Moroni for President

DISCUSSION GUIDE AND LESSON PLANS:
Decolonization, Indigenization, and Intersectionality

Frameline
Youth in Motion
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ABOUT THE FILM

Moroni for President

DIRECTORS: SAILA J. HUUSKO & JASPER M. RISCHEN
DOCUMENTARY, 2018, USA, 53 MINUTES

Diné Bikéyah, known in the English language as the Navajo Nation, is the largest Native American reservation in the United States. Every four years, the Navajo tribe elects its president, whom many consider the most powerful Native American in the country. In the midst of a frenzied election to determine the next president of the tribe, *Moroni for President* takes the audience to every corner of this vast area in the iconic American Southwest. The film centers on Moroni Benally, an underdog candidate with radical ideas, whose homespun campaign originated out of anger about the lack of progress in the reservation where he grew up. The witty academic embarks on a grueling, lonely campaign, discovering soon enough that theory does not necessarily prepare you for the daily dirt of politics.

As the election unfolds, the film delves into Moroni’s layered identity as a Mormon and two spirit Navajo man and, along the way, expands to include other LGBTQ+ characters working on some of the other campaigns. This includes Zachariah George, who is the executive assistant to the incumbent president Ben Shelly, with a love for beauty pageants, traditional singing and the Navajo language; and Alray Nelson, an LGBTQ+ rights advocate and campaign manager of one of the frontrunners. Through its characters, *Moroni for President* examines the world of LGBTQ+ rights and the meaning of identity in the Navajo Nation, while shining a light on the pressing social issues facing Native Americans in the United States today.

DIRECTORS’ STATEMENT

“This film began as a student thesis project in early 2014. Little did we know that it would end up being a journey of several years in which each step would come with a new set of questions about how to best tell a story so complex and sprawling. We’re very humbled and honored to have been allowed to document this moment in time and in the lives of the inspiring main characters Moroni, Zachariah, and Alray, and we’re grateful to know that the film will find its way to screens, TV sets, and classrooms around the country and possibly the world. In the end we hope that you, the viewer, also walk away with more questions than answers.”

— Saila J. Huusko & Jasper M. Rischen
HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

We know these topics can be new and challenging for students and adults alike. Pages 5-9 can help you to determine how and where to use the film, introduce you to key terms, and provide you with tips on facilitating conversations.

**Approaching the Materials**

We recommend reviewing the background information and related resources in this guide whenever possible. The Film Discussion Guide section contains optional supplemental media assets that are intended to provide context and aid organizers in facilitating a post-screening discussion.

Discussions and activities can be implemented by educators in the classroom or by student groups, such as GSAs. There are three discussion themes:

- Decolonization
- Indigenization
- Intersectionality

The guide is intended to be flexible and adaptable to work best with varied community needs, interests, setup, and available time. Materials can be:

- Used individually or collectively
- Adjusted based on time constraints
- Adapted to relate to other content or areas of study.

![Image](image-url)
Why is LGBTQ+ Inclusive Curriculum Important and Necessary?

Studying LGBTQ+ history and culture encourages all students to think more critically about the world, helps to create safe and affirming communities for LGBTQ+ students and families, and has the power to transform lives. Consider downloading GSA Network’s Implementing Lessons that Matter¹ Inclusivity tool kit and GLSEN’s LGBTQ+ Inclusive Curriculum Best Practice Guide².

How to Use this Guide in Classrooms and Gender Sexuality Alliances (GSAs)

It is helpful for educators and students who are addressing LGBTQ+ related topics at school to understand there may be potential push-back. It is important to know your rights when it comes to using LGBTQ+ themed content at your school. For example, in California, teaching about sexual orientation and gender identity is not only protected, but mandated by the FAIR Act (http://www.lgbtqhistory.org). However, laws vary from state to state and it is highly recommended you research where your state and/or district stand.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- GLSEN’s Erasure and Resilience: The Experiences of LGBTQ+ Students of Color, Native and Indigenous LGBTQ+ Youth in U.S. Schools³ is one of a series of reports on LGBTQ+ students of color that examines the school experiences of Native and Indigenous LGBTQ+ youth and is relevant to the film guide and curriculum this year. Other reports in this series examine the experiences of AAPI⁴, Black⁵, and Latinx⁶ LGBTQ+ youth.
- The GSA Network has launched Virtual GSA’s in Action, a digital space where they will feature opportunities to participate in virtual youth leadership events, online group conversation and training in digital organizing and engagement https://gsanetwork.org/resources/virtual-gsas/
- GLSEN has developed a ‘How-to Guide’ for hosting virtual GSA meetings and online events to promote community and to help LGBTQ+ youth. https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/2020-03/GLSEN_HostingVirtualEvent_2020_Final.pdf
- DC Public Schools Transgender and Gender Non-conforming Policy Guidance is a tool for schools, parents, and students to effectively navigate existing laws, regulations, and policies that support transgender and gender-nonconforming students. https://dcps.dc.gov/publication/dcps-transgender-and-gender-non-conforming-policy-guidance

¹ 1. https://gsanetwork.org/resources/implementing-lessons-that-matter
² 2. https://www.glsen.org/inclusive-curriculum
⁴ 4. https://www.glsen.org/research/api-lgbtq-students
⁵ 5. https://www.glsen.org/research/black-lgbtq-students
⁶ 6. https://www.glsen.org/research/latinx-lgbtq-students
Key Terms

For students, teachers, and parents, it can be intimidating to jump into conversations about sexual orientation and gender identity without knowing the correct terminology. The terms below are here as a starting point for conversations. And when in doubt, it is always best to have a check in and ask about someone’s preferred gender pronoun.

**Agender:** a person who does not identify with a gender identity or gender expression; some agender-identifying people consider themselves gender neutral, genderless, and/or nonbinary, while some consider “agender” to be their gender identity.

**Ally/Accomplice:** a person who recognizes their privilege and is actively engaged in a community of resistance to dismantle the systems of oppression. They do not show up to “help” or participate as a way to make themselves feel less guilty about privilege but are able to lean into discomfort and have hard conversations about being held accountable and the ways they must use their privilege and/or social capital for the true liberation of oppressed communities.

**Androgynous:** a person who expresses or presents merged socially-defined masculine and feminine characteristics, or mainly neutral characteristics.

**Asexual:** having a lack of (or low level of) sexual attraction to others and/or a lack of interest or desire for sex or sexual partners. Asexuality exists on a spectrum from people who experience no sexual attraction nor have any desire for sex, to those who experience low levels of sexual attraction and only after significant amounts of time. Many of these different places on the spectrum have their own identity labels. Another term used within the asexual community is “ace,” meaning someone who is asexual.

**Biphobia:** the prejudice, marginalization, and hatred of people who are perceived to be bisexual, also experienced by other identities (pansexual, omnisexual, etc.).

**Bisexual:** a person who may be sexually and/or romantically attracted to people of more than one gender.

**Boi:** a person who may identify as masculine-of-center and chooses to use this term as a reference to masculinity outside of cis-hood; a term originating in the black community.

**Butch:** someone who identifies themselves as masculine, whether it be physically, mentally or emotionally.

**Cisgender/Cis:** a person whose gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth (eg, man and male-assigned).

**Cisnormativity:** the societal and structural assumption that all people identify with the gender they were assigned at birth.

**Drag Queen/King:** a person who performs masculine or feminine gender theatrically. While some drag queens and kings also are transgender, the terms are not used interchangeably.

**Dyke:** a slur historically used against queer womxn, particularly masculine-of-center womxn, which now is reclaimed by some to affirm their identities.

**Fag:** a slur historically used against queer men, which now is reclaimed by some to affirm their identities.

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These materials are adapted from GSA Network Resources. Please visit this link to learn more: [https://gsanetwork.org/resources/gsa-terms-definitions/](https://gsanetwork.org/resources/gsa-terms-definitions/)

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**Frameline Youth in Motion**
Female-To-Male (FTM), Male-To-Female (MTF): used to describe a person who has gone through a gender transition, sometimes used to refer to someone who has had gender reassignment surgery.

Femme: someone who identifies themselves as feminine, whether it be physically, mentally or emotionally.

Gay: a person who is attracted exclusively to people of the same gender; often misused as an umbrella term for the entire LGBTQ+ community.

Gender: gender covers a wide range of concepts related to identities that apply to everyone.

Gender Characteristics: characteristics that are used to attribute gender to an individual, such as facial hair or vocal pitch.

Gender Confirmation/Affirming Surgery: a variety of medical procedures that trans people may choose to feel more at home in their bodies; wanting these procedures is not a requirement for being transgender.

Gender Expression/Gender Presentation: the way a person expresses their gender through gestures, movement, dress, and grooming.

Gender Identity: a person’s understanding, definition, or experience of their own gender, regardless of sex assigned at birth.

Gender Nonconformity: not expressing gender or not having gender characteristics or gender identity that conform to the expectations of society and culture.

Gender Roles: culturally imposed and expected behaviors associated with gender identities.

Gender Binary System: a social system that requires individuals to adopt a male or female identity according to the sex assigned at birth. This system imposes limitations for how you are educated, what jobs you can do (or are expected to do), how you are expected to behave, what you are expected to wear, what your gender and gender presentation should be, and who you should be attracted to/love/marry, etc.

Gender Dysphoria: strong, persistent feelings of discomfort with one’s own assigned sex that results in significant distress or impairment.

Gender Dysphoria: strong, persistent feelings of contentedness with one’s gender identity, expression and/or presentation.

Genderfluid: describes a gender identity that may change or shift over time between or within the mix of the options available.

Genderqueer: a gender identity label often used by people who do not identify with the binary of man/woman; or as an umbrella term for many gender non-conforming or nonbinary identities (eg, agender, bigender, genderfluid).

Gender Pronouns: How people want to be referred to when they are addressed or talked about in third person. Some examples of gender-neutral pronouns are They/them/their and Ze/hir/hirs.

Heteronormativity: the assumption, in individuals or in institutions, that everyone is heterosexual, and that heterosexuality is superior to all other sexualities.

Heterosexism: The societal and structural assumption that all people identify as heterosexual.

Homophobia: The hatred, prejudice, and violence projected onto someone because they are or are perceived to be gay, lesbian, or queer.

These materials are adapted from GSA Network Resources. Please visit this link to learn more: https://gsanetwork.org/resources/gsa-terms-definitions/
**KEY TERMS (CONTINUED)**

**Intersex:** an umbrella term that describes someone with a combination of sex characteristics that puts you somewhere outside the binary “male” and “female” boxes. Visit [interactadvocates.org](http://interactadvocates.org) for more information about intersex issues.

**Lesbian:** a womxn who is attracted exclusively to people of the same gender.

**Masculine:** concept of what is considered traditionally male in terms of appearance, behavior, and personality.

**Mx:** a gender-neutral honorific meant to affirm individuals who do not fit in the Mr/Mrs binary.

**Pansexual/Omnisexual:** a person who may experience sexual, romantic, physical or spiritual attraction for members of all gender identities and expressions.

**Passing:** being perceived as a particular privileged identity/gender, regardless of how the person identifies (straight passing, cis passing, etc.).

**Polyamory:** a romantic orientation and practice of having multiple partners, who are consenting to relationships with varying structures; not inherently queer.

**Queer:** Term originally used as a slur that has been reclaimed; used as an umbrella term to describe someone who does not identify as straight (when used for sexual orientation) or someone who does not identify as cisgender (when used for gender, i.e. genderqueer) or someone who does not conform to sexual or gender expectations or norms. Queer has different meanings to different people.

**QTPOC:** Refers to queer and trans people of color, often used when differentiating the experiences of people of color and white people within the LGBTQ+ community.

**Sex:** Determined by a combination of anatomy, hormones, and chromosomes. Assigned at birth based on genitals.

**Sexual Orientation:** Sexual identity of a person in relation to attraction and gender. For example someone might identify as gay or lesbian if they are attracted to a person of the same gender.

**Third Gender:** A person who identifies with a gender outside of the gender binary imposed by colonization. Fa’afafine of Samoa, Hijra of South Asia, and the Muxe in Oaxaca, Mexico are some examples of third genders.

**Transgender/Trans:** an umbrella term used to describe people whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. “Transgendered” has been noted to be an incorrect term.

**Transphobia:** The hatred, prejudice, and violence onto someone because they are or are perceived to be transgender.

**Transition:** Refers to the transitioning process transgender people go through when affirming their gender. This can be both a medical procedure and/or social transition, e.g., gender expression, pronouns, different name, etc.

**Two-Spirit:** A modern umbrella term by and for LGBTQ+ Native Americans to describe a non-binary gender system that existed within many Native American communities before colonization. This term should not be used to refer to oneself by people who are not Native American.

**Womxn:** A spelling of “women” that aims to be more inclusive and intersectional, and to show that womxn are not limited to being defined by patriarchy or gender binary.

These materials are adapted from GSA Network Resources. Please visit this link to learn more: [https://gsanetwork.org/resources/gsa-terms-definitions/](https://gsanetwork.org/resources/gsa-terms-definitions/)
Tips on Facilitating Conversations

Dialogues are different than debates. Review the tips below and this guide’s other introductory materials before delving into conversations with students or adults about these touchy subjects.

- Agree upon ground rules for discussion. Rules may include an agreement to maintain confidentiality, to speak one at a time, and to refrain from using slurs or making personal attacks.

- Establish language ground rules, including encouraging participants to speak only for themselves and not generalize or presume to know how others feel. As a group, decide if there are terms that should be off limits and provide acceptable alternatives (see KEY TERMS on pages 6-8). Depending on the maturity level of your participants, remind them that insults, personal attacks, or even a denigrating tone of voice undermine effective communication (and are, therefore, unacceptable). Reinforce a climate of respect with the language you use to pose questions (e.g., instead of inviting judgment by asking “What did you think about [insert person]?”, ask, “What did you learn from [insert person]?”).

- Acknowledge potential discomfort with the topics at hand. Remind participants that everyone is in the same boat and that no one will force them to reveal anything about themselves that they don’t want to share. This is especially important for middle or high school students who are exploring their sexuality and gender.

- Make sure that everyone understands the difference between sex and gender. This isn’t a conversation about sex. It’s about identity and the social roles we attach to being male and female. See pages 7 & 8 for more information about the difference between sex and gender.

- Clarify the difference between dialogue and debate. A debate is about staking out a position and trying to convince everyone else that you are right and they are wrong. A dialogue is about exchanging ideas in order to learn from one another. Unlike what we may see on talk shows or reality TV, that means actively listening as well as talking. It also means that you aren’t trying to force participants to accept a particular set of values or beliefs.

- Invite participants to share their honest opinions and not just say what they think you (or others) want to hear. Avoid leading questions and, in the case of students, assure them that they won’t be graded on what they say or believe.

- Model the use of inclusive language during classroom discussions. For example, when mentioning families, use terms such as “caregiver” or “parent” to create space for all types of family structures.

- Leave time to brainstorm actions addressing injustice—especially injustice that may be a part of participants’ lived realities—can lead to anger, sadness, and despair. Give participants the space to acknowledge these feelings, as well as the support to help them engage in positive actions and activism.

- Be prepared to protect vulnerable participants. Keep an eye out for students who seem to be struggling or upset. Offer to speak with them privately and be sure to have handy a list of local resources, support services, or professionals who can help.

- Be honest about what you do and don’t know. Use phrases such as, “I don’t know,” “That’s a good question,” or “Let me do some research and get back to you on that.” Refer to the resources section to encourage further exploration of a topic.
BACKGROUND - DECOLONIZING GENDER
• Rediscovering Navajo Gender Identities

DECOLONIZATION
• Map of the Navajo Nation & Background Facts
• Introduction & Film Discussion Question
• Supplemental Media and Discussion Questions
  - WATCH Pedagogy of the Decolonizing (Quetzala Carson, TEDx, 2017)
  - READ Why Are Diné LGBTQ+ and Two Spirit People Being Denied Access to Ceremony (High Country News, 2020)

INDIGENIZATION
• Introduction & Film Discussion Questions
• Supplemental Media & Discussion Questions
  - READ Navajo Nation’s LGBTQ+ Pride Event Celebrates a Return to the Culture’s History (NPR, 2019)
  - EXPLORE Call to Action: Land Acknowledgment and the #LandBack Movement

INTERSECTIONALITY
• Introduction & Film Discussion Questions
• Supplemental Media and Discussion Questions
  - READ Who is the Gay, Navajo Mormon Who Almost Became the Navajo Nation President (New Now Next, 2018)

ACTIVITY - INTERSECTING IDENTITIES: SOCIAL IDENTITY WHEEL
Nádlehé is an old Diné word that appears in our creation narratives... It signifies the presence of a third gendered being who is endowed with knowledge, skills and talents that are crucial to the wellbeing of our family and kin. Getting people to embrace this word is a step towards acknowledging that LGBT communities have always been a part of Navajo history. Nádlehé means that gender diversity was always recognized among the Diné and that our relatives are contributing members who revitalize cultural practices and are activists for Diné nation-building and self-determination.”

— Jennifer Nez Denetdale, PhD. Academic Advisor, Moroni for President

“In the Diné (Navajo) language, there are at least six genders:
• Asdzáán (woman),
• Hastiin (male),
• Náhleeh (feminine-man),
• Dilbaa (masculine-woman),
• Nádleeh Asdzaa (lesbian),
• Nádleeh Hastii (gay man).
All come from the Diné creation story, in which asdzáán and hastiin, a cisgender married couple, were not getting along and separated. When that happened, dilbaa and náhleeh emerged from hiding and were seen as a special group that could perform the duties of both women and men, stepping into the vacated partner roles. They were accepted by asdzáán and hastiin, who realized their survival depended on them.”

— Jolene Yazzie · High Country News · January 2020
Discourse Guide

Decolonization

Diné Bekéyah / The Navajo Nation

Map of the Navajo Nation Reservation

Background Information - By the Numbers

1. The Navajo Nation covers over 27,000 square miles and extends into the states of Utah, Arizona and New Mexico.
2. The Navajo word for the Navajo Nation is Diné Bikéyah.
3. The tribal government of the Navajo Nation was established in 1923 as a way to allow oil companies to lease land for oil exploration and extraction.
4. Today the government of the Navajo Nation is one of the most organized forms of government in Indian Country. There are 110 Navajo Nation chapters with 88 council delegates.
5. According to the 2016 census, the population of the Navajo Nation is 356,890. Sixty percent of the population of the Navajo Nation is under the age of 28.
6. The average household income on the Navajo Nation is $27,389. The average household income of Arizona is $50,448.
7. Approximately 43 percent of the workforce in the Navajo Nation works for the U.S. Government.
8. In 2005, the Navajo government passed the Diné Marriage Act which defines marriage as the legal joining of one man and one woman.

**What does it mean to Decolonize?**

Decolonization requires non-indigenous individuals, governments, institutions and organizations to create the space and support for indigenous peoples to reclaim all that was taken from them. For indigenous individuals, decolonization is the process by which they refute historical and current colonialistic stories about themselves, and reclaim their languages, cultures and knowledge systems.

In order to understand Decolonization, first we must understand Colonialism.

Colonialism is the policy of a country seeking to extend or retain its authority over other people or territories, generally with the aim of economic dominance. In the process of colonization, colonizers may impose their religion, economics, and other cultural practices on indigenous peoples. Modern colonialism is strongly associated with the European colonial period starting in the 15th century when some European states established colonizing empires. As a result of this initial westward expansion by the Spanish and Portuguese empires, the Americas were “discovered,” claimed and named by early explorers.

**FILM DISCUSSION QUESTION**

- How is the acknowledgment and resurfacing of the past perspectives on gender and sexual identity an example of decolonization?

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### NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

**Important Moments in History**

*Before European colonization, there were often examples and representations of various sexual and gender identities and expressions among indigenous people in the United States, and throughout the Americas. Now often referred to as Two-Spirit, this was an identity of an individual who was noted as having a blending or sharing of gender, or as androgyne and bi-gender. These were revered notable public figures and shamans, who identified as Two-Spirit and it was an identity that was celebrated.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1824</td>
<td>The Bureau of Indian Affairs is set up in the US.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1838</td>
<td>The Cherokee are forced to move to Oklahoma, during which thousands die. The path they traveled becomes known as the Trail of Tears.</td>
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<td>1866</td>
<td>We’wha, a Zuni (now described as Two-Spirit), met President Grover Cleveland, acting as a cultural ambassador for her people.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>Lakota Chief Big Foot is killed with his followers at Wounded Knee.</td>
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<td>1907</td>
<td>Charles Curtis becomes first Native American Senator in the US. He later becomes the 31st Vice President.</td>
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<td>1924</td>
<td>Indian Citizenship Act is passed by Congress, granting citizenship to all Native people born in the US.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>Robert Rauschenberg has his first one-man show at the Betty Parsons Gallery in New York.</td>
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<td>1968</td>
<td>American Indian Movement, an organization focused on support and advocacy around addressing issues of concern to American Indians, is founded.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Little Big Man is released with Robert Little Star as Little Horse, a Cheyenne accepted person who does not fit into traditional male or female gender roles. Several members of American Indian Movement protest the illegal seizure of the Sioux Nation at Mount Rushmore.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>American Indian Movement held a protest in D.C., where they seized the Bureau of Indian Affairs.</td>
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<td>1972</td>
<td>American Indian Movement was one of the sponsors of Trail of Broken Treaties, a cross country protest and presented a 20-point list of demands from the federal government.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Felipe Rose is discovered and recruited for the Village People.</td>
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<td>1978</td>
<td>American Indian Movement led the Longest Walk, a spiritual walk across the country for tribal sovereignty and protest anti-Indian legislation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Paula Gunn Allen published <em>The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Tradition</em>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>The first Two-Spirit Gathering hosted by the Minneapolis Native American community. Ouybekos released <em>War Vistas</em>, a book of poetry about the misconceptions and myths surrounding Native people and to illustrate issues of class, gender, and colonization that have impacted the Native American community.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>The term Two-Spirit is approved as a more appropriate label to encompass the spectrum of sexual and gender identities within the Native American communities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Beth Brant releases <em>Writing As Witness, A Book of Essays and Talks</em>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Jack Jackson, Jr. is elected to the Arizona House of Representatives, where he serves with his father, also a member.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Cheyenne Jackson makes his Broadway debut in <em>All Shook Up</em>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Max Wolf Valero released his memoir, <em>The Redstone Files</em>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Coquille Indian Tribe on the southern Oregon coast adopted marriage equality policies, the first tribal nation to do so openly in the US. Recognized as a federal sovereign nation, the tribe is not bound by Oregon’s constitution.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Two Spirits, a documentary about a nàdlèkiyú youth, is released and receives numerous awards.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Susan Allen elected to the Minnesota House of Representatives. The Suquamish Tribal Council, located in Washington State, unanimously votes to approve marriage equality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>The Odaaw tribe became the third tribal nation to expand marriage equality to LGBT members.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Native American Timeline adapted from GLSEN: [https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/NAHM_timeline.pdf](https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/NAHM_timeline.pdf)
Supplemental Media and Discussion Questions

This is a collection of optional media assets that relate to and compliment the film for deeper discussion. Incorporate and adapt these materials to best meet the needs of your community.

WATCH

Watch the Ted Talk to frame the discussion questions below:

**Pedagogy of the Decolonizing**
Quetzala Carson, TEDxUALberta
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IN17Os8JAr8

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. In the Ted Talk, Quetzala Carson defines colonialism as, “when another country or nation state comes into a territory with the purpose of taking the resources of that territory and appropriating them.”

   What are examples of colonialism in the film *Moroni for President*?

2. In the Ted Talk, Quetzala Carson describes axiology as a “big word for how we quantify, how we give value and how we give worth to things.”

   From the film *Moroni for President*, what appears to be of value within the Navajo nation that could be the influence of colonialism?
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Rei Yazzie and Jolene Yazzie both describe their struggles to find traditional healers to support the tá’cheeh ceremony and same sex marriage. Jolene states,

“I found a medicine woman who supported same-sex marriages, but only if they were performed in a church or other non-Diné venue. She said that according to Navajo tradition, we couldn’t be blessed in the same way as a man and a woman, and she declined to perform the ceremony.”

How does the struggle to resolve their search relate to colonization?

2. In the article Jolene also states,

“Rei Yazzie and I come from the same creation story. We take pride in who we are, and we shouldn’t be denied access to ceremony just because our gender roles don’t match our sex.”

How does the legislation of the Diné marriage act of 2005, which defines marriage as “the legal joining of one woman and one man,” conflict with Jolene Yazzie and Rei Yazzie’s ability to conduct their marriage and tá’cheeh ceremonies?
What is Indigenization?

Indigenization is the action or process of bringing something under the control, dominance, or influence of the people native to an area. Indigenization requires non-indigenous people to be aware of indigenous worldviews and to respect that those worldviews are equal to other views.

FILM DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What elements of Moroni’s campaign platform represent a move toward Indigenization in the Navajo Nation?

2. How do the characters of Moroni, Zachariah and Alray express or reject Indigenization in their lives and work?
Supplemental Media and Discussion Questions

This is a collection of optional media assets that relate and compliment the film for deeper discussion. Incorporate and adapt these materials to best meet the needs of your community.

READ

Navajo Nation’s LGBTQ Pride Event Celebrates a Return to the Culture’s History
Cayla Nimmo · NPR.org · July 2019

1. In the Article, Alray Nelson, founder of Diné Equality and board member for Diné Pride says:

“Since our creation, the Diné people have acknowledged and revered LGBTQ and especially the trans community in our leadership. Our theme, Sacredness Before Stonewall, is just a way that we are decolonizing and indigenizing Pride for us.”

How does the organization of the Diné Pride festival, and acknowledgment of this event function towards the indigenization of both LGBTQ+ culture and Navajo culture?

2. Currently, there are no anti-LGBTQ+ discrimination laws on the reservation, and same-sex marriage is illegal, per the 2005 Diné Marriage Act. During a panel discussion on visibility for indigenous trans people, Mattee Jim discussed her dual identities:

“I am Diné first and foremost. I am of my people,” she said. “A lot of our traditional teachings from precontact have been lost to westernization and Christianization.”

How do the existing laws on LGBTQ+ discrimination and same-sex marriage reflect the impacts of colonization on the Navajo culture?

3. In the article Oriah Lee, who identifies as Two-Spirit Diné, states:

“Before Europeans came, we were considered sacred people because we had strong medicine. Because we carried the spirit of both male and female, so we were very honored along with medicine people. That tradition has disappeared because it is so Christianized here.”

How does the establishment of an annual Diné Pride festival contribute to the decolonization and indigenization of the Navajo culture?

4. A year later, on July 31, 2020 the Navajo Nation Council proclaimed that the third week in June of each year would now be recognized as Diné Pride Week on the Navajo Nation.

How do the events that take place in the film, and the eventual recognition of Diné Pride Week by the Navajo Nation effect efforts toward decolonization and indigenization?
FURTHER EXPLORATION

Call to Action: Land Acknowledgment
Adapted from the U.S Department of Arts and Culture Honor Native Land: A Guide and Call to Acknowledgment [https://usdac.us/nativeland/](https://usdac.us/nativeland/)

In countries such as New Zealand, Australia, Canada, and among tribal nations in the U.S., it is commonplace, even policy, to open events and gatherings by acknowledging the traditional Indigenous inhabitants of that land. While some individuals and cultural and educational institutions in the United States have adopted this custom, the vast majority have not. Together, we can spark a movement to change that.

WHY INTRODUCE THE PRACTICE OF LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT?

- Offer recognition and respect.
- Counter the “doctrine of discovery” with the true story of the people who were already here.
- Create a broader public awareness of the history that has led to this moment.
- Begin to repair relationships with Native communities and with the land.
- Support larger truth-telling and reconciliation efforts.
- Remind people that colonization is an ongoing process, with Native lands still occupied due to deceptive and broken treaties.
- Take a cue from Indigenous protocol, opening up space with reverence and respect.
- Inspire ongoing action and relationship.

NATIVE LAND WEBSITE AND APP

Visit [https://native-land.ca](https://native-land.ca) to gain knowledge of and help in acknowledging the traditional lands of indigenous peoples worldwide. The website and app provide a comprehensive map outlining tribal territories and names.

CONTEXT

#LandBack: a movement to restore stolen territory to First Nations

On July 9, 2020, the Supreme Court ruled that 3 million acres of land, nearly half of Oklahoma, is Native American land and, as such, should be governed under the tribal jurisdiction of the Muscogee Creek Nation.

That same month, the Esselen tribe reclaimed a 1,200-acre ranch near Big Sur, California; home to old-growth redwoods and at-risk wildlife such as the California condor and red-legged frog.

In 2019, the city of Eureka, California returned stewardship of the 280-acre Duluwat Island to the Wiyot tribe, and the United Methodist Church in Upper Sandusky, Ohio returned a mission church and parts of the Old Mission cemetery to the Wyandotte Nation.

These recent wins show that wide-ranging support continues to grow for the #LandBack movement.

READ

After 250 years, Native American tribe regains ownership of Big Sur ancestral lands


"We are going to conserve [this land] and pass it on to our children and grandchildren and beyond. Getting this land back gives privacy to do our ceremonies. It gives us space and the ability to continue our culture without further interruption."

— Tom Little Bear Nason, Tribal Chairman of the Esselen Tribe of Monterey County
What is Intersectionality?

We all have multiple identities that intersect to influence how we experience our world, connect to others, and create a sense of self. An individual’s identity consists of multiple, intersecting factors, including gender, race, ethnicity, class, and sexuality. In fact, some prefer to use the plural word “identities,” emphasizing that identity is fluid and shifts throughout one’s life.

Coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, intersectionality refers to a framework that views people through the interaction of their social identities and the privilege and oppression that is associated with those identities.

Privilege: operates on personal, interpersonal, cultural, and institutional levels and gives advantages, favors, and benefits to members of dominant groups at the expense of members of target groups.

Oppression: the combination of prejudice and institutional power which creates a system that discriminates against target groups and benefits other dominant groups.

Each of us has identities around our lived experiences, which are influenced by our age, cultures, (dis)ability, education, family structure, gender expression, gender identity, geographic origin, language, race/ethnicity, religious/faith/spiritual tradition, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status, among others. For members of the LGBTQA+ community, coming out may be perceived as conflicting with other identities or experiences.

FILM DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. After watching the film Moroni for President, what are some of Moroni’s intersecting identities outlined in the film?

2. What are some of the challenges Moroni encounters in the film associated with his intersecting identities when running for Navajo Nation President?

3. In his younger years, Moroni considered his homosexuality to be a “cancer of the soul.” He prayed to be “healed” from this condition. How do these statements relate to the compounded oppressions associated with his intersecting identities?

4. The film also features Alray Nelson and Zachariah George, two other gay characters working for other candidates in the film. What are some of the intersecting identities of each character?
Supplemental Media and Discussion Questions

READ

Before discussing the questions below, read the article:

**Who Is the Gay, Navajo Mormon Who Almost Became the Navajo Nation President?**

Jen Deerinwater · New, Now, Next · November 19, 2018


DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

In the article, one of the questions the interviewer asks is:

“In the film, Moroni, you say that you don’t want the fact that you’re gay to be a part of the race. Why?”

*Moroni:* “I didn’t want it to [overshadow] any sort of policy conversation I wanted to initiate. I know my Navajo community and I know people who came out as gay and that’s the first thing that everyone says, ‘I know, he’s gay.’ They’re not taken seriously or respected. We debated this for months and we decided that we’d rather focus on the message [rather] than saying I’m gay.”

1. How is his stance reflective of his experience of intersectionality?

2. What might his statement reflect about the general Navajo cultures viewpoint on LGBTQ+ issues?

3. Another question asked is:

   “Do you see a connection between embracing LGBTQIA2S people within the tribal community and the process of decolonization?”

   *Moroni:* “Absolutely. At least within Navajo, within a Diné context. There weren’t these very strict binary sexualities that were kind of imposed on, and so I absolutely believe that embracing that is decolonization.”

By the end of the film, you see Moroni and other characters organizing the Navajo Pride festival. What has changed for each of the characters by the end of the film? What about for the Navajo Nation as a whole?
The Social Identity Wheel worksheet is an activity that encourages students to identify socially and reflect on the various ways those identities become visible or more keenly felt at different times, and how those identities impact the ways others perceive or treat them. The worksheet prompts students to fill in various social identities (such as race, gender, sex, ability disability, sexual orientation, etc.) and further categorize those identities based on which matter most in their self-perception and which matter most in others’ perception of them.

ACTIVITY
INTERSECTING IDENTITIES: SOCIAL IDENTITY WHEEL

1. Identities you think about most often
2. Identities you think about least often
3. Your own identities you would like to learn more about
4. Identities that have the strongest effect on how you perceive yourself
5. Identities that have the greatest effect on how others perceive you

From the University of Michigan College of Literature, Science and the Arts Inclusive Teaching
https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/inclusive-teaching/sample-activities/social-identity-wheel/
**SOCIAL IDENTITY WHEEL DEFINITIONS**

**Culture:** is the shared, learned, somewhat collective way you and your society view and navigate the world.

**Ethnicity:** is where your ancestors came from. This is shared by your family and can include traditions and customs based on your ancestral origin.

**Gender:** refers to expression or performance of a socially constructed role, such as masculinity or femininity. Gender is different from sex, in that sex is more about the body while gender is socially and culturally situated. For example, recent mainstream Western society has created a binary view of gender in terms of just masculinity and femininity, but many other societies recognize multiple genders and performances of those genders.

**National Origin:** is the country where you were born and/or where you have citizenship and participate in civic life.

**First Language:** usually the language you learned and spoke in the home. It can also be your primary language, especially if you’ve later learned a second language. Your primary language is the language that you speak everyday in most situations — home, work, school, etc.

**Race:** is a socially constructed category (meaning society creates it) based on your perceived phenotype or what you look like. Race is not genetic or biological, but social.

**Sex:** refers to a person’s unique sex characteristics (hormones, chromosomes, anatomy, etc.), often assigned at birth. In addition to “male” and “female,” there are also multiple variations of intersex — being neither male nor female or having characteristics of both.

**Sexual Orientation:** is a broad term which refers to a person’s expression of sexual attractions, desires, and/or orientations. This can include (but is not limited to) being lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual, pansexual, or heterosexual.

**Socioeconomic Status:** is a term that refers to a person’s combined class or economic status based on wealth, within their culture or social community.

**Religion or Spiritual Affiliation:** self-identified association with a religion, denomination or sub-denominational religious group and/or practices.

**Physical, Emotional, Developmental Dis(ability):** conditions that are due to mental or physical impairments. Developmental disabilities cause individuals living with them many difficulties in certain areas of life, especially in “language, mobility, learning, self-help, and independent living.”

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**ACTIVITY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

Questions can be selected from by facilitators or students for journal entry or small group discussion:

- Do any of your identities intersect in ways that combine to influence your experiences or perspectives?
- Which, if any, of your identities are marginalized, or might make you experience discrimination or inequality?
- Would any of your intersecting identities fall under Crenshaw’s definition of intersectionality, why or why not?
- At these intersections, what new, unique experiences are formed?
- How do your identities affect any art you make, or your other creative expressions?
- How do your identities influence the type of art or media that you enjoy or consume?
- What power dynamics do you experience in your occupation, family life, and other social contexts?
- In what ways do these power dynamics affect your interactions with other people and services?
- What are some ways in which you can support people to share the complexity of their lives?

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From the University of Michigan College of Literature, Science and the Arts Inclusive Teaching
https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/inclusive-teaching/sample-activities/social-identity-wheel/
Acknowledgments

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ABOUT YOUTH IN MOTION

As Frameline’s signature educational outreach program, Youth in Motion provides free LGBTQ+ films and professionally-developed curricula to educators and classrooms across the United States. Since 2008, Youth in Motion has used the power of queer cinema to support educators and students in creating safer and more inclusive school environments for LGBTQ+ youth and allies. Over 28,000 students in more than 1,400 schools across all 50 states have now engaged in screenings and discussions of Youth in Motion’s films and materials, comprising a new generation of motivated and informed youth inspired to create social change.

Learn more at www.frameline.org/youth-in-motion.

ABOUT FRAMELINE

Founded in 1979, Frameline’s mission is to change the world through the power of queer cinema. As a media arts nonprofit, Frameline’s programs connect filmmakers and audiences in the Bay Area and around the world.

Frameline, the San Francisco International LGBTQ+ Film Festival is the longest-running, largest and most widely recognized LGBTQ+ film exhibition event in the world. As a community event with an annual attendance of 60,000+, the Festival is the most prominent and well-attended LGBTQ+ arts program in the Bay Area.

Learn more at www.frameline.org.