive strengths of their applications, by a selection panel comprised of the project directors and a content area expert from another four-year institution.

**Project website:** The Institute's website will promote the Institute and help recruit diverse participants. It will also serve as a repository for resources, such as bibliographies and links to regional archives' finding aids that will be accessible to participants and non-participants alike. In addition, participants will be expected to use the site as a vehicle for sharing the resulting syllabi and/or course modules as they emerge and develop through implementation.

**Institutional Support:** Whitman College, founded as a memorial to Marcus and Narcissa Whitman in 1859, is located at the site where the Yakama Treaty of 1855 was signed. Its campus is located in downtown Walla Walla, WA and will offer affordable housing and meals for interested participants; moreover, though remote, Walla Walla's airport makes it easily reachable. Seminar discussions will take place in Maxey Hall in a room adjacent to Whitman's Maxey Museum collections. Owing to Walla Walla's large tourism trade, the surrounding area offers a wide array of housing options from hotel rooms to houses, all within walking distance to campus. Participants may elect to live in dorms with access to shared kitchens and coin-operated laundry machines for \$50/night. Participants may also choose to dine on campus at the rate of \$50/three meals each day. Project Faculty will stay at the Marcus Whitman Hotel, with which Whitman College negotiates reduced rates annually, presently \$<sup>(b) (4)</sup>/night. Finally, Whitman will offer participants library privileges, wi-fi access, and fitness center passes for the duration of their stay (see institutional letter of support, Appendix G, p.74). While NEH funds will support initial design and creation of the Institute's website, Whitman College will continue to host the site after the conclusion of the Institute, as part of its institutional support of the project.



**Appendix E**  
**Map of the Columbia Plateau and the Tribes who Inhabit the Region**



Image from: <https://www.aanativearts.com/plateau-region-tribes>

# Appendix F

## THE PLATEAU SEASONAL ROUND

