



# Ryan Goeckner, PhD, MA

Senior Research Scientist,  
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## Bio (141 words)

Dr. Ryan Goeckner studies how our beliefs about the world affect our health and the wellbeing of our communities. As an anthropologist applying cultural insights to health and society, he looks at how our views and values – not just biology – shape health, and how understanding this can lead to health equity for all.

Since 2014, he has worked with academic partners of the [American Indian Health Research and Education Alliance](#), a non-profit organization targeting health and educational disparities in Native America, in collaboration with Native communities on research and service projects that explore Native identities, mental health, quitting recreational tobacco, college preparation, and social justice movements.

Dedicated to building understanding between cultures, Ryan also co-hosts [Religiously Literate](#), a podcast that helps listeners learn about the many ways people practice religion around the world.

Visit his website at [ryangoeckner.com](http://ryangoeckner.com)

## Bio (266 words)

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He has a PhD in Anthropology from The Ohio State University where he studied how Native American communities hoped to move forward from the COVID-19 pandemic. He holds a Master of Arts and Bachelor of Arts from the University of Kansas in Religious Studies and Anthropology and American Studies, respectively.

Since 2014, he has worked with academic partners of the [American Indian Health Research and Education Alliance](#), a non-profit organization targeting health and educational disparities



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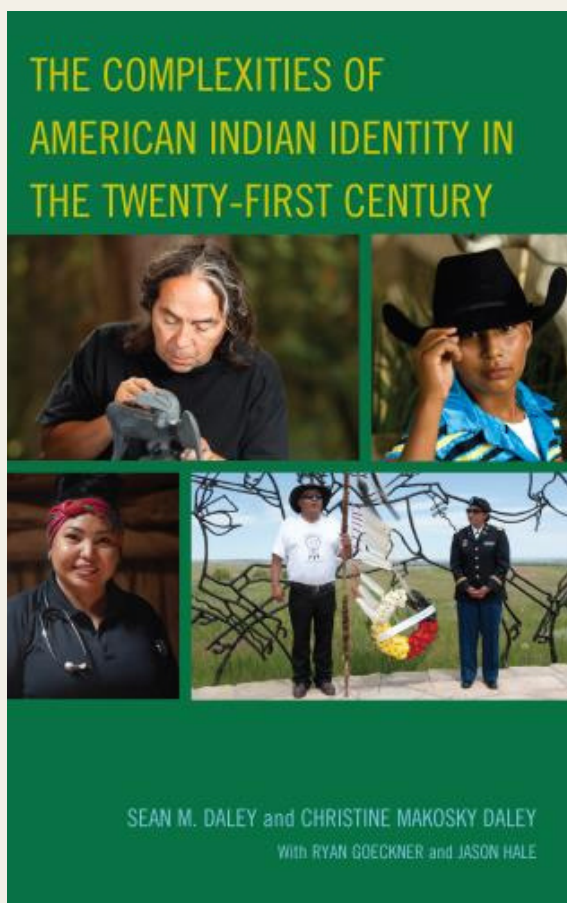
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in Native America, in collaboration with Native communities on research and service projects that explore Native identities, mental health, quitting recreational tobacco, college preparation, and social justice movements. He currently works as a Senior Research Scientist at the Institute for Indigenous Studies at Lehigh University.

In 2023, his co-authored book *The Complexities of American Indian Identity in the Twenty-First Century* was published by Lexington Books. The book highlights the diverse and often complex ways in which Native Americans define their identities today. It shows that for many, being Native is not just about bloodlines or tribal membership, but also about culture, family, spirituality, and community.

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## Book

*The Complexities of American Indian Identity in the Twenty-First Century* details Native 24/7, a study that highlights the diverse and often complex ways in which Native Americans define their identity today. It shows that for many, being Native is not just about bloodlines or tribal membership, but also about culture, family, spirituality, and community. The research found that many Native people navigate challenges like historical trauma, colonization, and issues around tribal enrollment or blood quantum. At the same time, they draw strength from their traditions and practices, shaping their identity in ways that are both personal and collective. Ultimately, the study emphasizes that Native identity is fluid and multifaceted, influenced by both historical factors and contemporary experiences.

[Order from Rowman & Littlefield.](#)

[Read Ryan's other publications.](#)

## Research Interests

- Health and wellbeing in Native America
- Influence of spirituality and culture on health
- Gender and health