

Fiber Arts: Sheep to Shawl

This immersive daytime certificate program will guide students through the complete process of weaving, from sheep shearing to the creation of a finished shawl—through three focused, three-week concentrations.

Concentration 1: Fiber Preparation and Spinning

In the first three weeks, students will learn foundational skills in fiber preparation and spinning. They will begin by working with raw fleece—skirting, picking, and washing it to remove debris and excess lanolin. Students will explore how fiber alignment impacts yarn quality and will use both traditional and modern tools to process the fleece. They will practice various spinning techniques, including thigh spinning and the Coast Salish spindle whorl spinning, building hand coordination and a deep appreciation for Indigenous methods. By the end of the concentration, each student will have produced a selection of handspun yarns prepared entirely by their own efforts.

Concentration 2: Natural Dyeing

The second three-week concentration will focus on the art and science of dyeing yarns using natural materials. Students will work with fiber responsiveness to dye and the chemistry behind plant-based dyeing. Hands-on activities will include preparing dye baths, experimenting with mordants, and observing the subtle variations produced by different fibers and plant sources. Special emphasis will be placed on the historical and cultural significance of dyeing across societies, with a focus on local Indigenous dye plants and practices. Students will finish this concentration with a custom palette of naturally dyed yarns, ready for integration into their final weavings.

Concentration 3: Weaving on a Coast Salish Loom

In the final three weeks, students will bring together their spun and dyed yarns to weave a complete shawl on a two-bar Coast Salish loom. They will learn to warp the loom, maintain proper tension, and apply basic weave structures in their compositions. Through guided studio time, lectures, and peer feedback, students will deepen their understanding of weaving as a cultural, spiritual, and artistic practice. Attention will be given to the concept of weaving as a relational act—where each shawl carries the potential to be gifted as an expression of care or community. This final project will challenge students to weave with intention, skill, and cultural respect.

As a culmination of the program, a Fiber Arts Showcase will exhibit student works, celebrating the knowledge, creativity, and cultural understanding developed throughout the quarter.

Class days and times are: Tuesdays 9:00am to 1:30pm; Wednesdays 9:00am to 1:00pm with optional studio 1:00pm to 5:00pm; and Thursdays 9:00am to 1:30pm. All classes will be held in the Paimarire~Fiber Arts Studio.