



WPUSD Ethnic Studies FAQs

About the Course Basics

1. What is ethnic studies and why are we offering it?

Ethnic studies is an interdisciplinary field that examines the history, culture, and contributions of diverse racial and ethnic groups, with a focus on promoting cultural understanding and social justice. This course will meet the requirements of California State Law AB 101 and provide students with the knowledge and skills to thrive in a diverse society.

2. Is this course required for graduation?

Yes, under AB 101, ethnic studies is a required course for high school graduation in California.

3. Which grade levels can take this course?

This course will be offered to ninth-grade students at all of our high schools.

4. How long is the course - one semester or two?

The course will be a one-semester class.

5. Will this replace any existing courses?

Yes, this course will replace geography in the ninth-grade course schedule.

6. Does California require specific content to be taught?

No. California has provided a model curriculum for ethnic studies which is not required to be used. Our course will be locally designed to reflect the unique histories, cultures, and perspectives of our community.

7. How will students access course materials (online, textbooks, etc.)?

Students will use a textbook and supplemental materials provided by the school. Digital resources may also be available for additional learning.



8. Can parents review the course materials before the class starts?

Parents will be included throughout the development process and will have opportunities to review the course outline and materials.

Teaching and Learning

1. What will students learn in this course?

Students will explore the histories, cultures, and contributions of various racial and ethnic groups in the United States. Topics will include identity, cultural traditions, historical events, and the ways different groups have shaped society

2. How will this course benefit students academically?

The course will enhance critical thinking, communication, and empathy. It will also foster a deeper understanding of social and historical contexts, preparing students for college, careers, and civic engagement.

3. What books and materials will be used?

A textbook approved by the committee, along with supplemental materials such as articles, documentaries, and primary sources.

4. Who chooses the course materials?

A committee of current teachers, administrators, and district office staff will select the textbooks and supplemental materials. The textbook will ultimately be approved by the school board.

5. Will there be field trips and guest speakers?

There may be opportunities for field trips and guest speakers to enhance the learning experience. These will be planned based on relevance and availability.

6. How will student progress be measured?

Students will be assessed through participation in discussions, small projects, written assignments, and other demonstration-based activities.



7. What support is available if students need help?

Teachers will provide support during and after class hours. Additional resources will be available as needed.

Teachers and Training

1. Who will teach this course?

The course will be taught by current social science teachers at our high schools.

2. What qualifications do teachers need?

Teachers must hold a valid social science credential to teach this course.

3. How are teachers being trained for this course?

Teachers will participate in professional development programs focused on the ethnic studies curriculum, instructional strategies, and culturally responsive teaching.

4. How are teachers selected?

Teachers are selected based on their credentials, experience, and interest in teaching ethnic studies.

5. Will there be diverse representation among the teaching staff?

While our current teaching staff is predominantly white, we are committed to fostering an inclusive curriculum and supporting teachers in presenting a range of perspectives and experiences effectively.

Creating a Safe Learning Environment

1. How will teachers handle sensitive topics?

Teachers will approach all topics with professionalism and respect for diverse viewpoints. The course begins with collaboratively establishing classroom discussion guidelines. Students will learn historical facts and multiple perspectives while being encouraged to think critically and draw their own conclusions. Parents will be able to review the course outline and syllabus.



2. What happens if conflicts arise in class?

Our teachers will address disagreements as learning opportunities. Class discussions will be structured and moderated to maintain respectful dialogue. If conflicts arise, teachers will use established classroom management strategies and can call upon counselors or administrators for additional support when needed.

3. How will you ensure all students feel respected?

Every student's dignity and right to learn will be protected through clear classroom guidelines and expectations. Students will not be asked to speak for any group or share personal experiences unless they choose to do so. The focus will be on learning about historical events, cultural contributions, and factual information rather than personal beliefs.

4. What support services are available for students?

Our school offers multiple layers of support:

- School counselors are available for all students
- Our Wellness Centers provide additional resources and support
- Students can request private conversations with teachers or counselors if they have concerns
- Parents can schedule meetings to discuss any specific needs or concerns

5. How will you prevent students from being singled out or stereotyped?

The course is designed to focus on historical events, cultural achievements, and factual information rather than individual students' experiences. Teachers will not ask students to represent or speak for any group. Class discussions will focus on course materials and historical context. Students will be able to share personal stories, if they choose, at appropriate times. All students will be held to the same academic standards and expectations for respectful participation.

Community and Cultural Content

1. Which cultures and communities will be studied?



The course will focus on the experiences of African Americans, Asian Americans, Latino/a/x Americans, Native Americans, and other historically marginalized groups, with an emphasis on local community histories.

2. How will local community perspectives be included?

Local community voices will be incorporated through guest speakers, partnerships, and the inclusion of regional history and culture in the curriculum.

3. How will you choose guest speakers?

Guest speakers will be selected based on their expertise, relevance to the course content, and ability to engage students effectively.

4. Will LGBTQ+ perspectives be included?

The course will focus on ethnic and cultural studies, with an emphasis on the histories and contributions of diverse racial and ethnic groups.

5. Will multiracial families and identities be discussed?

Yes, the course will include discussions on multiracial identities and families to reflect the diversity of student experiences and foster inclusive learning.

Addressing Common Concerns

1. How will challenging historical topics be taught?

Historical topics will be taught using primary sources, verified historical documents, and board-approved curriculum materials. The focus will be on understanding events in their full historical context, examining multiple perspectives, and learning how different groups have contributed to building our nation. Teachers will present information objectively, allowing students to develop their own understanding.

2. How will political topics be handled?

This course includes both historical and contemporary events as they relate to ethnic studies. Teachers will use factual information from reliable sources to help students understand both historical context and current implications. When discussing contemporary issues, multiple perspectives



will be presented, and students will be encouraged to think critically and draw their own conclusions based on evidence. Class discussions will be structured and moderated to maintain respectful dialogue focused on learning and understanding. The goal is to help students develop critical thinking skills and understand complex topics through multiple perspectives, not to promote any particular viewpoint.

3. How will you ensure balanced representation of different groups?

The curriculum follows state guidelines to include various cultural and ethnic groups who have contributed to American history. Course materials are carefully selected to provide accurate, well-rounded historical perspectives. The focus is on understanding how different groups have worked together to build our community and nation.

4. How does this course relate to existing history classes?

This course expands upon traditional history education by highlighting stories and achievements often left out of standard textbooks. Students will learn about historical figures, events, and cultural contributions that have traditionally been underrepresented in standard curricula. The course brings to light untold or overlooked stories that have shaped our nation's history. While traditional history courses provide important foundational knowledge, ethnic studies offers additional perspectives and deeper insights into the diverse groups who have contributed to our society. This broader view helps students develop a more complete understanding of American history.

5. What input has the community had in developing this course?

The development process has included:

- Community feedback sessions - both adult and student
- Parent and student surveys
- Parent review opportunities
- Teacher, administrator, and school board input
- Student perspectives
- Consultation with educational experts

We continue to welcome community feedback as we refine the curriculum.



6. How will you measure if the course is successful?

Success will be measured through:

- Standard academic assessments
- Student engagement and completion rates
- Parent and student feedback
- Achievement of state-mandated learning objectives
- Student ability to demonstrate understanding of course concepts

Regular evaluations will help us adjust and improve the course as needed.