Critical Ethnic Studies

Professors: Baptiste, Gómez (director), Katanski, Salinas, and Sinha

Critical Ethnic Studies interrogates the production of knowledge. CES Majors are required to theorize from multiple, and simultaneous, narratives of silenced peoples and epistemologies. Critical Ethnic Studies untangles and analyzes colonial and racial projects that attempt to govern the relationship between people and land.

Critical Ethnic Studies is an interdisciplinary field and process of engagement. The field seeks to change the logic governing the academy, and does not accept an uncomplicated grafting of content onto a universal idea. This change is realized through the relentless pursuit of multiple means of engagement. These processes invert, rethink, and displace universalities. Central to the field is a refusal to consume the other. Critical Ethnic Studies requires that scholars go beyond themselves, and devise conversations that move beyond voyeurism and consumption.

Requirements for the Major

Eight units are required.

Required Courses

CES 200: Argument with the Given (key concepts)
CES 240: Language: The Colonial and Imperial Difference
CES 260: Insurgency, Solidarity and Coloniality of Power
CES 490: CES Senior Colloquium

Four Electives chosen from Critical Ethnic Studies Elective List:

ANSO 270 Communities and Schools
ANSO 357 Immigrants and Exiles
ANSO 420 Boarder Epistemologies
ENGL 150 RTW*: Beyond Realism: Imperial Romance
ENGL 155 RTW*: Identities
ENGL 156 Reading the World: Social Justice
ENGL 220 African American Literature
ENGL 221 African Literatures
ENGL 222 American Indian Literatures
ENGL 230 US Ethnic Literature
ENGL 260 African Cinemas
ENGL 310 Constructing Blackness
ENGL 318 Post-colonial Literatures
ENGL 323 Chicana/o Literature
ENGL 331 East Asian Diasporic Literatures
ENGL 435 Advanced Literary Studies: American Indian Literature and the Law
GERM 430 Contemporary German Minority Cultures
GERM 435 Minority Cultures in Germany
POLS 229 Race, Law, & US Politics
RELG 120 Religion in the Early U.S.
RELG 121 Religion in the Modern U.S.
RELG 122 Religions of Latin America (and the Caribbean)
RELG 123 Catholicism in the Americas
RELG 221 Black Religious Experience in the Americas
SEMN 499 Social Justice and the American City (when taught by Drs. Fong and Salinas)
WGS 390: Feminist and Queer Inquiry

*Courses taught as part of the RTW series in the English Department must be approved of by CES Director. Only those RTW courses taught by Drs. Salinas and Sinha will be approved.

Courses that fit into the major will be designated CES courses under course type. The elective lists will continue to develop. For a list of current electives please consult the Critical Ethnic Studies website.

*Courses taken at other U.S. colleges and universities, or on Study Abroad, may count for an elective course. We usually only accept one transfer credit toward the major. Please speak with the Director of the program for final approval and clarification.

Critical Ethnic Studies courses

CES 200 Argument With the Given
This course is a survey course; consequently a wide breadth of topics will be covered. The primary work will consist of developing a sophisticated understanding of central themes, and key concepts, in the field of Critical Ethnic Studies. Students will pursue that understanding via an interdisciplinary process. The secondary goal will be to acquire and build the skills necessary to pursue further learning in Critical Ethnic Studies; these include identifying your own research agenda (obsessions and desires), stocking your analytical tool kit (bibliographic skills, critical thinking, and the identification of knowledge demands), and lighting your intellectual fire (interest in the field).

CES 240 Language: the Colonial & Imperial Difference
This course is an interdisciplinary survey course designed to introduce students to the study of language and power. Our primary objective will be to assert linguistic rights and interrogate the politics of language in light of colonization, imperialism and the transit of empire. We will consider ideas and practices of literacy, language revitalization, translation and identity. These explorations will serve as a means to counter the monologism, monoculture, and monolingualism often invoked in nationalist projects.

CES 260 Insurgency, Solidarity and Coloniality Of Power
This course is an interdisciplinary survey course designed to engage students in the study of power. The primary focus will be on instances of continuity and insurgency, between and among world indigenous, national and transnational subjects. Embedded in this practice will be the assertion of epistemic rights, and simultaneous world views, and the varied and landed responses made to world systems of racialization and colonization. We will engage history and narrative through the power of storytelling and the critical fictions of conquest and enslavement. Most important, we will ask: what alternatives to modernity/coloniality can we conceive of through practices of insurgency and solidarity? How can we restore relations that have been severed, or disfigured, by these same world systems, as well as our wide-ranging responses to them?

CES 298 Independent Study

CES 300 Body, Land, and Labor
In this course, students will consider the questions of how racialized bodies, gendered bodies, and able/disable bodies play a crucial role in understanding present realities in the U.S. and around the globe. Using different case studies from the Americas, students will examine the interconnection between performance of identity, embodiment, natural resources, geographies, and unfree labor. Paying particular attention to social movements in times of a global pandemic. Student will develop projects to incorporate their embodied experiences with the land and explore topics of resistance in social movements such as land sovereignty and/or labor rights.

CES 340 Plant Communication/Kinship
In this course, students learn about the theories of ontology and the "ontological turn" to understand human and "other-than-human" being interactions. In this course, students explore non-Western concepts of kinship. The course will prioritize plant and human interactions. Student will examine how communities make sense of multispecies relations, reflect on their own relationship with plants, challenge topics such as personhood, understand the division between science/culture and discuss issues of food scarcity, food sovereignty, food justice, and land pedagogy.

Prerequisite: Must have taken CES-200, CES-240, or CES-260, or with Instructor Permission.

CES/ANSO 410 Missionaries to Pilgrims: Diasporic Retu
This course explores the synergistic relationship between Africa and its diaspora through an analysis of return voyages. From 19th century formerly enslaves Africans who returned home after emancipation to contemporary religious and ethnic pilgrims seeking connection with their African ethnicity and or spirituality; the meeting space between the diaspora and Africa represents a contested terrain. Because Africa and the diaspora are ideological and political constructs, the class will engage the ways these constructions are negotiated and deployed across space and time. We will pay particular attention to
questions of belonging, identity, and place and moments of miscommunication as Africa seeks to claim its diaspora and the diaspora makes claims on Africa

Prerequisite: 300-level ANSO course

CES 490 CES Senior Colloquium
The Critical Ethnic Studies Senior Colloquium, 1-unit course collaboratively shaped by the CES faculty and senior majors. The colloquium will focus on the planning and executing of an intellectual social-political project that contributes to the CES program, to the larger community, and to the field of Critical Ethnic Studies. The Critical Ethnic Studies Senior cohort will decide the form and content project, in collaboration and consultation with CES faculty, who will provide leadership and organizational support. Infused in the project and the work of the course are professional development, collaborative scholarly work, and learning community development.

Prerequisite: Must be a CES Major

CES 593 Senior Individualized Project

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