



ILSA

THE INDIGENOUS LITERARY STUDIES ASSOCIATION (ILSA)

OUR GUIDING PURPOSE

- To honour the history and promote the ongoing production of Indigenous literatures in all forms; to advance the ethical and vigorous study and teaching of those literatures; to reaffirm the value of Indigenous knowledges and methodologies within literary expression and study; to foster respectful relationships within and between academic and non-academic communities; to facilitate mentorship and professional development; and to advocate for responsible institutional transformation.

OUR CONTEXT

- The Indigenous Literary Studies Association was created in 2013 to address the need for a scholarly body based in lands claimed by Canada that focuses specifically on the study and teaching of Indigenous peoples' literatures. We gratefully acknowledge that this has been made possible by the work of many other individuals and associations who have created space for the growth of this discipline.
- "Indigenous Literary Studies" is an expansive term that includes the study of literatures by Indigenous people and the use of Indigenous literary critical methods.
- While the root of the word "literature" refers etymologically to letters-or to alphabetic written language-we use the term to refer much more broadly to 'arts in the medium of language.' Although Indigenous literary studies sometimes focuses on written texts, it remains inclusive of and connected to the study of a wide range of textual and rhetorical productions, including oral traditions, film, music, graphic novels, and many other forms of creative expression. Likewise, we welcome and encourage engagement with Indigenous literatures composed not only in English and French, but also in Indigenous languages.
- While much of our work is grounded in the territories of Indigenous nations within the boundaries of the Canadian state, we honour our connections to the broader network of global Indigenous literary studies.

OUR VALUES

- ILSA acknowledges the continued existence of Indigenous nations within the territorial boundaries of lands claimed by Canada and the inherent and inalienable rights of those nations to self-determination;
- ILSA affirms the specificity of and diversity among Indigenous intellectual, spiritual, linguistic, and governance traditions and practices;
- ILSA values and seeks to support the survival and flourishing of Indigenous languages;

- ILSA respects the integrity of various communities, Indigenous and otherwise, and seeks to foster positive and accountable community building within and beyond the discipline of Indigenous literary studies;
- ILSA honours the creative work of Indigenous writers, storytellers, and literary artists of the past, present, and future on whose creative work the field of Indigenous literary studies depends;
- ILSA understands Indigenous literatures in a rich and open-ended manner that includes but is not limited to novels, short stories, poetry, orality, drama, film, music, screenwriting, and other forms of expressive art by Indigenous creative artists;
- ILSA values the sophistication and complexity of Indigenous literary expression and endeavours to foster strong, ethical scholarship thereof (while pursuing the continued re-evaluation of the standards by which we understand effective scholarship);
- ILSA honours the foundational critical work of foremothers and forefathers in the field of Indigenous literary studies;
- ILSA values new ideas, the production of new knowledge, and the development of new theories, methodologies, and practices;
- ILSA endeavours to mentor and support undergraduate and graduate students working in the field of Indigenous literary studies, with particular commitment to promoting the success of Indigenous students;
- ILSA seeks to foster an atmosphere of respect, sensitivity, and safety among its members, and ILSA expects its members' interactions with cultural productions, communities, and other members to be characterized by a high standard of integrity;
- ILSA seeks to promote a climate of generosity and collaboration over one of possessiveness and competitiveness within the field of Indigenous literary studies;
- ILSA seeks to foster the healthy and well-rounded lives of its members and others, recognizing that various forms of balance are integral to strong scholarly and creative work;
- ILSA is inclusive of and welcomes participation from persons of all races, gender identities, abilities, cultures, religions, spiritualities, sexual orientations, and economic strata;
- ILSA supports the responsible transformation of the academy to better reflect the values described in this document.

Adopted 19 October 2013, in the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the Musqueam people, Vancouver, BC, by the ILSA Inaugural Council: Kristina Bidwell, Renate Eigenbrod, JoAnn Episknew, Daniel Heath Justice, Keavy Martin, Sam McKegney, Rick Monture, Deanna Reder, and Armand Ruffo.

For more information about ways you can help to develop ILSA into the vibrant intellectual community envisioned in this document, please contact Sam McKegney (sam.mckegney@queensu.ca) or Daniel Heath Justice (daniel.justice@ubc.ca). We will soon have a website and other resources, so like our Facebook page to keep up with the latest ILSA news (<https://www.facebook.com/IndigenousLiteraryStudiesAssociation>)!