



2026 ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

HAIDA GWAI
INSTITUTE



LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



Here on Haida Gwaii, the seasons rarely change quietly. Instead, they arrive with movement and energy, reminding us how closely our work and learning are tied to the rhythms of the land and sea. Sk'aadgaa gud ad is *learning together*, we were given that Xaayda Kil phrase from Elders at the Skidegate Haida Immersion Program (SHIP) when we started offering semester programs. I've been reflecting on what makes HGI's courses and programs so unique. I believe it's the relationships we have built over the years that sustain this work; the connections with communities, partners, and the extraor-

dinary people who share their knowledge with our students. In this edition of the HGI newsletter, we are proud to highlight some of the people that contribute to making Haida Gwaii Institute education so meaningful and transformative. Our instructors, an incredible group of scholars, working professionals, and local community experts. Their work spans conservation, resource management, science, reconciliation and social justice. Each brings not only expertise but also deep care for place and community. I invite you to meet the remarkable people who have taught in our in-person and online programs this year on page 8 & 9. Our HGI Advisory Council, always there to offer support and guidance; our HGI Advisory represent our communities, our organization's history and roots, HG Semester Alumni and the Faculty of Forestry and Environmental Stewardship. Meet our HGI Advisory Council on page 7. Our Community Educators, the people who bring the content and context of our courses to life, in the forests and on the shores of Haida Gwaii and in the class-

room. We are incredibly grateful for our Elders, Haida scholars, working professionals, researchers, who generously share their time and knowledge. See some of the fieldtrips and community educators on page 10 & 11. There are many people that contribute to making HGI Semester experience so special, those who rent to students, those who take the time to meet and have a friendly chat when they see our students in town, local organizations that offer volunteer opportunities. We are grateful for all of the people and places that support the programs and welcome students each term. As you read through these pages, we hope you feel inspired by the vibrant network of individuals who make our work possible. Whether you are an alum, a partner, or a friend of HGI, thank you for being a part of this journey. We invite you to stay connected, as we continue to learn and share lessons from the land, sea and the people, together, Sk'aadgaa gud ad is. Haw'aa,

- K'iinuwaas *Carrie Anne Vanderhoop*

OUR TEAM



HGI DIRECTOR



OPERATIONS
MANAGER



ADMISSIONS & ONLINE
LEARNING
COORDINATOR



IN PERSON
LEARNING
COORDINATOR



ADMINISTRATION
MANAGER



2026/27 COURSE CALENDAR

IN-PERSON PROGRAMS in Skidegate, Haida Gwaii



SEMESTER IN NATURAL RESOURCE SCIENCE

September to December

- HGSE 352 Indigenous Governance & Land Stewardship
- HGSE 355 Applied Ecology of Coastal Terrestrial Ecosystems
- HGSE 356 Marine Terrestrial Interactions
- HGSE 357 Ecology & Management of Island Wildlife
- HGSE 359 Ecosystem Based Management



SEMESTER IN MARINE CONSERVATION

January to April

- HGSE 360 Ocean People, Culture & Tradition
- HGSE 361 Fisheries Co-Management of the North Pacific Coast
- HGSE 362 Marine Protected Areas
- HGSE 363 Applications in Marine Conservation
- HGSE 364 Ocean Governance



SUMMER SESSION IN PLANTS, PEOPLE AND PLACE

May and June

- HGSE 330 Social Ecological Change: An Intro to Systems Thinking
- HGSE 331 Environmental Assessments in Cross-Cultural & Indigenous Contexts
- HGSE 332 Plant Ecology & Diversity
- HGSE 333 Indigenous Plant Knowledge: Ethnobotany & Ethnoecology



2026/27 COURSE CALENDAR

ONLINE COURSES



HGSE 383 Social Innovation & Entrepreneurship

Instructor: Fraser Earl
September to December
Monday & Wednesday
9-10:30am



HGSE 394 Marine Conservation in BC

Instructor: Dr. Lais Chaves
September to December
Tuesday & Thursday
9-10:30am



HGSE 320A Histories & Personal Responsibilities: Indigenous People & Colonialism in Canada

Instructor: Dr. Gwooyim Gyat
September to December
Monday & Wednesday
1-2:30pm



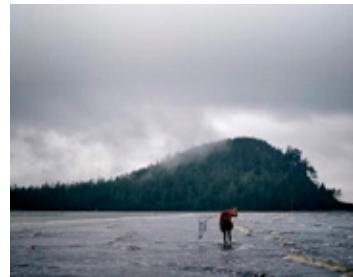
HGSE 311 Law & Governance: Indigenous & European Traditions

Instructor: Dr. Vivian Weitzner
January to April
Monday & Wednesday
10-11:30am



HGSE 320A Histories & Personal Responsibilities: Indigenous People & Colonialism in Canada

Instructor: Dr. Gwooyim Gyat
January to April
Tuesday & Thursday
8-9:30am



HGSE 371 Re-Storying Histories: Indigenous Perspectives

Instructor: Dr. Gwooyim Gyat
January to April
Tuesday & Thursday
11:30-1pm



HGSE 354 Diversifying Resource Dependant Communities

Instructor: Conner Cepella
January to April
Monday & Wednesday
1-2:30pm



HGSE 312 Perspectives on Reconciliation

Instructor: Dr. Jen Gobby
May to June
Monday & Wednesday
9-11:30am



HGSE 313 Reconciliation & Resource Management

Instructors: Nigel Baker-Grenier & Aaron Cressman
May to June
Tuesday & Thursday
9-11:30am



HGSE 381 Ecological Economics

Instructor: Dr. Kaitlin Kish Linden
July to August
Tuesday & Thursday
9-11:30am



HGSE 373 Community Planning & Development for Resilience

Instructor: Kris Olsen
July to August
Monday & Wednesday
9-11:30am

LEARN MORE &
REGISTER:





THANK YOU, DEB PEARSON



After a decade of dedicated service, Deborah Pearson has retired from our team. Deb was a steady force behind the scenes, keeping things organized and moving along smoothly through different chapters and seasons of our organization. Deb was an excellent problem solver and team player, she helped us advance many projects and get to where we are today. We want to wish Deb all the best in her retirement, which we know will not be boring! We hope she will have more time for working in her beautiful garden, for visiting with friends and family, and for enjoying all of the things she loves about Haida Gwaii. Haawa/haw'aa *thank you* for the many meaningful contributions you made during your years with HGI!

SEEKING WISE COUNSEL

HGI is governed by an Advisory Council, along with UBC Forestry and Environmental Stewardship Office of the Dean. Our Advisory Council is an engaged and committed working group made up of mostly local people, who share in a mission to deliver education inspired by Haida Gwaii. Together they offer their experience and community connection to inform our strategic direction within UBC and on Haida Gwaii. They help ensure we are operating in a good way and in alignment with our core values. Some of our Advisory Council were founding members of the Haida Gwaii Higher Education Society, the roots of our organization. Others teach in our undergraduate and professional development programs, co-develop our new curriculum as we expand our course offerings, join classes as community educators, and one of our newest members is even a former HGI student! We are grateful for the ongoing support and guidance of our Advisory Council, both past and present.



OUR INSTRUCTORS

One of the most exciting parts of studying with the Haida Gwaii Institute, is the opportunity to build connections with and learn from our incredible teaching team. Our teaching team is made up of people from many different walks of life, academic and professional backgrounds, all with various relationships to Haida Gwaii. We want to shine a light on those who have taught courses with us in the past year!



Dr. Carolyn Gibson
HGSE 359 Ecosystem
Based Management
Director of Cumulative
Effects with the Province
of BC, local resident, HGI
alumna



Dr. Laís Chaves
HGSE 394 Marine
Conservation in BC
Marine Use Planner
for the Tsawout First
Nation



Berry Wijdeven
HGSE 357 Ecology &
Management of Island
Wildlife
Former Species at Risk
Coordinator with the
Province of BC, local
resident



Dr. Caroline Fox
HGSE 356 Marine
Terrestrial Interactions
Conservation Scientist
and Coastal Ecologist
with the Canadian
Wildlife Service



**Skil Hiilans Allan
Davidson**
HGSE 352 Indigenous
Governance & Land
Stewardship
Hereditary Chief, local
resident, member of the
HGI Advisory Council,
archaeologist



Dr. Viviane Weitzner
HGSE 311 Law &
Governance: Indigenous
& European Traditions
Legal anthropologist,
activist, researcher,
writer



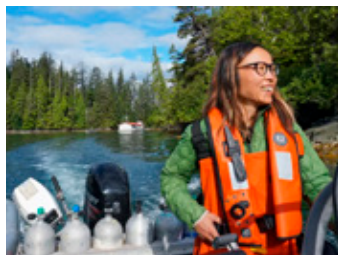
Gid Yahk'ii Sean Young
HGSE 360 Ocean People,
Culture & Tradition &
HGSE 331 Environmental
Assessments in Cross-
Cultural & Indigenous
Contexts
Collections Curator with the
Haida Gwaii Museum, Haida
Watchman, archaeologist



Dr. Severn Cullis-Suzuki
HGSE 333 Indigenous Plant
Knowledge: Ethnobotany
& Ethnoecology
Environment and culture
activist, author, Haida
Gwaii Mentor Apprentice
Program language
coordinator, local resident



Dr. Fiona Beaty
HGSE 362 Marine Protected Areas | Marine Conservationist, Science Coordinator with the Great Bear Sea MPA Network Initiative



Dr. Lynn Lee
HGSE 363 Applications of Marine Conservation
Marine Ecologist with Gwaii Haanas Parks Canada, local resident



Julien Braun McLeod
HGSE 364 Ocean Governance
Haida Gwaii Marine Plan Project Manager with the Council of the Haida Nation, local resident



StiidGa Jaad Niisii Guujaaw
HGSE 364 Ocean Governance
Marine Planning Program Manager with the Council of the Haida Nation, local resident



Fraser Earl
HGSE 383 Social Innovation & Entrepreneurship
Admissions and Online Learning Coordinator with HGI, education management professional, local resident



Dr. Gwooyim Gyat
HGSE 371 Re-Storying History: Indigenous Perspectives & HGSE 320A Histories & Personal Responsibilities: Indigenous Peoples & Colonialism in Canada
Gitsxan Legal Scholar, educator



Dr. Dan McCarthy
HGSE 330 Social Ecological Change & HGSE 331 Environmental Assessments in Cross-Cultural & Indigenous Contexts | School of the Human Environment, Department Head at University College Cork



Shona Ellis
HGSE 332 Plant Ecology & Diversity & HGSE 355 Applied Ecology of Coastal Terrestrial Ecosystems
Retired Professor of Teaching with UBC Botany and Associate Head of Biology



Natalie Benoit RPBio
HGSE 361 Fisheries Co-Management of the North Pacific Coast
Fisheries Biologist, HGI Alumna



Dr. Jen Gobby
HGSE 312 Perspectives on Reconciliation
Founder of Research for the Front Lines, educator, researcher



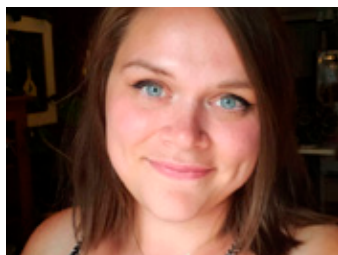
Elizabeth Bullbrook, JD
HGSE 313 Reconciliation & Resource Management
Managing Lawyer with White Ravel Law, archaeologist, former local resident



Nigel Baker-Grenier, JD
HGSE 313 Reconciliation & Resource Management
Associate Lawyer with White Raven Law, lead dancer for Dancers of Damelahamid



Aaron Cressman, JD
HGSE 313 Reconciliation & Resource Management
Associate Lawyer with White Raven Law



Dr. Kaitlin Kish Linden
HGSE 381 Ecological Economics
Postdoctoral fellow for the Economics for the Anthropocene project at McGill University, ecological economist, educator



Kris Olsen
HGSE 373 Community Planning & Development for Resilience
Former Mayor of Daajing Giids, special education assistant, local resident



Dr. Jaskwaan Amanda Bedard
HGSE 372 Language & Cultural Continuity
Haida Language Educator and Advocate, Assistant Professor at SFU, local resident

OUR COMMUNITY EDUCATORS

All of our programming includes a variety of connection points with Community Educators – people who join in the field or classroom, to share their direct experience on some of the complex issues explored in our courses. In this way we are able to engage with a diversity of perspectives, in an effort to represent a cross-section of community and to help ground concepts in local contexts and case studies. Community Educators significantly enrich the learning experience and it's an aspect of programming that we really treasure. We are so grateful to the people who join us year after year, to generously share their time and knowledge, and to support education inspired by Haida Gwaii.

Some of our Community Educators have become curriculum developers, course instructors, and other types of partners. Haawa/haw'aa *thank you* to everyone who contributes in these meaningful ways, and for sharing so much with us. If you have an interest in becoming a Community Educator, please reach out to our team!



Spirit Lake with Gaajjiaawa



Birdwatching with Rian Dickson of Laskeek Bay Conservation Society



Goshawk habitat talk with Kiku Dhanwant and her good dog



Kuunajaad Jenny Cross' plant presentation at Antler Cove



Community hatchery tour with Brad Yonkman



Hiking Taaw Hill with Gwaliga Hart



Low tide with Gudt'aawt'is Judson Brown



Learning about old growth with Elijah Washington

NEW ONLINE COURSE





HGSE 320A HISTORIES & PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITIES: INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND COLONIALISM IN CANADA

This course examines how colonialism in this country is remembered, denied, justified, challenged, and lived across institutions and everyday life. Beginning with questions raised by the late, Honourable Murray Sinclair on identity and life purpose, students will explore how colonial narratives are reproduced through schools, media, universities, business, law, and state policy. Students will critically examine such topics as residential school denialism, citizenship education, anti-Indigenous racism, land acknowledgements, Aboriginal title, UNDRIP and DRIPA implementation, and Indigenous responses to global crises.

Grounded in Indigenous scholarship, public controversies, documentaries, legal cases, and contemporary media, the course invites students to reflect on their histories and personal responsibilities within ongoing colonial realities and to ponder the ways in which these narratives are not only produced and contested, but how they might be re-storied towards better relations.

The development of this course has been led by Dr. Gwooyim Gyat, with support from a local advisory committee of curriculum reviewers, including Sgaas Sgwaansing *Shyla Cross*, Gwaay K'iiyanda *Aaliyah Arens*, Taanud Jaad *Joanne Yovanovich*, Kuujuuhl *Evelyn Vanderhoop*, Gid Yahk'ii *Sean Young*, Fraser Earl, Skil Hiilans *Allan Davidson*, and Dr. Jaskwaan *Amanda Bedard*, as well as UBC faculty and GAA Rep'rep'sken *Morris Prosser*. Dr. Gyat will also be teaching – he is a Gitsxan scholar and educator whose work explores Indigenous law, governance, and history. Drawing on both academic and land-based learning, he encourages students to engage in complex issues with curiosity, humility, and balanced judgement.

While currently listed under a temporary code of HGSE 320A, this is actually a first year (100 level) course and open to all students and lifelong learners. Our intention is that it will eventually become the prerequisite for HGSE 371 Re-Storying History: Indigenous Perspectives. Students taking any of our online or in-person programming are strongly encouraged to take this foundational course!

SEMESTER IN MARINE CONSERVATION

In January 2026 we offered the Haida Gwaii Semester in Marine Conservation – a program that was launched only once before in 2020, in Kil Kun *Sandspit*. After laying dormant for five years, it was so wonderful to return to these courses with a new wave of energy and this time around, based in Skidegate.

This program explores some of the enduring, emerging, and keystone concepts within the broad study of marine conservation. It is offered during our stormier winter months from January to April, and is not a field-based science program where students are working on the water or out conducting field research. It is intended for people with an interest in studying marine conservation from the ocean's edge on Haida Gwaii, with a focus on community-based learning.

We welcomed a really diverse group of 14 students, who came to us from 11 different Universities across Canada, representing a wide range of academic disciplines. It is so enriching to have this diversity in a classroom

setting, where people bring different lenses to concepts and discussions, making for a lively learning exchange.

The teaching team was a vibrant mix of local and visiting course instructors, as well as a selection of amazing community educators, who joined to share their expertise, perspectives, and first-hand experiences on topics and case studies examined in class. It also included a variety of field trips and activities, into the many living classrooms of Haida Gwaii.

We plan to continue offering this program and invite any curious students to reach out to our team for more information, or to apply online! And if you're a local Haida Gwaii resident who would like to enrol for one or two (or all!) of the courses, we are opening special, limited seats for this purpose – welcoming traditional undergraduate students, lifelong learners, or anyone in between.



NITEP & HGI COLLABORATIONS

HGI was pleased to host a special hybrid offering of HGSE 372 Language & Cultural Continuity, for a cohort of students from UBC's Indigenous Teacher Educator Program at the Faculty of Education, this July. Dr. Jaskwaan *Amanda Bedard* taught this course partially online, with one immersive week on Haida Gwaii, based out of Hiellen Longhouse Village.

This cohort was made up of students from Lax Kw'alaams, Metlakatla, and Kitkatla who are pursuing their Bachelor of Education degrees, including a 21-credit Indigenous Education specialization. How amazing to connect with these future educators, who will be affecting positive change in our neighbouring communities and school districts, just across the Hecate Strait!



STUDENT HOUSING

Do you know of any short-term housing opportunities, at the south end of Haida Gwaii? We help connect our incoming students with available local housing – rooms in family homes, private suites, tiny houses or cabins, off-season tourist accommodation, etc. If you have a place you'd like to chat about listing, please reach out anytime to hg.institute@ubc.ca.



MORE INFO

These are exciting times for Haida Title! HGI congratulates the Haida Nation on the many years of hard work and dedication that have led to the signing of historic agreements and the recognition from Canada and BC, affirming that Haida Gwaii belongs to Haida People.

This work, and the good people who come together to do it, are a source of inspiration for us. We aim to respectfully share these lessons with our students, so that they can understand the importance of gud ad t'alang hlGang.gulxa tll yahda/tll yá'adee Gii gud ahl t'alang hlGángulaang *people working together to make it right.*

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