Ethnic Studies

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ACADEMIC PROGRAMS
Comparative Ethnic Studies – BA
Ethnic Studies – Minor

The Ethnic Studies Department uses inter- and multi-disciplinary approaches to study the lives of Indigenous, African, Latino/a, and Asian peoples in the United States within a global and postcolonial context. The Ethnic Studies curriculum provides students with unique forms of critical inquiry that advance their analysis of race, ethnicity, and cultural difference in an increasingly heterogeneous and complex world. Courses in Ethnic Studies examine how social hierarchies frame access to political power, allocate economic resources, and influence cultural expression. By critically exploring such issues, students develop not only a greater understanding of the legacy of racism, discrimination, and injustices in the United States, but also a greater appreciation for new and emerging knowledge about diverse American peoples and their global and transnational connections.

Housed in the College of Liberal Arts, the Ethnic Studies Department at Cal Poly encourages critical dialogue about race, ethnicity, postcoloniality, and transnationalism across the entire university curriculum, with special focus on concepts that integrate the arts, humanities, and social sciences, as well as the sciences and technology. The department offers a number of courses that fulfill both general education and United States Cultural Pluralism requirements. A minor in Ethnic Studies is open to all majors and provides a useful complement to the differing types of inquiry used in the wide variety of disciplines throughout the University.