

Ethnic Studies: *Multicultural America* **Course Overview**

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*"Diversity may be the hardest thing for a society to live with,
and perhaps the most dangerous thing for a society to live without."
~ William Sloane Coffin, Jr.*

I. Rationale

"Ethnic Studies: Multicultural America" at PRHS seeks to deepen students' civic engagement by understanding how identity, race and racism, along with other forms of oppression have been resisted, and have and continue to be, profoundly powerful social and cultural forces in American society.

II. Course Aims and Outcomes

The primary purpose of Ethnic Studies: Multicultural America is to educate students to be politically, socially, and economically conscious about their personal and cultural connections to local and national history. The course focuses on themes of social justice, empathy, resilience, 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 society. This course focuses on the experiences of African Americans, Asian Americans, Latino Americans, Native Americans, and other historically disadvantaged peoples in the US. This course will actively seek out local speakers (state legislators, council members, community leaders) to provide valuable insight into these issues as they play out in our local community. The course includes an Identity section where students will consider concepts related to their own personal, group, and/or national identity.

Alignment and Orientation

The Ethnic Studies curriculum is consistent with the California state "Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum" and strives to:

- align with the 2016 History–Social Science Framework
- promote the values of civic engagement and civic responsibility
- align to the Literacy Standards for History–Social Studies within the California Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History–Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects, as appropriate;

- encourage cultural understanding of how different groups have struggled and worked together, highlighting core ethnic studies concepts such as equity, equality, justice, race, ethnicity, indigeneity, etc.;
- promote critical thinking and rigorous analysis of history, systems of power, and the status quo in an effort to generate conversations about reconciliation and reform

Specific Standards:

- [California Dept. of Education Model Ethnic Studies Curriculum Guidelines, 2020](#)
- [California History/Social Studies Framework \(2016\), Chapter 14, Curriculum Frameworks](#), “Ethnic Studies” pp. 310-314
- [CA HSS Analysis Skills \(9–12\)](#): Chronological and Spatial Thinking 2, 3; Historical Interpretation 1
- [CA CCSS Writing Standards WHST 1-10](#) (Grades 9-12)
- [CA CCSS Reading Standards RH 1-10](#) (Grades 9-12)
- [CA CCSS Speaking and Listening Standards SL 1-10](#) (Grades 9-12)
- [CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy Standards](#) (Grades 9-12)
- [CA ELD Standards: ELD.PI.9–10.1, 5, 9, 10a](#)
- [California HSS Framework Chapter 20, “Access and Equity.”](#) pages 24–25.

Course Text

- *A Different Mirror for Young People: A History of Multicultural America*, Ronald Takaki, 2012

Specific Learning Outcomes

In accordance with their individual capacity, students will grow in the ability to:

- Understand how historical context influences the content of a document.
- Recognize that documents are products of particular points in time.
- Locate, interpret, and assess information found in primary and secondary sources.
- Describe how major historical events are related to each other in time by distinguishing between cause and effect, sequence, and correlation.
- Apply the principles of historical research by asking questions, evaluating data, and analyzing different points of view.
- Identify an author’s position, audience and purpose in producing a document.
- Evaluate the trustworthiness of, and disparities between, sources by considering genre, audience and purpose.

General Course Learning Goals

- Examine identity formation among individuals, communities, and the nation.
- Explore the meaning of race as it pertains to individuals and communities.
- Examine the idea of American citizenship and how hyphenated Americans get defined and/or redefined.
- Consider how a nation confronts, emerges from, and reconciles its past.

- Evaluate how often stereotypes can affect an individual and/or groups.
- Explore the histories, struggles, and triumphs of the disadvantaged communities
- Gain insight into social identities and the advantages and disadvantages associated with these identities.

Standards (apply to all Units)

[*CA Dept. of Education Model Ethnic Studies Curriculum Guidelines, 2020*](#)

[*CA HS/SS Framework \(2016\). Ch 14. Curriculum Frameworks. "Ethnic Studies" pp. 310-314*](#)

[*CA HSS Analysis Skills \(9–12\): Chron/Spatial Thinking 2,3; Research 1,2,3: Interp 1,2,3,4*](#)

[*CA CCSS Writing Standards WHST 9-12.1*](#)

[*CA CCSS Reading Standards RH 9-12.1,4,6*](#)

[*CA CCSS Speaking and Listening Standards 9-12 .1,2,3,4,5,6*](#)

[*CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy Standards 9-12 .1-10*](#)

[*CA ELD Standards: ELD.PI.9–10.1, 5, 9, 10a*](#)

[*California HSS Framework Chapter 20, "Access and Equity," pages 24–25.*](#)

COURSE SYLLABUS and SCHEDULE

Fall Semester

Introduction to Ethnic Studies and Identity Unit (4 weeks)

In this unit, students will become familiar with the discipline of Ethnic Studies and its history. Students will explore the meaning of words such as race and ethnicity as they pertain to individuals and communities. Students will study how we define our various identities: national, state, local, and community. The overall objective of this Unit is for students to understand the approaches used in Ethnic Studies, and to explore themselves and how they fit into society.

Essential Questions

- What is Ethnic Studies and how did it emerge as a field of study?
- How do we define and perceive our various identities: national, state, local, and community?
- How do we form these identities and how do they intersect with each other?
- What does it mean to be American, and how do "hyphenated American" identities change over time?

Key Concepts

multicultural	assimilation	narrative	migration
ethnic	alien	antisemitism	demography
identity	race	equity	equality
ethnography	stratification	appropriation	intersectionality
minorities	diversity		

Readings

Takaki, Introduction "My Story, Our Story,"

Potential Supplemental Readings (Alternative Perspectives)

Alejo and Lara, [Editorial: “Ethnic Studies Should be a High School Requirement”](#)
[Independent Lens, “The Case Against Ethnic Studies”](#)

Cal Poly’s [video intro to Ethnic Studies](#)

Thomas Sowell [“Do ‘minorities’ really have it so bad?”](#)

Ana Lia Cabello, PRHS alum, [video “What Ethnic Studies means to me”](#)

Possible Unit Assignment: *Students will research their family history using an ethnographic approach. Students will develop an oral and visual presentation that analyzes the student's family history and “American identity” while applying their knowledge of how race, ethnicity, religion, geography, culture, politics, sexual identity, gender, society and personal experiences have shaped their identity.*

African American Unit (6 weeks)

In this unit, students will study and explore the experience of African Americans both historically and up to modern times, with a particular emphasis on resilience and achievements in overcoming historical barriers to opportunity. The unit will include contemporary issues, with an emphasis on the post – WWII Civil Rights Movement. Students will become familiar with the contributions of Marcus Garvey, Thurgood Marshall, Rosa Parks, Medgar Evers, Martin Luther King, Jr., Stokely Carmichael, Angela Davis, and other African American Civil Rights leaders.

Essential Questions

- What role did African Americans play in the growth and development of the United States?
- What role did self – determination play in the trajectory of the African American community?
- How did political power develop within the African American community and how has this power evolved to work effectively with changing power structures in the United States?
- Was the Civil Rights Movement the work of one man?
- What role did youth play in the Civil Rights Movement?
- How did the Freedom Riders influence the Civil Rights Movement?
- What challenges continue to face African Americans?
- What opportunities do students have to enact positive change for African Americans?

Key Concepts and Terms

Disadvantages and Barriers

Slavery

Minstrel Shows

Plessy v. Ferguson

Jim Crow

Sharecropping/Tenant Farming

Struggle and Achievement

Bacon’s Rebellion

New Negro Renaissance

NAACP

Breaking the color barrier in sports

Brown v. Board of Education

Lynchings
Voter Suppression (Poll tax, etc.)
Criminal Justice challenges

Montgomery Bus Boycott
Freedom Riders
Loving v. Virginia

Essential Readings

Takaki Chapter 3 “The Hidden Origins of Slavery”
Takaki Chapter 5 “Life in Slavery”
Takaki Chapter 13 “Blacks Arrive in Northern Cities”

Possible Supplemental Readings (Alternative Perspectives)

Thomas Sowell [“Blacks and Bootstraps”](#)
[Pius Kamao - “A Duty to Heal.”](#)
[Chapter 11 from “Autobiography of Malcolm X”](#)
[Shelby Steele “White Guilt and the End of the Civil Rights Era”](#)
Chapter 1 from Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass
[Melba Beals interview “They Didn’t Want Me There”](#)

Potential Assignment: Students use the resources from the [Smithsonians’s National Museum of African American History and Culture](#) to focus on an important milestone event or theme in the Post WWII era and develop a research project around it. Topics could include

- *Brown v. Board of Education and school integration*
- *Loving v. Virginia and interracial marriage*
- *Emmett Till and lynching in Post WWII America*
- *Malcolm X and Black Nationalism*
- *African Americans and the Supreme Court - Thurgood Marshall and Clarence Thomas*
- *Redlining, Racially Restrictive Covenants, and White Flight*
- *The Civil Rights Movement vs. Black Lives Matter movement*

Native American Unit (6 weeks)

In this unit, students will study and explore the experience of Native Americans both historically and in terms of contemporary issues. Students will be exposed to a variety of Native American voices and perspectives exploring indigenous history, culture, resilience and achievements.

Essential Questions

- How has the formation of the United States and westward expansion affected Native Americans?
- How have Native Americans demonstrated cultural resilience in the face of loss, hardship and discrimination?
- How have the experiences of different tribes within the United States varied and what impact have these differences had on the economic/political status of the tribes?
- What role has assimilation played in the experience of Native Americans?

- How did political power develop within the Native American community and how has this power evolved to work effectively with changing power structures in the United States?

Key Concepts and Terms

Disadvantages and Barriers

Forced Removal
Manifest Destiny
Indian Wars
Broken Treaties
Reservation System
Indian Boarding schools

Struggle and Achievement

Preservation of tribal cultures
American Indian Movement
Code Talkers
Economics of gambling licenses
The Modern Pow Wow
Conversations about sports mascots

Essential Readings

Takaki, Chapter 2 “Removing the Savages,”
Takaki, Chapter 4 “The Road to the Reservation,”
Takaki, Chapter Nine, “Dealing with the Indians”

Possible Supplemental Readings (Alternative Perspectives)

[Joy Harjo, “A Sacred Connection to the Sun”](#)

[Native Americans in the military speak](#), PBS short

[Why We Serve: Native Americans in the Military](#), Smithsonian

Sherman Alexie, [“Indian Education” from *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fist Fight in Heaven*](#)

Peter MacDonald [“White House Address on the Navajo Code Talkers”](#)

[“U.S. Apology to Native Americans: Unnecessary or Not Enough?”](#)

Potential Assignment: *Students will analyze and evaluate the causes and effects of systems by using the perspective of Native/Indigenous people to compare and contrast past and present issues around customs, conservation of the land, education, and personal and public health through a multimedia artistic representation that features the use of images, sounds/songs, and writing.*

Voluntary & Involuntary Immigrant Experiences, Assimilation, and Identity Formation Unit (4 weeks)

In this unit, students explore the experience of two important European immigrant groups--Jewish and Irish Americans--through the lens of identity formation and assimilation. Students will study the policies and forces that influenced immigration to the U.S. and the extent to which different ethnic groups assimilated into American culture. Students will also compare Irish and Jewish immigration with immigration since the 1960s.

Essential Questions

- What were the push and pull factors of migration that influenced the waves of Irish and Jewish migration to the U.S.
- What were the factors that influenced the different immigrant groups' acculturation and assimilation?

- To what extent were European Americans able to assimilate into the white dominant culture, compared with other groups? What can explain this?

Key Concepts and Terms

Disadvantages and Barriers

Potato famine
Anti Semitism
Pogroms
Shtetls and Sweatshops

Struggle and Achievement

Union organizing, Mother Jones
International Ladies Garment Workers' Union
1924 Immigration Law
Emma Goldman

Essential Readings

Takaki, Chapter 6, "The Flight from Ireland"
Takaki, Chapter 11, "The Jews are Pushed from Russia"
Takaki, Chapter 16, "New Waves of Newcomers"

Possible Supplemental Readings (Alternative Perspectives)

Emma Goldman, [The New Declaration of Independence](#), 1909
[Clara Lemlich and the Garment Workers' Strike](#)
Song Lyrics, ["Lament of the Irish Immigrant"](#)
[The Rise of Industrial Labor in Antebellum America](#) article

Possible Unit Assignment

Interview of a descendant of European ancestry and identity Project. The interview will address a specific issue related to the European identity and ethnicity of the person being interviewed. The interview (which will be recorded and transcribed) will explore cultural traits, ethnic identity and assimilation within the U.S. Students will compare and contrast the European immigrant story with the experiences of African-Americans, Asian-Americans, Native Americans, and Latino Americans. The final product can then be presented to the class and/or shared with the school.

(End of First Semester)

Spring Semester

Overcoming Adversity Unit (2 weeks)

In this unit, students will consider how particular ethnic groups in the U.S. have overcome historical, ideological and structural barriers in their journey to be fully accepted into American society. Students will use critical thinking skills to identify and evaluate the forms of agency, creativity, resistance, and resilience that specific groups have used to gain access to the American Dream. Students will focus on comparing how institutions, such as public education, legal system, immigration system, health care system, housing system, labor system, prison/detention institutions, and economic system, have functioned over time to impact groups' identity, creativity, and resilience. Students will connect the learning from this unit to their own community and reflect on ways that structures, attitudes, and institutions have shaped our lives. Students will highlight the tactics and strategies that

have allowed groups and individuals to make progress toward equality, inclusion and opportunity.

Essential Questions

- How have groups experiencing discrimination and racism used agency and creativity to address their needs and aspirations?
- How have Native Americans, African Americans, Latino Americans and Asian Americans demonstrated resilience To what extent do internal and external social, ideological, political, and interpersonal factors shape our resistance and identity?

Possible Supplemental Readings (Alternative Perspectives)

[Harlem Renaissance](#) (from Smithsonian)

[Stories of Resilience](#) museum exhibit, New London Connecticut

[Racism, Resilience and Resistance in Asian American Communities](#), Smithsonian forum

[Fred Korematsu, All American Hero](#)

[Muslim Americans, Resilient and Patriotic](#) video

[The New History of Being Asian American](#), New Yorker

[Native American Resilience through art](#), Bunky Echo-Hawk

Possible Unit Assignment

Students will reflect on their history, culture, and identity by evaluating their consciousness around a specific institution or structure that has impacted their lives by creating a visual representation to illustrate their ideas and writing a reflection that highlights their forms of resilience.

Latino American Unit (6 weeks)

In this unit, students will study and explore the experience of Latino Americans both historically and in terms of contemporary issues. Students will explore statistics and the diverse ethnic groups living in the United States within Latino communities. Among the questions explored are:

- What are the cultural and political similarities/differences between South Americans, Central Americans, and Mexican Americans?
- What role did Latinos play in the growth and development of the United States?
- How did political power develop within the Latino American community and how has this power evolved to work effectively with changing power structures in the United States? (How Latino/Chicanx movements have impacted the experience of Latino individuals today?)
- To what extent have acculturation and immigration impacted the political, social, and economic realities of Latino Americans?
- How has the experience of Latino Americans in California differed from that of Latino Americans in other parts of the United States?
- What challenges continue to face Latino Americans?
- What opportunities do students have to enact positive change for Latino Americans?

Key Concepts and Terms

Hardships and Barriers

Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo
Mexican Revolution
Bracero Program
Lemon Grove Incident
Zoot Suit Riots
Life in the “Barrio”

Struggle and Achievement

San Joaquin Labor Strike
Nativism
Mendez v. Westminster case
Cesar Chavez/United Farm Workers
DACA/Dreamers
Chicano Movement/School “Blowouts”

Essential Readings

Takaki Chapter Seven, “The War Against Mexico,”
Takaki, Chapter Thirteen “Up From Mexico,”
Takaki, pp. 284-86 (Up From the Barrio). pp 300-303 (Protest in the Barrio)

Possible Supplemental Readings (Alternative Perspectives)

Cesar Chavez speech, [“The Lessons of Dr. King”](#)
[I am Joaquin.](#) by Corky Gonzales
[To Live in the Borderlands.](#) poem by Gloria Anzaldua
[Zoot Suit Riots.](#) History article

Possible Unit Assignment

Students are required to create a collage (artwork) that compares and contrasts the various struggles of Mexican Americans and Latinos in America between the late-1800s-Present. Students will also include the influence of the Chicano Movement in challenging those struggles. Students will demonstrate their learning through an oral presentation of their collage.

Asian American and Pacific Islander Unit (6 weeks)

In this unit, students will study and explore the experience of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders both historically and in terms of contemporary issues. Students will explore statistics and the diverse ethnic groups living in the United States of Asian and Pacific Islanders descent. Students will be exposed to readings showcasing the variety of experiences and perspectives from this diverse group of Americans. Among the questions explored are:

- What are the cultural and political similarities/differences between East Asians, Southeast Asians, Pacific Islanders, and Southern Asians?
- What role did Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders play in the growth and development of the United States? How did political power develop within the Asian American community and how has this power evolved to work effectively with changing power structures in the United States?
- How have immigration and acculturation impacted the political, social, and economic realities of Asian Americans?
- What accounts for the cultural perception that Asian Americans are the “model minority”? What challenges continue to face Asian Americans?

- What opportunities do students have to enact positive change for Asian Americans?

Key Concepts and Terms

Disadvantages and Barriers

Chinese Exclusion Act
WWII internment camps
Angel Island
Korematsu v. U.S.
Labor barriers

Struggle and Achievement

1870 Civil Rights Act
Chinatowns
Picture brides, Nisei, Isei
Taiko Drums
Japanese Strike of 1909

Essential Readings:

Takaki, Chapter Eight, "From China to Gold Mountain"
Takaki, Chapter Twelve "Japanese and the Money Trees"

Potential Supplemental Readings (Alternative Perspectives)

[Asian Americans](#) documentary on PBS
[Angel Island Poetry: Voices of Resistance online exhibit](#)
[Supreme Court dissent in Korematsu v. US case](#)
[Senator Daniel Inouye's Maiden Speech to the Senate](#)
[Early Chinese immigration to the U.S.](#)
[California Apologizes to Chinese Americans](#)
[Patricia Tsubokawa "America Gives my Life Meaning."](#)

Key assignment: *Using research and inquiry skills, students write a research paper comparing and contrasting the treatment of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders between the mid-1800s-Present. Research will include investigation into barriers faced as well as achievements and successes. Possible topics include: Asian Americans in SLO County, Japanese-American Internment, Immigration and Assimilation, and Asian American diversity.*

Muslim and Arab American Unit (2 weeks)

In this unit, students will study and explore the experience of Muslim and Arab Americans both historically and in terms of contemporary issues, with an emphasis on the post – 911 environment. They will seek to answer the following questions:

- What role did Muslim and Arab Americans play in the growth and development of the United States?
- How did political power develop within Muslim and Arab American communities and how has this power evolved to work effectively with changing power structures in the United States?
- How has the racialization of Muslim and Arab Americans changed since 9/11.
- How have post 9/11 sentiments in America changed the way Muslim, Arab Americans and Arab-looking individuals see themselves?
- What have been some of the shifts in their understanding of race?
- What challenges continue to face Muslim and Arab Americans?
- What opportunities do students have to enact positive change for Muslim and Arab Americans?

Key Concepts and Terms

Disadvantages and Barriers

Islamophobia
Impact of 9/11
Stereotypes and discrimination

Struggle and Achievement

Muslim American Society
Interfaith Alliances
American Muslims elected to Congress

Essential Readings

Takaki, pp. 324-327

Possible Supplemental Readings (Alternative Perspectives)

[Muslims in America: Telling Your Own Stories](#), NPR

[Eboo Patel "We Are Each Other's Business"](#)

[Muslims in America after 9/11](#), Psychology article

[Hate Crimes Against American Muslims](#), NY Times

Assignment: Working with a partner students will interview an individual who identifies as Muslim and/or Arab American and create an oral presentation for their classmates in which they tell their interviewees story. Presentations will: consider interviewees background, consider the impact of 9/11 on the interviewee and their family, consider the impact of 9/11 on Muslim and/or Arab communities.

Capstone Project Unit (4 weeks)

Students will conduct research to identify, evaluate, and interpret an issue in their community that needs to be addressed. Students will then pose a solution and plan of action that is connected to topics that were analyzed in a previous unit, or units of study. As critical thinkers, students will develop their own approach on a viable solution to a continued area of historical challenge for a particular ethnic group. Students will research various media sources and watch several news outlets to determine what social inequalities still exist and students will put their ideas into action through a plan/project that involves personal and civic engagement.

Essential Questions

- How might we continue to promote positive identities as scholars and community members through our continued engagement?
- How can we advance our studies, strengthening our community, and advocating in favor of ideas that counter racism and oppression?

Essential Readings

Takaki, Chapter 15, "Calls for Change"

Takaki, Chapter 17, "We Will All be Minorities"

Potential Supplemental Readings (Alternative Perspectives)

National Geographic, [Visualizing Race, Identity, and Change](#)

[Agency by Design](#): Harvard's Project Zero, student empowerment approach

[Civic Action Plan overview](#)

Assignment: *Students will select a unit, or units, to research, create, and produce a project that puts their learning into practice. Students will share their findings with their school and community. Students will also reflect on their personal journey throughout the course and design a plan or a project that demonstrates agency in responding to contemporary challenges in the field of race, ethnicity, identity or justice.*

III. Format and Procedures

This course will use a wide variety of instructional and assessment approaches in the exploration of the questions presented. Among the instructional and assessment methods used will be: lecture, text readings, seminar discussions, small group study, academic research and analysis of primary texts. The textbook shall serve as the guiding curriculum, and students will demonstrate understanding and mastery of the material through written and oral presentations, research papers, tests and quizzes, reflection journals and hands-on projects.

IV. Scope of Course

Ethnic Studies will be offered as a Social Science elective to any and all interested students, and will complement the existing courses offered through the department (Psychology, World History, U.S. History, Government and Economics).

V. Grading and Course Procedures

Grading and late work: Grade will be based on the cumulative total of scores from student assignments, participation, attendance, notebook maintenance, and projects/assessments. Grades will be posted and updated regularly. Missed quizzes and tests may be taken up to **two weeks** late, **but no later**. Late homework will be graded down (10% per day), and missed class activity credit may be made up by completing other assignments available from Mr. Land.

Attendance: The school's attendance policy will be enforced. .

VI. Academic Integrity

Each student in this course is expected to abide by the PRHS Code of Ethics. Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student's own work. Students copying, cheating, helping others cheat, or otherwise engaging in dishonest behavior will receive a **zero** on the assignment the first time, and have their course grade lowered one full grade every time afterwards.

VII. Accommodations for students with disabilities

In compliance with the Educational Code and Board Policy, Ethnic Studies welcomes students with disabilities and will make appropriate academic accommodations that may be required. Requests for academic accommodations are to be made during the first three weeks of the semester, except for unusual circumstances, so arrangements can be made.

Students are encouraged to register with Student Disability Services to verify their eligibility for appropriate accommodations.

VIII. Inclusivity/Diversity Statement

We understand that our members represent a rich variety of backgrounds and perspectives. This course (especially) is committed to providing an atmosphere for learning that respects diversity at PRHS. While working together to build this community we ask all students to:

- share their unique experiences, values and beliefs
- be open to the views of others
- honor the uniqueness of fellow students
- appreciate the opportunity that we have to learn from each other in this community
- value each other's opinions and communicate in a respectful manner
- keep confidential discussions of a personal nature
- use this opportunity to create an inclusive environment in this course

Diversity Statement: I strive to make this classroom (especially this class!) a place where students will be treated with respect, and I welcome individuals of all ages, backgrounds, beliefs, ethnicities, social classes, genders, gender identities, gender expressions, national origins, documentation statuses, religious affiliations, sexual orientations, ability – and other visible and nonvisible differences. All members of this class are expected to contribute to a respectful and inclusive environment for every other member of the class. This does not mean we cannot disagree or have different ideas. It does mean we try to consider perspectives other than our own, though they may differ from our own beliefs/experiences.