



## Santa Rosa City Schools Course Proposal: English: Ethnic Studies

### Proposal Submitted By Teaching and Learning

#### **Overview:**

Rooted in social justice, this course will develop students' critical thinking skills through an analysis of a wide variety of historical and contemporary issues of race, ethnicity, and identity. This course examines the history, culture, identities, and experiences of colonially and institutionally oppressed communities in the United States with particular attention to African American Studies, Native American Studies, Chicana/o/x and Latina/o/x Studies, and Asian American/Pacific Island Studies. Students in this course will read and analyze a broad range of nonfiction and fiction selections, deepening their recognition of how language works to affirm or dehumanize a person or group, to uphold or challenge power, and to stifle or liberate self-expression. Students will study the histories of race, ethnicity, nationality, and culture, and how these constructs relate to the historical and contemporary material oppression of marginalized communities. As they build self-awareness, empathy and an appreciation for solidarity and the power of coalition-building, students will learn respect for themselves, for other individuals and for groups of people locally, nationally, and globally. Students will consciously and intentionally develop their understanding of community assets and cultural wealth to become agents of positive change who promote equity, empathy, and social justice in society.

#### **Graduation Requirements: Specify which requirement is met. (High School only)**

This course also satisfies 10 English credits. This course concurrently meets the Santa Rosa City Schools' district requirement for Ethnic Studies.

#### **UC a-g Requirements: Specify which requirement is met. (High School only)**

This course will be submitted for approval as a "b" course by the UC/CSU systems.

Explain the rationale for course addition or modification. How does this fit in with district/site goals? If this course is replacing a current course, which course is it replacing and why? Will this course require new sections? Be explicit.

In July 2020, Santa Rosa City Schools approved Ethnic Studies as a course of study and as a graduation requirement. This course will allow students to meet their 10 unit ETHS requirement through a one year English class by adding an option to the current English classes. Research shows that Ethnic Studies increases graduation rates, improves attendance and results in greater engagement and higher grades.

Explain the measurable learning outcomes

Students will:

- think independently and critically about issues of race, ethnicity, identity, and power in American society
- understand the ideas of community assets and cultural wealth
- recognize unfairness on the individual level (e.g., biased speech) and injustice at the institutional or systemic level (e.g., discrimination)
- recognize that power and privilege influence relationships on interpersonal, intergroup and institutional levels and consider how they have been affected by those dynamics
- recognize their own responsibility to stand up to exclusion, prejudice and injustice
- read texts in a variety of genres that challenge the traditional literary canon
- be able to explain the importance and significance of those texts
- explore contemporary issues confronting different cultural identities and populations.
- analyze literary elements within a text.
- analyze how elements of fiction (plot, setting, character, point of view, style, voice, symbol, or theme) create meaning in a narrative.
- identify and explore archetypes and analyze how they coincide or clash with ideas about identity and culture.
- communicate in clear and persuasive prose and speech about contemporary and historical issues at the heart of American culture and society.
- write clearly, effectively and creatively and will adjust their writing style as appropriate to the content, audience, and purpose of the context and nature of the subject.
- participate in collaborative conversations in which they discuss complex issues
- write a variety of expository essays, research papers, pieces of creative writing, and journal responses with attention to developing and supporting a compelling thesis
- Research, plan and produce an action plan for an injustice in their community
- work within their communities to build solidarity as they become active participants in a democratic society

## Course Description (To be used in the course catalog)

This college preparatory course is designed to challenge students to broaden their understanding of traditional education by studying literature and non-fiction pieces from different cultures and perspectives. Students will learn about cultural wealth and will pay particular attention to institutionally oppressed communities. Students will study about race, ethnicity, and identity in America; migration and immigration and governmental responses; systems of power and the history of education; and historical and contemporary social movements.

Students will achieve mastery of key California Common Core Standards for English. They will analyze multiple texts, conduct research, write a variety of expository and literary compositions, and participate in their communities as active members of a democratic society.

## Detailed Course Design

(Course design should include the objectives, activities, assessments, and standards to be addressed in this course.)

### Unit One:

#### Race, Ethnicity, and Identity in America

Through the use of a multitude of readings and sources, this first unit provides an introduction to the key terms of race, ethnicity, oppression, assimilation acculturation, nativism, discrimination, and integration. With a focus on identity, students find ways to recognize what ethnic studies is and its role in current events. In particular, students will examine Tara Yosso's ideas about cultural wealth (aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistance) and identify their own cultural wealths. Through different readings and sources, students will be asked to discuss and respond to the following questions:

#### Essential Question:

1. How do you define yourself, why do you define yourself, and to what end?
2. How and why might you define others, and how are communities shaped by the ways we define ourselves and others?

#### Supplemental Questions:

- How has the development of images, often stereo-types, reduced or magnified an individual?
- What are the origins of race and racism in the United States? How has race been socially constructed?
- What does it mean to be "colorblind?"
- What is the difference between race and ethnicity?
- What is discrimination and prejudice?

- How do stereotypes affect our own identities and why do they negate us of our individuality? How can stereotypes affect our thinking of different social groups?
- What percentage of self identity is a social construction and/or social reproduction versus authentic self expression and growth?
- What is your cultural wealth?

**Sample Assignments:**

1. At the end of the unit, using information from group discussions, research, and readings students will write a personal essay in which they reflect on their identities as well as past experiences with ethnic diversity, discrimination, privilege, and disadvantage.
2. Students will write an "I am" autobiographical poem in which they reflect on how race, ethnicity, nationality, and culture have shaped their identity and will publish it to a greater audience.
3. Students will create a visual representation of their own cultural wealth. Further, they will create a class visual of their collective wealth.

**Literature:** "Legal Alien" (Pat Mora); "Poem for the Young White Man who asked me how I, an intelligent well-read person could believe in the War Between Races" (Lorna Dee Cervantes); *The Fire Next Time* - James Baldwin; *The Bluest Eye* - Morrison; *The House on Mango Street* - Cisneros  
 Article: [Tara Yosso's Cultural Wealth Model](#)

\*\*\*\*\*  
 \*\*

**Unit Two:  
 Migration**

In this unit, students will study stories of migration and immigration of ethnic groups in the U.S. Students will consider the real-life histories of these ethnic groups in connection with the literary lens of the Hero's Journey. This study will include the ethnic groups' reasons for migration, their settlement and resettlement in the U.S., their perception of the United States, and their acculturation into mainstream American society. Students will also study the different status that ethnic groups hold in the U.S. Consequently, students will analyze how local and national policy impacts ethnic groups, their concept of the United States, acculturation, and overall experiences. Additionally, students will critically

examine governmental and societal receptions of specific ethnic groups and the effect they have on those marginalized communities' experiences. Through different readings and sources, students will be asked to discuss and respond to the following questions:

**Essential Question:**

1. How does the society in which we live shape our understanding of the hero's journey; does the archetype coincide or clash with our notion of immigration as an historical and political phenomenon?

**Supplemental questions:**

- Should hero's journeys be thought of as individualistic or collective?
- Is the status of hero assigned equally across cultures, or can this designation be a matter of privilege or prejudice?
- Is authenticity integral to the hero's journey? What are the obstacles to authenticity that the hero must face?
- What does it mean to be authentic as an immigrant? How do immigrants navigate retaining their culture while also living in a new culture?
- How have immigrant communities contributed to the United States and our community?
- In what ways have immigrants been scapegoated in certain points of US history? Who benefits from this? What are the effects on immigrant communities?
- How have national and local immigration policies affected immigrant communities?
- What are the reasons people leave their countries of origin to come to the United States?

**Sample Assignments:**

1. Students will write an argumentative essay to answer the following question: How does the society in which we live shape our understanding of the hero's journey; does the archetypal coincide or clash with our notion of immigration as an historical and political phenomenon?
2. Students will create a visual representation of a hero's journey from a piece of literature studied within the unit along with a comparison of a modern immigrant's journey. Students will have a Socratic Seminar to answer the question: To what extent does the archetypal pattern hold true for all cultures?

**Literature:**

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian (Sherman Alexie);  
Americanah (Adichie);  
The Leavers (Lisa Ko);

Collections of short stories (titles to be determined);  
Poem: "To live in the borderlands means you..."(Gloria Anzaldúa);

\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*

### **Unit Three:**

#### **Systems of Power**

In this unit, students will examine who has power in a society and how it is challenged or reinforced through reading and analyzing various types of texts. Students will consider political, legal, economic, educational, cultural, and familial systems and the power imbalances that exist within them. Students will also investigate the role that education and pedagogy play in power dynamics as well as power imbalances that still exist in society today. After careful textual analysis, discussion, and research, students will reach their own conclusions about which current issues constitute oppression, and how they can fight that oppression through concrete action that is centered around written communication.

#### **Essential Questions:**

1. How do political, legal, economic, educational, cultural, and familial systems work to create power imbalances?
2. How does literature challenge or reinforce systems of power? What about other forms of knowledge? What role does education and pedagogy play in power dynamics?
3. How and why do power and oppression continue to exist today and what can be done about it?

#### **Supplemental Questions:**

- How have you experienced power and/or lack of power in your own life?
- How might people define power differently? Is the desire for power part of human nature, or is it culturally determined?
- Who has power in a society? How is it obtained/kept?
- Who crafts laws and policies, and whom do those policies benefit?
- What are overt and covert ways that systems oppress groups of people?
- How do our identities afford us privilege and/or position us as members of marginalized groups?

#### **Assignments:**

1. Students will examine art as demonstrations of claiming power. They will create a piece of art (visual, written, or performance) that grapples with power.
2. Students will research a current issue they feel is an example of oppression,

racism, or discrimination. They will then write a letter to a public audience (editor, congressperson, school board members, etc.) responding to that current issue and asking for action. As part of this project students will read, annotate, summarize and analyze their research.

3. Students will examine an issue in education (grading practices, seating arrangements, course design, text selection, etc.) and create an alternative model with social justice in mind.

**Literature:**

Music lyrics - hip hop, etc.; *Dear Martin* - Stone; *On the Come Up* - Thomas;

Possible Lit Circle Titles: *Burro Genius*; *Breaking Through*; *On the Come Up*;

*American Born Chinese*; *57 Bus*; *How it Went Down*; *Farewell to Manzanar*

Non-fiction excerpts: *Teaching to Transgress*; *We Want to do More Than Just Survive*; *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*;

\*\*\*\*\*

\*

**Unit Four:**

**Social Movements, Current Community Movements**

In this unit, students will examine past social movements, including those in the sixties and seventies of Civil Rights, United Farmworkers (Cesar Chavez), women’s rights and gay rights. In addition, students will examine current social movements such as Dakota Pipeline (Standing Rock), and Black Lives Matter and the ways in which they have succeeded and/or failed. Through analysis and discussion of various texts and multimedia sources, including fiction and non-fiction, students will be able to fruitfully contend with the unit’s essential questions. Ultimately, students will engage with social movements by joining/participating in one, creating a new one, or analyzing the effectiveness of one.

**Essential Questions:**

1. Are social movements positive or negative for a society? Why might people have different answers?
2. How can a social movement change a society?

**Supplemental Questions:**

1. How do people attempt to influence others to support their social movement?
2. Are social movements most effective when they are focused on the oppression of one group, or when they target a common enemy that oppresses more than one group?
3. To what extent are social movements organic and spontaneous vs. designed,

conscious and strategic?

**Assignment:**

1. Students will research current events connected to their interests/experiences/passions around social justice. After discussion/presentations of their research, students will engage with current social movements by joining/participating in one, creating a new one, and/or analyzing the effectiveness of one.
2. Students will participate in a group project that brings together their chosen current events in a creative and practical challenge to build solidarity.

**Budget-** budget figures must be included even if they are an estimate.

Projected Costs	Start-up	Ongoing
Personnel (Not to include classroom instructor unless a new section is needed)		
Instructional Material Supplies per student (textbooks, software, etc.)	\$35,000	
Services (training, equipment maintenance, contracts, etc.)	\$30,000	Yes, as needed for training teachers
Capital Outlay (remodeling, technology, etc.)		
<b>Total Projected Costs</b>	<b>\$65,000</b>	

**Instructional Materials-** must include an estimate for new materials even if none have been selected. Place in the chart above.

Type	Publisher	Title	ISBN	Author	Copyright	# Have/Need
Novel						
Novel						
Textbook						



### Funding Source(s) for Costs and Instructional Materials

<b>Grants (indicate specific grant and grant timeline)</b>	
<b>Categorical Funds (include related programs)</b>	
<b>Career Technical Education (must be for an approved CTE course)</b>	
<b>Department Funds</b>	
<b>Other (be specific)</b>	

### District Principal Review and Approvals:

<b>Principals' Signatures</b>	<b>Site</b>	<b>Approved / Not Approved</b>
Gabriel Albavera	Elsie Allen High School	Approved
Valerie Jordan	Ridgway HS	Approved
Kimberly Clissold	Santa Rosa High	Approved
Adam Paulson	Montgomery High	Approved
Laura Hendrickson	Comstock Middle	Approved
Katie Barr	Maria Carrillo HS	Approved
Stacy Desideri	Piner High School	Approved

### District Department Chair Review and Approvals:

<b>Department Chair Signatures</b>	<b>Site</b>	<b>Approved / Not Approved</b>
Kathryn Howell	LCMS	Approved
Christina Gravelle	RHS	Approved
Greg Karussos	HSMS	Approved
Ricky Alcala	EAHS	Approved
Susan Cleek	HCMS	Approved
Simone Harris	MHS	Approved

Sarah Walls	PHS	Approved
James Hart	MCHS	Approved
Nzinga Woods	SRHS	Approved