

BEST-BORDERLAND & ETHNIC STUDIES

BEST 1110G. Introduction to Borderlands and Ethnic Studies 3 Credits (3)

The field of Ethnic Studies is about 1) critical knowing and 2) unapologetic imagining and creation of a better, more just world. This course explores the roots, logics, and administrations of racism within the U.S. context, locally along the border, and framed within a larger global and historical context. The past few decades have borne witness to increasing global diversity and cross-border migrations, which has led many in the U.S. to imagine the nation as "post-racial." Simultaneously, increasing clashes that can only be described as "racist" have led people to wonder about the dark racist underpinnings of a society that believes it has achieved the goals put forth by the distinct and intersecting Civil Rights Movements of the 1960s. Perhaps now, more than any other time in history, there is earnest desire to talk about race and racism and unpack these constructs/activities/outcomes. This course is designed to inform us about how colonization, racism, and hegemony function. Secondly, it is designed for self and collective exploration of these somewhat broad and abstract concepts in an applied manner. Finally, it is designed for us to arrive at a shared understanding of the decolonial turn, or a re-humanization imperative. How do we understand, apply, and heal as these activities each relate to coloniality of power

Learning Outcomes

1. Learn and understand broad histories of social struggles, social movements, and ensuing human relationships.
2. Meaningfully engage classical and new materials from the Borderlands and Ethnic Studies "canon."
3. Articulate observations using key terms, theories, and concepts in Borderlands and Ethnic Studies.
4. Apply key concepts in "everyday life" via course activities.
5. Gain a better understanding of your own worldviews and opinions towards issues of race, class, gender, nationalism, migration, borders, social movements, and resistance.
6. Learn mindful and constructive ways to engage peers about sometimes "difficult" topics like race, power, and privilege.

BEST 300. History and Theories in Borderlands and Ethnic Studies 3 Credits (3)

This course provides a basic understanding of the history and theoretical foundations of Borderlands and Ethnic Studies. It engages in an in-depth analysis of the concepts and history that resulted in reshaping the way we understand race, national borders, immigration, education, and the law. It examines borderlands theorizing to critically engage the border not simply as a physical barrier meant to regulate migration, but the economic, cultural, spatial, and metaphorical borderlands that informs us on larger processes of membership, belonging, identity, politics, and dehumanization linked to social structures and institutions. It explores the history of social movements in the U.S. that sought to illuminate social inequalities and social justice issues and investigates the underlying causes and sources of these social movements as they relate to reconceptualizing race and the borderlands and their overall impact on society at large. Throughout the course we will ask the following questions: How does the idea of race permeate our everyday lives? How does education reinforce our understandings of race? How do historical struggles over economic resources and political power illuminate the formation and development of the borderlands? How does law relate to power relations and mechanisms of social control?

Learning Outcomes

1. Explain how race and ethnicity has been historically socially constructed in the U.S.
2. Understand how the social construction of race and ethnicity is related to issues of social control.
3. Understand how the idea of race helps to reinforce existing power arrangement.
4. Connect historical struggles for justice and equality in the U.S. to current social and political issues dealing with the Borderlands.
5. Explain hegemony and its link to shifting borders and nationalism.
6. Identify how racial beliefs are tied to laws, policies, and practices of social institutions and organizations.
7. Understand how race relates to the development of the border.
8. Analyze the ways race, class, and gender serve as interlocking systems of oppression.
9. Gain a better understanding of your own worldviews and opinions towards issues of race, class, , gender, nationalism, migration, borders, social movements, and resistance. 1
10. Critically engage and "think outside the box" when discussing the conceptualization and history of the idea of race.

BEST 400. Capstone in Borderlands and Ethnic Studies 3 Credits (3)

This seminar is designed to culminate the undergraduate minor by summarizing knowledge and experience garnered in pre-courses: Intro to Borderlands & Ethnic Studies, History & Theories of Ethnic Studies, as well as the chosen gender course, the chosen race, history & education course, and the chosen elective course. Students will be asked to write a reflective essay at the start of the course that highlights 1) materials and ideas that have most impacted the student throughout the core courses, 2) discuss how the elective course complemented and expanded materials and ideas from BEST core classes, 3) what materials and ideas remain challenging to grasp, and 4) what kind of culminating project the student would like to complete. This essay will be the foundational document to carry the student through the semester, along with close guidance provided by the instructor as well as peer feedback.

Prerequisite/Corequisite: BEST 1110G, BEST 300, and either (AFST 2140G, CCST 3120V, or NATV 4110) and either (AFST 4110, CCST 3110, or NATV 4210).

Learning Outcomes

1. Design and develop a semester-long project that draws upon all previous BEST in collaboration with instruction and peers.
2. Re-explain vis-a-vis previous courses how race and ethnicity has been historically socially constructed in the U.S.
3. Critically engage and "think outside the box" when discussing the conceptualization and history of the idea of race.
4. Work with a community organization, agency, or other group to collaborate on the final project.
5. Present project to class as a final product.

BEST 450. Special Topics in Borderlands and Ethnic Studies 3 Credits (3)

This course is a focused and intensive study of particular historical, aesthetic, cultural, political, or social issues and contexts within the discipline of Borderlands and Ethnic Studies. Repeatable under different subtitles. May be repeated up to 9 credits.

Learning Outcomes

1. Define and articulate the fundamental characteristics and issues related to the topic of focus.

- Contextualize the topic of focus within the broader field of Ethnic Studies, Chicana Studies, Africana Studies, and/or Native American Studies.
- Develop compelling and logical arguments for class discussion, individual and group presentations and writing assignments, based on course readings and discussions.
- Interpret, understand, and engage texts within cultural, social and historical contexts.
- Gather, analyze, and evaluate information from a variety of sources.
- Compose texts in a variety of media formats.

BEST 455. Borderlands Representations

3 Credits (3)

In this course, we will explore contemporary portrayals of border spaces and peoples in literature, film, visual art, and theory. We will engage an interdisciplinary and cross-genre exploration to examine the flexibility, tensions, and range of border-focused textual/artistic production. The Mexico-U.S. border will be the foundation and we will extend from this most familiar border to borders globally, with particular attention to the Canada-U.S. border, the Haitian-Dominican border, the Palestine/Israel nation states. Questions that will guide the course: How do representations of the Mexico-U.S. border reflect/converse with historical and contemporary political tensions? How do the perspectives and vantage points of Mexican, Chicano, and U.S. Anglo producers of cultural artifacts, including literature, diverge, collide, and coalesce? And, finally, how do perceptions and portrayals of geopolitical borders converse with understandings of the Mexico-U.S. border, what can we bring from our border-knowing to global borders, and what are specificities of particular border spaces?

Learning Outcomes

- Express knowledge of major economic, political, social and cultural realities of multiple global borderlands.
- Explain the multidisciplinary diversity and intellectual rigor that compose cultural productions of these borderlands.
- Develop compelling and logical arguments for class discussion, individual and group presentations and writing assignments, based on course readings and discussions.
- Interpret, understand, and engage texts within cultural, social and historical contexts.
- Gather, analyze, and evaluate information from a variety of sources.
- Compose texts in a variety of media formats.

BEST 470. Literary Explorations of Race & Justice

3 Credits (3)

While this course is, as the title suggests, a survey of literary texts emphasizing race and justice, an exploration like this one posits an argument about which works of a literary tradition are most important, most fundamental, and, especially, how works that are deemed “political” feature in literary traditions. How have some authors and their texts become popularized, for whom, and what are some of the consequences (both positive and negative) of how the processes (both organic and inorganic) of popularization (canonicity, if you will) establish the parameters of ethnic literary traditions? We will work with these questions as you read and respond in discussion and in writing to some of what I, and others, consider a handful of the most prominent U.S. writers of color, their works, and their representations of race and justice. Other questions that will help us explore the multiplicity and richness of these literary texts: How do these texts converse with broader traditions of literatures? What are the conversations between and tensions within these texts and among its writers? How do aesthetics, politics, and

community intersect? How do issues, including race and justice, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and self-representation manifest within texts? What histories impact literary production and publication of these texts? How are these literary explorations of race and justice evolving and what does the future hold? The course will be writing-intensive, reading-intensive, and genre-inclusive, as we connect the “creative” realm of textual representation in fiction, poetry, and nonfiction to the “theoretical” realm of criticism and scholarship that provides ways for us to see and read textual representation critically, imaginatively, differently. The course promises to incite provocative discussions, as it engages the relevance of a rapidly changing U.S. population.

Learning Outcomes

- Summarize the major economic, political, social and cultural forces influencing the composition, publication, and reception of literary texts focusing upon race and justice.
- Explain the multidisciplinary diversity and intellectual rigor that compose these texts.
- Develop compelling and logical arguments for class discussion, individual and group presentations and writing assignments, based on course readings and discussions.
- Interpret, understand, and engage texts within cultural, social and historical contexts.
- Gather, analyze, and evaluate information from a variety of sources.
- Compose texts in a variety of media formats.

BEST 480V. Narratives and Representations of Palestinians: Media, Music, Film, and Art

3 Credits (3)

This course is an undergraduate (that fulfills requirements for VWW) and graduate Palestine Studies course that draws on Palestine, settler-colonial studies, and decolonial Arab feminisms as an intersectional set of knowledges, methodologies, and practices. It also draws on various examples of contemporary Palestinian arts—paintings, fashion, land-based ceremonies/rituals, music, and film. The course is structured to connect the themes addressed throughout the semester with their iterations in world media, Palestinian art creation, and representation. The course aims to help the learners address 1) how Palestinian art creation is a resistance tool to the erasures imposed by the Zionist settler-colonial state of Israel on Palestinians and 2) how art creation in all its forms act to counter the Zionist’s narratives and propaganda about Palestinian history, heritage, identity and right to their land. It also introduces and engages liberatory and decolonial visions of art/knowledge creation, as well as, global resistance and solidarity with Palestinian artists.

Learning Outcomes

- How Palestinian art creation is a resistance tool to the erasures imposed by the Zionist settler-colonial state of Israel on Palestinians.
- How art creation in all its forms act to counter the Zionist’s narratives and propaganda about Palestinian history, heritage, identity and right to their land. It also introduces and engages liberatory and decolonial visions of art/knowledge creation, as well as, global resistance and solidarity with Palestinian artists.

BEST 510. Foundations in Borderlands & Ethnic Studies

3 Credits (3)

This seminar explores the roots, logics, and administrations of racism within the U.S. context, locally along the border, and framed within a larger global and historical context. In addition to race, other social locations such as gender, class, and sexual orientation are explored as intersectional. The course uses traditional lecture format, multi-media, guest lecturers, and engaging activities inside and outside the classroom

to apply materials in tangible and impactful ways. May be repeated up to 6 credits.

Learning Outcomes

1. Identify, compare and contrast broad histories of social struggles, social movements, and ensuing human relationships.
2. Meaningfully engage classical and new materials from the Borderlands and Ethnic Studies “canon.”
3. Articulate observations using key terms, theories, and concepts in Borderlands and Ethnic Studies.
4. Apply key concepts in “everyday life” via course activities.
5. Demonstrate mindful and constructive ways to engage peers about sometimes “difficult” topics like race, power, and privilege.

BEST 511. Methodologies in Borderlands and Ethnic Studies 3 Credits (3)

This seminar introduces the practice of indigenizing research methods by looking beyond the canon of Eurocentric methodologies that have often trapped marginalized communities outside of normative time frames. Through the deconstruction of colonial apparatuses and their influence on research methods, the class explores key concepts in decolonizing research to move us to new understandings of communities according to indigenous traditions that privilege ancestral ways of knowing. May be repeated up to 6 credits.

Learning Outcomes

1. Explain how producing research is connected to producing knowledge.
2. Identify and describe the impact of colonialism and imperialism on disrupting ways of knowing.
3. Recognize political and cultural implications of the world seen as a colonial, constructed narrative
4. Describe how a social reality can have set political and ideological conditions.
5. Distinguish how indigenous methodologies relate to decolonizing methods.
6. Describe how decolonizing methods are a different approach to research.
7. Identify decolonizing methods that have been used in research.
8. Critically engage with research lenses stemming from a decolonizing standpoint.

BEST 512. Theories in Borderlands and Ethnic Studies 3 Credits (3)

This seminar provides a basic understanding of theoretical foundations of Borderlands and Ethnic Studies. It also examines borderlands theorizing to critically engage the border not simply as a physical barrier meant to regulate migration, but the economic, cultural, spatial, and metaphorical borderlands that informs us on larger processes of membership, belonging, identity, politics, and dehumanization linked to social structures and institutions. Social movements in the U.S. that sought to illuminate social inequalities and social justice issues are explored. The course investigates the underlying causes and sources of these social movements as they relate to reconceptualizing race and the borderlands and their overall impact on society at large. May be repeated up to 6 credits.

Learning Outcomes

1. Explain how race and ethnicity has been socially constructed in the U.S.
2. Recognize how the social construction of race and ethnicity is related to issues of social control

3. Describe how the idea of race helps to reinforce existing power arrangements
4. Connect historical struggles for justice and equality in the U.S. to current social and political issues dealing with the borderlands
5. Explain hegemony and its link to shifting borders and nationalism
6. Identify how racial beliefs are tied to laws, policies, and practices of social institutions and organizations
7. Distinguish how biopolitics relates to the development of the border.
8. Analyze the ways race, class, and gender serve as interlocking systems of oppression.
9. Gain an understanding of and be able to evaluate your own worldviews and opinions towards issues of race, class, gender, nationalism, migration, borders, social movements, and resistance.
10. Critically engage and “think outside the box” when discussing the conceptualization and development of the idea of race.

BEST 513. Capstone in Borderlands and Ethnic Studies 3 Credits (3)

This seminar is designed to culminate the graduate certificate by summarizing knowledge and experience garnered in pre-courses: BEST 510, 511, 512. Students will be asked to write a reflective essay at the start of the course that highlights 1) materials and ideas that have most impacted the student throughout the core courses, 2) discuss how the elective course complemented and expanded materials and ideas from BEST core classes, 3) what materials and ideas remain challenging to grasp, and 4) what kind of culminating project the student would like to complete. This essay will be the foundational document to carry the student through the semester, along with close guidance provided by the instructor as well as peer feedback. May be repeated up to 6 credits.

Prerequisite: BEST 510; BEST 511; BEST 512.

Learning Outcomes

1. Summarize, concisely, key concepts and frameworks learned in BEST seminars.
2. Express, reflectively, what these concepts and frameworks mean in the context of historical and contemporary social issues related to power dynamics created and exacerbated by hierarchies associated with racial, gender, class, sexual orientation and other positionalities.
3. Design a culminating project that encapsulates a nuanced understanding of Borderlands and Ethnic Studies, ensuring its impact on a broader audience.
4. Generously evaluate cohort mates’ projects as they progress during semester.
5. Receive feedback about one’s own project and apply those comments and critiques in useful ways and in collaboration with instructor.
6. Create/generate a culminating project that aligns with rubrics in the most effective manner possible.
7. Present work to cohort and instructor in an effective way.

BEST 550. Advanced Special Topics in Borderlands and Ethnic Studies 3 Credits (3)

This course is a focused and intensive study of particular historical, aesthetic, cultural, political, or social issues and contexts within the discipline of Borderlands and Ethnic Studies. Repeatable under different subtitles. May be repeated up to 9 credits.

Learning Outcomes

1. Define and articulate the fundamental characteristics and issues related to the topic of focus.

2. Contextualize the topic of focus within the broader field of Ethnic Studies, Chicanx Studies, Africana Studies, and/or Native American Studies.
3. Develop compelling and logical arguments for class discussion, individual and group presentations and writing assignments, based on course readings and discussions.
4. Interpret, understand, and engage texts within cultural, social and historical contexts.
5. Gather, analyze, and evaluate information from a variety of sources.
6. Compose texts in a variety of media formats.