

## **Ethnic Studies Courses**

*Excerpted from Faculty Document 1736: Undergraduate Ethnic Studies General Education Requirement:*

"The University of Wisconsin-Madison is committed to fostering an understanding and appreciation of diversity, in the belief that doing so will:

- Better prepare students for life and careers in an increasingly multicultural U.S. environment,
- Add breadth and depth to the University curriculum, and
- Improve the campus climate.

One of the University's overarching goals is to infuse the curriculum in all disciplines with diversity, including those where traditionally it has been absent. The Ethnic Studies Requirement (ESR) is one of several key elements in reaching this goal. This is a requirement that all students take a 3-credit course that considers ethnic/racial minorities that have been marginalized or discriminated against in the U.S. Because issues of ethnic diversity and religion are often intertwined and cannot easily be separated, courses that focus only on religion may, where appropriate, fulfill the ESR.

All courses that the implementation committee approves as satisfying the requirement must provide evidence that the course material illuminates the circumstances, conditions, and experiences of racial and ethnic minorities in the United States."

### **ESR Course Criteria Guidelines**

*Approved by UAPC Action, 14 September 2017; effective for all ESR courses taught Fall 2019 and after.*

- ❖ ESR courses must be offered for a minimum of 3 credits.
- ❖ Syllabus and reading list must demonstrate that the course material is centrally focused on the circumstances, conditions, and experiences of persistently marginalized racial and ethnic minorities and/or indigenous peoples in the United States.
- ❖ Courses that are not centrally focused on the circumstances, conditions, and experiences of persistently marginalized racial and ethnic minorities and/or indigenous peoples in the United States may be designated as ESR classes under certain circumstances.
  - Courses that explore the circumstances, conditions, and experiences of racial and ethnic minorities and/or indigenous peoples in a comparative international format must devote at least 50% of the course (syllabus, reading list, course content, and student assessment) to exploring the experiences and concerns of persistently marginalized groups in the United States.
  - In cases where religion is intertwined with respect to persistently marginalized racial and ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples in the United States, courses that focus on religion may fulfill the ESR.
- ❖ Syllabus will reflect the ESR Essential Learning Outcomes among the course-level learning outcomes, by listing them as expressed in the ESR course guidelines, or by integrating them into discipline-specific course-level outcomes.

### **ESR Course Approval**

Faculty seeking approval of new ESR courses, or to add ESR to an existing course, may make a request through the [Lumen course proposal system](#). In the "Course Designations" section indicate "YES" to the question "Should this course be considered for the Ethnic Studies attribute?" The Ethnic Studies Subcommittee will review the course and convey its decision via the course proposal system.

## Essential Learning in Ethnic Studies

In March, 2010, UW-Madison’s Ethnic Studies Subcommittee invited faculty and academic staff who teach or influence the most frequently taken ESR courses to meet and talk about student learning in the requirement. A key objective of the event was to articulate the goals ethnic studies courses share across campus, despite the breadth of topics these courses cover.

Beginning with the fundamental assumption that mastery of the content is the primary goal of any course, the group identified four learning goals that transcend specific content areas and instead speak to common objectives among ESR courses offered in a wide variety of topics. Instructors understand that the balance of attention paid to these learning goals will vary across the range of Ethnic Studies Courses we offer; however, every course is expected to emphasize at least one of these goals, and many will attend to all.

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Learning Outcome</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<b>Awareness of History’s Impact on the Present</b>	Students will articulate how the past has affected present day circumstances regarding race and racial inequalities in the U.S.	Ethnic Studies courses highlight histories of racial/ethnic minorities in the U.S., pointing to patterns of oppression that have led to racial disparities in contemporary American society.
<b>Ability to Recognize and Question Assumptions</b>	Students will recognize and question cultural assumptions and knowledge claims as they relate to race and ethnicity.	Ethnic Studies courses promote the development of critical thinking skills so that students can identify and question the racial power dynamics that undergird social and political institutions.
<b>Consciousness of Self and Other</b>	Students will demonstrate self-awareness and empathy toward the cultural perspectives and worldviews of others.	Ethnic Studies courses challenge students to think about their own racial and ethnic identities in relation to others, as awareness of self is inextricably linked to empathy toward the perspective of others.
<b>Effective Participation in a Multicultural Society</b>	Students will apply course concepts to their lives outside the classroom by respectfully participating in our multicultural society.	Ethnic Studies courses should be relevant to students in their lives outside the classroom, preparing them for more effective and respectful participation in a multicultural society. This could mean being able to discuss race with a colleague or friend, or to recognize inequities in interpersonal, institutional, and other contexts.