



University of Alberta
Native Studies

RELATIONALITY LAB REPORT

- 2024 / 2026 -

Principal Investigator

Dr. Matthew Wildcat

Report by

Kyla Lindsay

Draft

OVERVIEW

The Relationality Lab is a student training and research space led by Dr. Matthew Wildcat at the University of Alberta. The Lab is funded primarily by a SSHRC insight grant Wildcat received to fund the Relational Governance Project. The Relationality Lab brings together professors, undergraduate and graduate students to learn about Indigenous relationality as both a field of research and an everyday practices. Participants worked together to analyze academic research and critically think about the relationships between academia and Indigenous identities. Lab members also conducted a large scale literature review on Indigenous Relationality and have led multiple academic and community workshops with outcomes like drafting the Faculty of Native Studies event principles. Most important, the space helps to grow students own leadership and relational practices.

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LAB MEMBER INFO

Meet our members!

- Abigail Lee
- Claire Neilson
- Cori Baldson
- Daniela Carbajal
- Dezmond Coyes-Loiselle
- Elizabeth Hunter
- Julia Cardinal
- Kaylie Stalthane
- Kelsey Dokis-Jansen
- Kyla Lindsay
- Lexi House
- Mailys Paccoud
- Marc Junior Doire
- Ryan O'Toole
- Tamara Blesse
- Theresa Ngo

ARTICLE CLUB BIBLIOGRAPHY

Each semester, Lab members identified a set of readings to undertake collectively to learn about the latest research on Indigenous Relationality. Selecting the list was primarily led by Tamara Blesse and Matthew Wildcat with input by other members.

Byrd, J. A. (2020). What's normative got to do with it? Toward indigenous queer relationality. *Social Text*, 38(4), 105–123.
<https://doi.org/10.1215/01642472-8680466>

Crosschild, R. (2025). Straddling Boundaries, Rebuilding Relations: Queer Indigenous Governance in Blackfoot Territory. *Topia (Montreal)*, 50(1), 27–51. <https://doi.org/10.3138/topia-2024-0038>

Gaudet, J. C. (2019). Keeoukaywin: The Visiting Way - Fostering an Indigenous Research Methodology. *Aboriginal Policy Studies (Edmonton, Alberta, Canada)*, 7(2), 47–64.
<https://doi.org/10.5663/aps.v7i2.29336>

Halle-Erby, K. (2024). “Relationships are reality”: centering relationality to investigate land, indigeneity, blackness, and futurity. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 37(1), 114–131.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2022.2025471>

Jadallah, C. C. (2025). Positionality, relationality, place, and land: Considerations for ethical research with communities. *Qualitative Research: QR*, 25(1), 227–242. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794124124617>

Kuokkanen, R. (2026). It's about all relations: Indigenous feminist theory of relational freedom. *Review of International Studies*, 52(3), 514–533. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210525100879>

Jadallah, C. C. (2025). Positionality, relationality, place, and land: Considerations for ethical research with communities. *Qualitative Research: QR*, 25(1), 227–242. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14687941241246174>

ARTICLE CLUB BIBLIOGRAPHY

Legault, G., Bleau, D., & Carter, D. (2025). From Protocols to Practice: Integrating Wahkohtowin and Keeoukaywin in Community-Based Research Methodologies. *International Review of Qualitative Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/19408447251403490>

Loukes, K. A., Ferreira, C., Gaudet, J. C., & McGuire-Adams, T. (2022). A methodological protocol for conducting a scoping review of health research on/by/with Indigenous women in North America. *Systematic Reviews*, 11(1), Article 233. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13643-022-02080-6>

Snelgrove, C., Wildcat, M. (2023). Political Action in the Time of Reconciliation. In H. Stark, A. Craft, & H. Aikau (Eds.), *Indigenous Resurgence in an Age of Reconciliation* (pp. 157–176). Univ Toronto Press.

Strakosch, E. (2024). Violence as care: Indigenous policy and settler colonialism. In S. Lightfoot & S. Maddison (Eds.), *Handbook of Indigenous Public Policy* (pp. 18–34). Edward Elgar Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781800377011.00007>

Wildcat, M. (2020). Replacing Exclusive Sovereignty with a Relational Sovereignty. *Borderlands E-Journal*, 19(2), 172. <https://doi.org/10.21307/borderlands-2020-014>

Wolff, M. (2026). Responsible Relations for AI Ethics. *Modern Theology*, 42(3), 629–643. <https://doi.org/10.1111/moth.70071>

West, S., Haider, L. J., Hertz, T., Mancilla Garcia, M., & Moore, M.-L. (2024). Relational approaches to sustainability transformations: walking together in a world of many worlds. *Ecosystems and People (Abingdon, England)*, 20(1), Article 2370539. <https://doi.org/10.1080/26395916.2024.2370539>



WINTER 2024

Relational Governance Project

This first Relationality Lab was completing an important and impactful portion of the Relational Governance Project. This focused on First Nations communities and the delivery of education. As a team, we completed the Education Database for the Relational Governance Project. This involved coding every First Nations school, grades K-12, within Canada. We input information such as Nation name, location, grade levels, and who is running the school. Specifically wanting to find if they were run by the Federal or Provincial government, if they ran the education program themselves or if they were using co-governing strategies by partnering with neighbouring First Nation communities to create a larger education council to provide more resources and opportunities for their students and community members. Our team members for the Relational Governance Project were Matthew Wildcat, Kelsey Dokis-Jansen, Kyla Lindsay, Claire Neilson, Marc Junior Doire, and Daniel Carbajal

Also within this lab was Native Studies student and scholarship award winner, Tamara Blesse who completed a project through the Indigenous Primary Healthcare and Policy Research Network in Alberta with Dr. Wildcat as her mentor. Her literature review focuses on incorporating Cree language within healthcare facilities to eliminate language barriers for community members seeking medical care.

SUMMER 2024

The Summer 2024 term was our official pilot year for the Relationality Lab, our team members were Claire Neilson, Kelsey Dokis-Jansen, Kyla Lindsay, Maily Paccoud, Ryan O'Toole, and Tamara Blesse, led by Dr. Matthew Wildcat. As a lab we held a facilitation workshop to create a set of principles that we envisioned for our lab space.

RELATIONALITY LAB SPACE PRINCIPLES

- **KEYOKÊTÂN! (LET'S VISIT!): A RECIPROCAL SPACE FOR VISITING, CONNECTION AND COMMUNITY, ROOTED IN JOY, KINDNESS AND SHARING.**
- **CREATE A WARM ADAPTABLE MULTI-USE SPACE FOR CEREMONY AND ART**
- **AN ENERGIZING RESEARCH SPACE FOR COLLABORATION, CREATIVITY AND FOCUS**
- **CREATING STRONG, SUPPORTIVE AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY WHERE PEOPLE FEEL THEY BELONG**
- **ROOTED IN SACRED ANCESTRAL KNOWLEDGE TO STRENGTHEN CULTURAL CONNECTIONS**

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SUMMER 2024

During this time we also introduced the Article Club. The Article Club consisted of choosing scholarly articles to read and discuss together on a weekly basis. This helped us connect more deeply with Indigenous knowledges and relationality based research practices.

As a lab, we attended and assisted an Indigenous Housing Event hosted at MacEwan University, in collaboration with MacEwan University, NiGiNan Housing Ventures and the Inner City Health and Wellness Program team led by Renee McBeth. During this two day event we listened to panelists discuss Indigenous housing areas of strength and areas of focus for improvement. We also helped with facilitation workshops, where participants of the event were asked to think about Indigenous housing programs in Edmonton. Participants worked in small groups to discuss their ideas and solutions.

Research Assistant, Kyla Lindsay, won a research project scholarship through the Indigenous Primary Healthcare and Policy Research Network, under the mentorship of Dr. Matthew Wildcat. This project focused on Indigenous Food Sovereignty and how we can incorporate these practices into K-12 schools to facilitate further Indigenous knowledge education to our youth and promote deeper connections to culture through traditional dietary practices for both physical and mental health purposes.



WINTER 2025



During this time, Research Assistants, Kyla Lindsay and Tamara Blesse continued working alongside Dr. Wildcat on planning for events such as facilitation workshops and panel discussions. As well as, conducting research by finding and reading articles that discuss Indigenous relationality, to be used in the Annotated Bibliography on Indigenous Relationality.

Dr. Wildcat also taught a 400-level Selected Topics in Indigenous Studies course where Native Studies students read and discussed articles related to Indigenous Research Methods. Students were asked to read a number of articles to discuss with one another in a type of Article Club style as we had done in the Relationality Lab.

Key articles used in the course:

Coulthard, G. S. (2007). Subjects of Empire: Indigenous Peoples and the 'Politics of Recognition' in Canada. *Contemporary Political Theory*, 6(4), 437–460. <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.cpt.9300307>

Deloria, V. (1998). Intellectual Self-Determination and Sovereignty: Looking at the Windmills in Our Minds. *Wicazo Sa Review*, 13(1), 25–31. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1409027>

Gone, J. P. (2019). Considering Indigenous Research Methodologies: Critical Reflections by an Indigenous Knower. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 25(1), 45–56. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800418787545>

Quinn, A. L. (2022). Bridging Indigenous and Western Methods in Social Science Research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 21, Article 16094069221080301. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069221080301>

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SUMMER 2025

The summer of 2025 brought another successful year for the Relationality Lab. Our members were Abigail Lee, Claire Neilson, Cori Baldson, Kyla Lindsay, Lexi House, Makayla Mantla, and Tamara Blesse. We continued with our Article Club, reading and discussing thought provoking articles that connected with Indigenous relationality.

Faculty of Native Studies Event Principles

Through the collaboration of our lab members and Faculty of Native Studies staff, we created Event Principles for the Faculty of Native Studies to create respectful guidelines for attendees to follow. The purpose of this was to develop principles rooted in Indigenous knowledges and teachings to guide how the Faculty of Native Studies hosts public and private research events with care, accountability and respect. These principles were created using the ORID (Objective, Reflective, Interpretive and Decisional) method of facilitation and consensus building, participants were divided into small groups and were guided through a series of questions. These questions allowed for participants to understand the objective of the workshop, provided an opportunity for reflection on their own lived experiences and knowledges, allowed for new interpretations of potential principles and culminated in a collaborative thematic categorization of the identified principles. The new principles were then transformed into statements, forming the finalized FNS Event Principles.





SUMMER 2025

Faculty of Native Studies Event Principles

- WE COMMIT TO CREATING A WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE SPACE THAT REFLECTS A DIVERSE RANGE OF EXPERIENCES AND VIEWPOINTS
- WE ARE ALL TEACHERS AND STUDENTS, ENTHUSIASTICALLY LEARNING AND SHARING OUR PERSPECTIVES
- WE DRAW FROM OUR ANCESTRAL KNOWLEDGE TO SHAPE OUR SHARED SPACES AND FOSTER GOOD RELATIONS
- WE ACKNOWLEDGE THAT WORKING THROUGH MOMENTS OF DISCOMFORT EMPOWERS US TO CREATE SUPPORTIVE SPACES
- WE RECOGNIZE THE DIGNITY OF ALL PARTICIPANTS THROUGH PRACTICING KINDNESS AND RESPECT IN OUR INTERACTIONS
- WE ENCOURAGE PARTICIPANTS TO HONOUR THEIR PHYSICAL NEEDS AND TAKE STEPS TO ENSURE PEOPLE ARE COMFORTABLE

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SUMMER 2025

Participedia School

Two of our Research Assistants, Kyla Lindsay and Tamara Blesse, got the opportunity to attend a Participedia School event called “Democratic Innovations in Latin America: Social Movements, Indigenous Peoples, and Traditional Communities” hosted by Participedia and the Federal University of the State of Rio de Janeiro (UNIRIO) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The school included panelists, case studies, collaborative projects and a community outreach day where participants were able to visit local communities at either a Quilombola community or the favelas. This school was extremely beneficial for Kyla and Tamara because it connected to relational governance within democratic societies through an Indigenous lens.

Annotated Bibliography on Indigenous Relationality

Another important project the lab collaboratively completed was the Annotated Bibliography on Indigenous Relationality. This was created in partnership with the Critical Approaches to Indigenous Relationality (CAIR) network. The annotated bibliography provides annotations for 35 articles on Indigenous Relationality and was created for individuals to access appropriate articles that benefit the understanding of what Indigenous relationality is and how it can contribute to knowledges and societies. The Principal Investigator for this project was Matthew Wildcat with Co-Investigators Jessie Loyer and Shalene Jobin and the researchers were Mailys Paccoud, Ryan O’Toole, Kyla Lindsay, Tamara Blesse, Lexi House, Claire Neilson, Kelsey Dokis-Jansen, and Abigail Lee.



[Click here to read the
Annotated Bibliography](#)

SUMMER 2025

First Culture Camp

In 2025, we hosted our first culture camp event out in Ermineskin Cree Nation, at Matthew Wildcat's parents property. Attendees included a research team from New Zealand, the Inner City Health and Wellness Program team based in Edmonton, and other scholars and researchers part of the University of Alberta community. We started the day at the Ermineskin powwow, grounding ourselves in community values. The day then continued at Brian Wildcat and Pam Cooke's residence, Matt parent's property on Ermineskin Cree Nation where people were able to connect with one another. Attendees were able to participate in trail walks with Brian Wildcat where he discussed history, family stories and knowledge of the land. This first run of the culture camp was a huge success for the Relationality Lab. We received extremely positive feedback on the day from attendees and we were eager to start planning for the following year's event.

WINTER 2026

The Winter 2026 lab team members were Cori Baldson, Dezmond, Coyes-Loiselle, Kaylie Stalthanee, Kyla Lindsay, Lexi House, Tamara Blesse and Theresa Ngo. As a lab, we had weekly meetings and continued with our Article Club which provided us with productive conversations regarding Indigenous relationality. There were also workshop facilitations regarding different Indigenous research methodologies. The team also began planning our 2026 Culture Camp to be held in May 2026. One of our facilitation workshops was to create a set of principles that can help guide us as a research lab.

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WINTER 2026

RELATIONALITY LAB GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- **We are responsible to show up honestly and authentically**
- **Create an environment of honesty, curiosity and acceptance**
- **Intentionally make time to visit and build relationships**
- **We will build toward and reflect upon tangible goals**

SUMMER 2026

The Summer 2026 lab team members were Cori Baldson, Kaylie Stalthanee, Kyla Lindsay, Lexi House, Tamara Blesse and Theresa Ngo. We began this lab with an Art practice and had time to create a piece of art of what we felt represented our research and what we envisioned for the lab. Together, we continued with planning and flushing out the details of the kihokewin Culture Camp. The lab also continued with weekly meetings and Article Club sessions.





SUMMER 2026

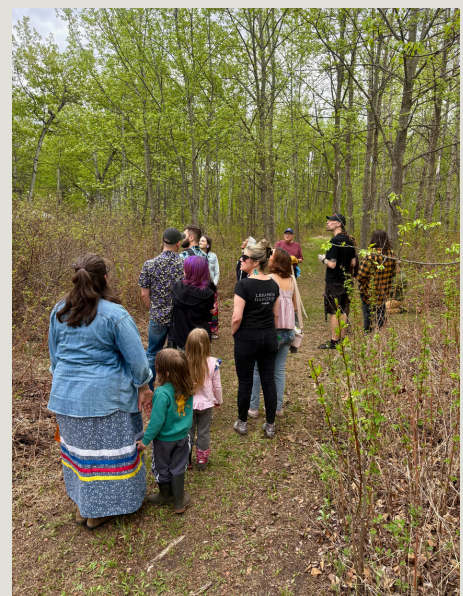
kihokewin Culture Camp

The 2026 Culture Camp was themed around the Cree term kihokewin, which means visiting. It was held at Matt's parents, Brian Wildcat and Pam Cooke's residence in Ermineskin Cree Nation. We thoughtfully curated the day by incorporating different stations for our guests to sign up for over 3-4 hours. We had 2 fireside chats with Elder John Nepoose and Elder Rose Mackinaw, an art making station with Tamara Blesse where people were able to sew medicine pouches, tea making with Cori Baldson where participants were able to make their own tea with harvested plants, trail walks led by Brian Wildcat, Cree singing with Jessie Loyer, and traditional plant knowledge with Clara Wildcat. The day concluded with a reflection discussion led by Matthew Wildcat. The kihokewin camp received positive feedback from participants that it was a successful day of meaningful conversations, relationship building and connecting with both one another and the land



Lab members: Tamara Blesse, Lexi House, Cori Baldson, Kaylie Stalthane, Theresa Ngo and Kyla Lindsay

Pictures taken at kihokewin camp



Trail walks with Brian Wildcat

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