

Ethnic Studies Syllabus

Course Description:

Ethnic Studies courses operate from the consideration that race and racism, white supremacy, colonialism, settler colonialism, and intersectional marginalization have been, and continue to be, profoundly powerful social and cultural forces in American society. These courses focus on the experiences and contributions of African Americans, Asian Pacific Islander Desi Americans, Chicana/Latina, and Native Americans in the US. Courses are grounded in the concrete situations of people of color and use a pedagogical framing that emphasizes the structural dimensions of oppression, racial trauma and community cultural knowledge associated with cultural and ancestral knowledge that has sustained the resilience of the aforementioned groups. The major purpose of this course is to educate students to be politically, socially, and economically conscious about their personal connections to local and national history. Ethnic Studies focuses on themes of social justice, social responsibility, and social change. The course spans from past to present, from politics to social reform, allowing students to identify similar social patterns and universal qualities present in other societies, including their own. This course will focus on the experiences of African American, Asian, Pacific Islander, Desi Americans (APIDA), Chicana/Latina, and American Indians. This course will have a community building/identity section where students are encouraged to consider concepts related to their own personal, group, and/or identity.

This Ethnic Studies course is designed for students to be politically, socially and economically conscious about their personal connections to local and global histories. By studying the histories of race, ethnicity, nationality, sexuality, and culture, students will cultivate respect and empathy for individuals and solidarity with groups of people locally, nationally, and globally so as to foster active social engagement and community building. Particular focus will be given to the contributions, and struggles of different racial and ethnic groups for liberty, equality, and justice in the United States. Students will investigate and analyze the historical factors of power and privilege and the subsequent impact on historically disadvantaged groups' ability to navigate and mitigate internal and external structures that influence their human experience. Students will apply in-depth analysis to contemporary issues and collectively pose creative, self-affirming solutions in a variety of ways to promote agency through grassroots community advocacy and civic engagement. This course is intended to help build inter-ethnic understanding and socio-cultural bridges in an increasingly more multicultural and multiethnic nation, which is imperative to creating a just society.

Course Purpose: Goals and Student Outcomes Students will:

- have a better understanding of themselves in context of the history of the United States and our contemporary society.
- be able to discuss their identities, including race, ethnicity, culture, sexuality and nationality and the ways these categories are socially constructed and how they affect students' lives and the lives of others.

- ❑ be able to explain the dynamics among internalized, interpersonal, and institutional oppression and resistance.
- ❑ develop academic skills in reading, analysis, and writing of historical narratives which can be applied in multiple academic courses

Course Syllabus

Unit 1: Introduction: What is Ethnic Studies?

Students learn the concepts of “historical perspective”, “historiography as power”, and “critical consciousness”. Students also study the historical and ongoing struggle for Ethnic Studies. Students engage in community builders to create a safe and courageous space in which to investigate issues of identity. Roots, indigeneity, and the recovery of self-identity are important elements of Ethnic Studies pedagogy. This journey of self-discovering should include the development of a critical consciousness, radical hope and self-love that can lead to personal and collective agency where student engagement in changing oppressive structures both within schools as well as the community.

Enduring Understandings

- We have mutual respect and love for ourselves and each other, and we center the experiences and histories of Native Americans/American Indians, African Americans/Black Americans, Chicana/Latina, and Asian Pacific Islander Desi Americans have experienced, survived, and resisted settler colonialism, racism, white supremacy, cultural erasure, and other patterns, structures, and systems of marginalization and oppression.
- We understand that Ethnic Studies is interdisciplinary and comparative.
- We recover and reconstruct the counternarratives, perspectives, epistemologies, and cultures in a process of ongoing struggle for those who have been historically neglected and denied citizenship or full participation within traditional discourse and institutions, particularly highlighting the contributions people of color have made in shaping US culture and society.

Essential Questions

- What is Ethnic Studies?
- How does the field of Ethnic Studies help students understand their identities and their positionality in the communities and society that they inhabit?
- Why is it important to recover and reconstruct counternarratives, perspectives, epistemologies, and cultures? What does this add to the national narratives of the United States?

Unit 2: Self/Stories: Student identity and Narratives

It is important to remember that because of colonial/imperial hegemony, students often have little knowledge of their own historical legacy. The little knowledge they may have of their culture, language, and past is often passed down from ancestors, parents, or older siblings. It is important to remember that the historical lessons of racialized communities of color are either invisible or misrepresented in traditional texts. In this section, we honor the historical and

contemporary voices of our people by centering historical events, key historical figures, or contemporary ancestral knowledge.

- Students learn the history of the social construction/constructs of race and collect documents pertaining to their own history.
- Students investigate the social construction of race and its impact on systems as well as patterns and practices of oppression that influence the lives of communities of color.
- Students learn about racial microaggression as well as how to respond to them.

Enduring Understandings

- We understand our racialized selves and the complexities, intersectionality and beauty associated with them.
- We embrace and understand cultural, historical roots, and indigeneity.
- We embark on a journey to decolonize as holistic human beings through critical consciousness, radical hope and self-love.
- We understand that the stories of people have shaped who they are.

Essential Questions

- What is identity? How do we define our own sense of identity?
- What is race?
- What structural or systemic oppressions have the four major groups in Ethnic Studies experienced?
- Why does it matter for our marginalized communities to know of their pre-contact histories?

Unit 3: Systems: Four I's of Oppression

Anti-racist and decolonial pedagogy requires that students study the positionality of their people in the social hierarchy of the United States. Students study the historical and contemporary effects of imperialism, racism, linguisticism, sexism, heteropatriarchy, heterosexism and other forms of discrimination. In addition, students study forms of oppression, such as those contained in the seminal work of John Bell who stated, "oppression is a system, not a prejudice." In this section, we not only engage students in understanding the various forms of oppression, but in developing critical consciousness, reclaiming hope and healing.

- Students will research the impact settler colonialism, imperialism, genocide and hegemony have had on the historical and contemporary experiences on people of color in the U.S.
- Students will gain a deeper understanding of systemic oppression and the manifestations of several forms of oppression (racism, ableism, etc.), and describe the impact these forms of oppression have had on communities of color in the U.S.
- Students will engage in constructive projects of reclaiming hope and healing, improving cross-cultural relationships, and transformative projects that improve our communities.

Enduring Understandings

- We understand the impact settler colonialism, imperialism, genocide and hegemony have had on the historical and contemporary experiences of our people.

- We understand and critique the relationship between white supremacy, racism, anti-Blackness, anti-Indigeneity, xenophobia, patriarchy, cisheteropatriarchy, capitalism, ableism, ageism, anthropocentrism, and other forms of power and oppression.
- We understand the importance of continuously analyzing and assessing the impact of systems of power and forms of oppression, including:
 - empire, white supremacy, white supremacist culture, racism and its specific forms of antiBlackness, anti-Indigeneity, anti-Asian hate; xenophobia; linguicism;
 - patriarchy, cisheteropatriarchy, capitalism; misogyny, heterosexism, transphobia, classism; ableism; sizeism/anti-fatness; ageism; anthropocentrism;
 - across race, class, gender, sexuality, disability, and additional intersections of identity.
- We understand and challenge all forms of oppression and their manifestations by conceptualizing and enacting transformative projects of agency and resistance.
- We understand that while studying forms of oppression, it is critical to engage ourselves in developing critical consciousness, reclaiming hope and healing.

Essential Questions

- Given the intergenerational trauma carried by marginalized communities, what does healing look like?
- What is agency?
- How are forms of resistance crucial to building a safe community?
- In ways we are privileged, how can we be in solidarity with those who are oppressed?
- How does critical consciousness transform our learning?

Unit 4: Social Movements: Community-based social movements in the 1950's-1970's

Students study community organizing and social movements of the 1950's and the 1970's. System changes occur when people unite, mobilize and organize in coordinated resistance to disrupt and dismantle inequitable systems. Situating the curriculum in social movements (local, national and global) reflects the Freirean concepts of education as liberation. More recently Bettina Love has proposed the idea of abolitionist teaching, both recognizing the importance of agency, as well as taking political stances against oppression. In this unit, students will be able to identify pivotal historical moments of the social and political movements of the 1950- 1970's. Students will be able to analyze, discuss and present concrete policies, practices and laws that emanated from these movements and describe the impact on the social conditions in communities of color.

- We will research examples of community organizing and social movements of the 1950's through 1970's.
- We will be able to explain and provide examples of coordinated resistance to disrupt and dismantle inequitable systems.
- We will identify organizations and individuals who contributed to positive and constructive changes in the social conditions of communities of color and describe their impact on contemporary social issues and communities.

Enduring Understandings

- We understand that change can only occur when marginalized people unite, organize, and mobilize social movements that fight racism and injustice.
- We understand that it is essential to analyze and study significant social movements and their impact on inequitable and oppressive systems.
- We understand that white supremacy and related power structures concede nothing without demand and resistance.
- We recognize the importance of agency and taking political stances against oppression and the impact this has on People of Color.

Essential Questions

- What are the key components of successful social movements?
- How is agency instrumental in understanding the structures of oppression and liberation?
- “The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house.”-Audre Lorde. What does this quote tell us about both collective and individual liberation and justice?