

Race and Ethnic Studies

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The race and ethnic studies major takes an interdisciplinary approach to the study of race and ethnicity — What do these categories of difference mean? How have they been defined, constructed, and applied in different socio-historic contexts? How do they intersect or overlap with other axes of difference (e.g., gender, class, nation, religion)? Exploring these questions with analytical tools and approaches developed in a range of academic disciplines, this major leads to a critical examination of many historical and contemporary social issues that arise from the institutionalization of race and ethnicity.

In all courses, the student's work should focus on issues of race and ethnicity whenever that is possible.

In addition to the 36 credits required for the major, the student will complete three courses totaling at least 11 credits of college-level study in a language other than his or her first language. Courses used to satisfy requirements in other majors or minors cannot also be used to satisfy the race and ethnic studies major or minor.

Learning Goals: Upon graduation, a student will be able to:

- **Major-Specific Areas of Knowledge**
 - Identify and interpret important ideas, assumptions, and debates that are central to the study of race and ethnicity.
 - Explore the intersection of broad theoretical claims with different socio-historic contexts, as well as with other categories of difference such as nation, class, religion, and gender.
 - Develop an interdisciplinary approach to the study of race and ethnicity and a critical ability to analyze the historical and contemporary issues arising from the institutionalization of racial and ethnic differences.
- **Critical Thinking**
 - Analyze issues with a variety of tools and approaches in a range of disciplines.
- **Research Experience**
 - Conduct a substantial academic inquiry about a focused research question, demonstrating a critical awareness of competing arguments, the mastery of relevant methods, and a capacity to generate substantive results from original research.

Distribution: Race and Ethnic Studies designated courses count toward the cultural pluralism distribution area.

Total credit requirements for a Race and Ethnic Studies major: 36

The Race and Ethnic Studies major:

- 36 Credits (11 additional credits in language)
- Required Courses
 - RAES 105 and one additional foundation course (see course list below)
 - RAES 490, and 497 or 498
 - Concentration: three courses in a topic or region from at least two disciplines
 - Two of the three courses must be taken at Whitman and independent studies may not be applied toward the major
 - Three electives to complement concentration so the student has worked in three disciplines overall (see course list below)
 - Recommended to explore more than one geographic area
 - Three or more courses totaling at least 11 additional credits in language
 - No more than two languages
 - Not in student's first language
 - May be earned from Whitman courses, transfer credit, and study abroad
- Other notes

- The concentration must be submitted to the Race and Ethnic Studies Steering Committee by the end of the week following Thanksgiving break in the fall semester of the junior year. Examples of regional concentrations include: race and ethnicity in Latin America, ethnicity and race in Africa, U.S. race and ethnic studies, African American studies, or race and ethnicity in South Asia. Examples of thematic or topical concentrations include: ethnicity and identity; race and gender; literary representations of race and ethnicity; race and class; ethnicity and nation; race, ethnicity, and nature; religion and ethnicity.
- Proposal must include
 - A title
 - A list of the three courses proposed
 - An explanation of how the courses fit together and complement each other
- No courses may be taken PDF
- Senior Requirements
 - RAES 490, 497 or 498
 - Students will propose thesis topics to the RAES Steering Committee by midterm in the second semester of the junior year
 - Oral examination
 - Thesis defense
 - Broader synthesis of student's work in the major
- Honors
 - Students submit a Honors in Major Study Application to their department
 - Students must submit a proposal for their thesis or project
 - Must be submitted within the first six weeks of the two-semester period in which student is eligible
 - Accumulated at least 87 credits
 - Completed two semesters of residency at Whitman.
 - Cumulative GPA of at least 3.300 on all credits earned at Whitman College
 - Major GPA of at least 3.500
 - Complete a written thesis or research project prepared exclusively for the satisfaction of this program
 - Earn a grade of at least A- on the honors thesis or project and the honors thesis course.
 - Pass the senior assessment with distinction
 - The department will submit the Honors applications to the Registrar's Office of students pursuing Honors by the specified deadline
 - The department submit "Senior Assessment/Major Study Certificate" to the Registrar's Office no later the Reading Day
 - An acceptable digital copy of the Honors Thesis must be submitted to Penrose Library no later than Reading Day

The Race and Ethnic Studies minor:

- 16 credits
- Required Courses
 - One foundation course (see course list below)
 - Three elective courses (see course list below)
- Other notes
 - Courses used for other majors and minors cannot be used
 - No courses may be taken PDF

Foundation courses: courses incorporating race and ethnicity as central, defining issues:

Art History 235/Race and Ethnic Studies 235 *Forms and Feels Race and Visual Culture*
 Art History 353 *Blues, Blood, Bruise: Blackness in Art*
 English 376 *Colonial and Anti-Colonial Literature*
 Gender Studies/Global Literatures/Race & Ethnic Studies 320 *Trauma & its Aftermath: Narrative, Witnessing & Remembrance*
 Gender Studies 328 *Queer Studies*
 Global Literatures 395 *Contemporary Literary Theory*
 History 268 *Im/migration and US History: Population Flows, Experience, and Nation*
 History 371 *African American History*
 Race and Ethnic Studies 105 *Introduction to Race and Ethnic Studies*
 Race and Ethnic Studies 225 *Race, Class, Violence*
 Race and Ethnic Studies 305 *Continental Philosophy, Postcolonial Theory, and the Palestinian Question*
 Race and Ethnic Studies 325 *Afro-Pessimism and Its Critics*
 Sociology 267 *Race and Ethnic Group Relations*

Race and Ethnic Studies courses: a list from which majors will draw concentration and elective courses in consultation with advisor and approved by committee. For a thorough listing of courses used in the race and ethnic studies program, please consult the department web page at www.whitman.edu/academics/courses-of-study/race-and-ethnic-studies or see the list below.

- Anthropology 153/Religion 153 *Religion and Native America*
- Anthropology 210 *Bring Out Your Dead: Anthropology of Death and Dying*
- Anthropology 248/Politics 202 *ST: Political Anthropology*
- Anthropology 258 *Peoples of the Tibeto-Burman Highlands*
- Anthropology 304 *Anthropology of Complementary, Alternative and Integrative Medicine*
- Anthropology 309 *Urban Life: Readings in the Anthropology of Cities*
- Anthropology 328 *Medical Anthropology*
- Art History 225 *Inventing Egypt*
- Art History 235/Race and Ethnic Studies 235 *Forms and Feels Race and Visual Culture*
- Art History 353 *Blues, Blood, Bruise: Blackness in Art*
- Art History 355 *Indigenous Aesthetics: Native North American Art and Visual Culture*
- Classics 280/History 280 *The "Other" Greece & Rome*
- English 231 *Introduction to Shakespeare: Race, Nationality, and Power*
- English 245 *Native American Literatures*
- English 246 *Introduction to African American Literature*
- English 346 *African American Historiographic Fiction*
- English 375 *ST:/Global Literatures 395 Contemporary Literary Theory*
- English 376 *VT: Counterpoints: Edward Said's Work and Anti-Colonial Literature*
- English 387 *VT: Black Shakespeares*
- Film and Media Studies 315 *Bad Objects: Popular Culture and Questions of Taste*
- Film and Media Studies 345 *The Middle East in Cinema & Media*
- Film and Media Studies 350 *Latinxs in U.S. Media*
- French 316 *Contemporary France and the Francophone World*
- French 407 *Ironic Enchantments*
- Gender Studies/Global Literatures/Race & Ethnic Studies 320 *Trauma & its Aftermath: Narrative, Witnessing & Remembrance*
- German Studies 230 *Conceiving and Re-conceiving Race*
- Hispanic Studies 143 *U.S. Latinx Literatures and Culture: An Introduction*
- Hispanic Studies 305 & 306 *Advanced Spanish: Topics in Contemporary Hispanic Culture*
- Hispanic Studies 325 *Translation: Healthcare and Language*
- Hispanic Studies 326 *Translation: Public Affairs, the Law and Language Change*
- Hispanic Studies 425 *Tropics of Disaster: Speculative Fiction in the End of Times*
- Hispanic Studies 447 *Staging Memory & Cultural Identities: Performative Discourses in the Contemporary Hispanic World*
- Hispanic Studies 451/Global Literature 351 *Maid in Latin America: The Image of the Domestic Worker in the Contemporary Cinema*
- History 112 *Modern Africa*
- History 188 *Modern Latin America*
- History 204 *Syria: From Ruin(ation) to Restoration*
- History 208 *Latinx in the US: A History*
- History 209 *Religion in Latin America*
- History 211 *The World Wars in Africa*
- History 214 *Sex in the Casbah: Sex, Gender & Islam*
- History 217 *Decolonization in Africa*
- History 218 *Africa to 1885*
- History 219 *Nation Creation: Latin America in the Nineteenth Century*
- History 220 *Ottomania! History, Politics, and Memory of the Ottoman Empire*
- History 243 *Japan's Modern Empire*
- History 247 *Early Chinese History*
- History 250 *New Worlds, New Empires: North America, 1600-1800*
- History 254 *Social History of Stuff*
- History 267 *Protest & Organizing: A History of U.S. Social Movements*
- History 268 *Im/migration and US History: Population Flows, Experience, and Nation*
- History 280/Classics 280 *The "Other" Greece & Rome*
- History 286 *Making Modern Mexico*
- History 287 *Colonial Latin America*
- History 288 *Reform or Revolution: Latin America in the Twentieth Century*
- History 297 *Nineteenth-Century United States*
- History 314 *Colonial Moment in Africa*
- History 322 *History of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict*
- History 335 *Modern European Imperialism*
- History 344 *China in Revolution*
- History 364 *Sugar, Sex, & Slavery: The History of the Black Atlantic*
- History 366 *The Americas, 1968-1999: Dictatorship, Neoliberalism & Solidarity*
- History 370 *Histories of US Genders and Sexualities*
- History 371 *African American History*
- History 397 *ST: Harem Histories*
- Interdisciplinary Studies 230 *ST: Race and the Law*
- Music 160 *Study of Jazz*
- Politics 200 *ST: Gender, Race, and The 2020 Elections*
- Politics 203 *ST: Race and International*
- Politics 240 *Mexico: Politics and Society in the Age of NAFTA*
- Politics 254 *Gender and Race in Law and Policy*
- Politics 311 *Deservingness in US Social Policy*
- Politics 312 *Humanism Europe and Others*
- Politics 334 *The U.S.-Mexico Border: Immigration, Development, and Globalization*
- Politics 359 *Gender and International Hierarchy*
- Politics 367 *African Political Thought*

Psychology 230/Sociology 230 *Social Psychology*
Psychology 232 *The Psychology of Prejudice*
Psychology 336 *Social Stigma*
Religion 205 *American Islam*
Religion 222 *Hindu India*
Religion 304 *Muslim Bodies*
Religion 358 *Feminist and Liberation Theologies*
Rhetoric, Writing and Public Discourse 353 *The
Rhetoric of the Black Freedom Struggle*
Rhetoric, Writing and Public Discourse 380/English
377 *Rhetorical Bodies*
Rhetoric, Writing and Public Discourse 403 *ST:
Rhetorics of Racism*
Sociology 220 *Latin@s in the United States*
Sociology 230/Psychology 230 *Social Psychology*
Sociology 267 *Race and Ethnic Group Relations*
Sociology 271 *Asian Americans in Contemporary
Society*
Sociology 290 *History and Sociology of Rock 'n' Roll*
Sociology 353 *Environmental Justice*
Sociology 369 *Social Stratification*
Theater and Dance 382 *ST: Hip Hop Culture*

100 Special Topics in Race and Ethnic Studies

4 credits

Courses under this category explore selected topics in Race and Ethnic Studies at the introductory level. Any current offerings follow.

105 Introduction to Race and Ethnic Studies

Fall

Zalloua

4 credits

This interdisciplinary course is designed to introduce students to the foundational concepts and critical debates animating the study of race and ethnicity. It will interrogate categories of race and ethnicity, in the United States and globally, in contemporary and historical contexts. Open to First-year and sophomore only, and others by consent of instructor.

200-201 Special Topics in Race and Ethnic Studies

1-4 credits

The course explores selected topics in race and ethnic studies. Any current offerings follow.

200 ST: Race and the Law

Fall

Lemma

4 credits

This course explores what has been called humanity's most intractable challenge: the role of the law in defining and dealing with race and racism, with particular emphasis on the continuity across history of the legal treatment of issues of race and the evolution of that treatment. By examining topics of comparative and international law and using exploratory case studies of specific countries and regions, the course will analyze how the law deals with the definitions of race, prejudice, stereotypes, racism, discrimination, oppression, privilege, and racial equality and equity; the intersection of race with issues of not only skin color, but also class, ethnicity, religion, culture, sex, gender, and sexual orientation; the intersection of race with issues of education, economic opportunity and socio-cultural development, health inequity, criminal justice, residential, land, and property rights, media coverage, and immigration and citizenships; the treatment of the four major minority racial groups in the USA, namely, African Americans, Indians, Hispanics, and Asian Americans; how other western, industrialized, non-western, non-industrialized societies and different world religions have dealt with issues of race, racism, racial justice and social reform; and redressing and addressing racism generally. Distribution area: cultural pluralism.

210 Problems with Privilege

Spring

Simek

4 credits

This course engages the now widespread liberal activist slogan "check your privilege" so prevalent on U.S. college campuses. What does it mean today to "check" privilege? Is "checking privilege" enough? When consuming the news and educating ourselves in class, whose voices get to be heard? Who aren't we hearing from? What questions haven't we raised? How do we listen effectively? Intersectionality as theory and method responds to many of these questions. It posits that various structures of discrimination and privilege (such as sexism, racism, and colonialism among others) intersect, influencing our daily lived experience as well as our social institutions and policies. This course presents foundational concepts that allow us to understand power through debates in the field of Gender Studies, and a genealogy of intersectionality and its discontents. The course explores theories and methods based on intersectionality beyond a race/gender pairing, engages critiques of intersectionality, and facilitates a more nuanced understanding of challenges and opportunities surrounding social justice and identity through the lens of intersectional analysis. May be elected as Gender Studies 210.

215 Dialogue, Difference and Social Justice

Not offered 2021-22

2 credits

The course will provide a context in which students from a variety of social locations and identities will explore deeply the meaning and the impacts of socially constructed realities that tend to limit the full humanity of others. Categories such as race, class, gender, gender identity, national origin, religion, ability, and how they shape social

interactions will be explored, with the view of providing and developing skills that will enable course participants to have these dialogues across difference with the goal of working towards a more inclusive and just community. Through theoretical readings, experiential learning and actual engagement around critical contemporary issues, the course participants will refine their abilities to have meaningful dialogue in ways that lead to a praxis of social change. Graded credit/no credit.

225 Race, Class, Violence

Not offered 2021-22

4 credits

In this course we will examine the complex relationships between race and class in contemporary structural modes of violence. Students will analyze various bodies of social theory (such as Marxism, Critical Race Theory, feminism, and postcolonial theory) and evaluate the ways they account for the interplay of race and class, of domination and exploitation. By considering the analytical category of race together with that of class (and vice versa), our goal is to strengthen each term's explanatory force and better account for the dynamism and complexities of racial and economic struggles.

235 Forms and Feels: Race and Visual Culture

Fall

Uddin

4 credits

Race is foundational to modern life and complex in its permutations. How does one go about engaging it in a critical and sensitive way? This course cultivates observation, analysis and response in this direction. We will study how racial meaning, experience and power are produced through practices of visual representation in art, film, education, science and the law, and how the visual field itself is a racial formation. We will also explore the lines between seeing race and feeling race. Topics may include racial identifications, embodiments, caricature, performance, surveillance, spectatorship, and archives. Students develop conceptual vocabularies, historical contexts and interpretive skills for understanding race in and through the visual world. Lecture-based with short papers, projects, presentations and exams. May be elected as Art History and Visual Culture Studies 235.

301 Special Topics in Race and Ethnic Studies

2-4 credits

The course explores selected topics in race and ethnic studies. Any current offerings follow.

305 Continental Philosophy, Postcolonial Theory, and the Palestinian Question

Spring

Zalloua

4 credits

The Palestinian question has emerged as a growing concern for continental philosophers in recent decades, spurred by postcolonial theory. This course examines this philosophical engagement, scrutinizing the racialization of Palestinians, their normalization as inferior and expendable beings, and the ethical and political hierarchization of lives. Raising the Palestinian question invites us to reframe the relationships between philosophy and history, ethics and politics, so as to scrutinize the tendency to ontologize the other (as in the rhetoric of the timeless victim), to abstract the other from the earthly, historical, and dynamic field of power. Thinkers examined will include Edward Said, Judith Butler, Jacques Derrida, Slavoj Žižek, and Jacqueline Rose. May be taken for credit toward the Rhetoric, Writing and Public Discourse major.

320 Trauma & its Aftermath: Narrative, Witnessing & Remembrance

Not offered 2021-22

4 credits

Trauma has attracted critical attention as a limit case through which to explore the nature of selfhood, language, memory and power, and the ethical and political implications of representing violence. Taking contemporary examples of race- and gender-based violence, their intersections, and their specificities as a point of departure, students will examine debates in scholarship and activism over definitions of trauma, its personal and collective impacts, and the social, cultural, and political actions to be taken in its wake. We will pay particular attention to questions of narrative genre, medium and transmission, as well as the role of commemoration in projects to combat violence. May be taken for credit toward the Gender Studies major or the Global Literatures minor. May be elected as Gender Studies 320 or Global Literatures 320.

325 Afro-Pessimism and Its Critics**Not offered 2021-22****4 credits**

This course examines Afro-Pessimism's controversial claim that it is anti-blackness rather than white supremacy that governs the production of meaning and value in white civil society. Afro-Pessimism is skeptical of narratives of racial progress, as well as the ability of coalitional alliances to address the roots of racism. We will consider the ontologies underpinning Afro-Pessimism, the opposing contemporary movements with which it dialogues, and the differing visions of social and political change that each offers. We will also evaluate Afro-Pessimism's definition of the black experience and its criticism of movements organized instead around commonalities between people of color.

360 The Cultural Politics of Science**Fall****Pribilsky****4 credits**

An upper-level introduction to the widening field known as science and technology studies (STS). Interdisciplinary in scope, this course primarily draws on ethnographic attempts to understand how science and technology shape human lives and livelihoods and how society and culture, in turn, shape the development of science and technology. Throughout the course, we will be particularly concerned with ways that scientific visions and projects, broad in scope, articulate, mirror, distort, and shape hierarchies based on such categories as gender, race, class, development, definitions of citizenship, understandings of nature, the production of knowledge, and global capitalism. Topics may include race-based pharmaceuticals, climate debates and "natural" disasters, genomics, politicized archaeology, science in postcolonial contexts, DNA fingerprinting, clinical trials, cyborgs, nuclear weapons production, and human/nonhuman relationships. May be elected as Anthropology 360.

405, 406 Independent Studies in Race and Ethnic Studies**Fall, Spring****Staff****1-3 credits**

Directed readings of topics or works selected to complement the RAES program. The number of students accepted for the course will depend on the availability of the staff. No more than four credits in independent study may be used to satisfy the race and ethnic studies major requirements. *Prerequisite:* consent of instructor.

490 Senior Seminar**Fall****Pribilsky****4 credits**

Taught by a race and ethnic studies faculty member with guest participation by others, this seminar is intended to engage senior majors in case studies focused on race and ethnicity. Readings, discussion, and papers, including a proposal for the thesis. Required of and limited to senior race and ethnic studies majors. Fall degree candidates should plan to take this seminar at the latest possible opportunity. Open to senior Race and Ethnic Studies majors.

497 Thesis**Fall, Spring****Staff****2 credits**

Completion of a thesis based on the previous semester's plan. *Prerequisite:* Race and Ethnic Studies 490.

498 Honors Thesis**Fall, Spring****Staff****2 credits**

Completion of an honors thesis. Required of and limited to senior honors candidates in race and ethnic studies. *Prerequisites:* Race and Ethnic Studies 490 and admission to honors candidacy.