

Guidelines for Ethnic Studies Implementation

AB 101

By **2025-26**: all high schools will *offer* at least a one-semester course on ethnic studies. This offering could be a pilot course.

By **2029-30**: students must complete a one-semester course in ethnic studies in order to graduate; this includes students enrolled in a charter school.

A year-long course offering can be made at the discretion of the school district.

Offerings may include a stand-alone, thematic, or a course integrated into another content area.

Ethnic studies content must be the primary driver of the classroom curriculum. (Integrated Model)

A focus on [**one or more**] of the four foundational disciplines: African American, Chicana/o/x and Latina/o/x, Native American, and Asian American and Pacific Islander studies. (May consider local demographics)

Meets the A-G requirement for the State of California.

HOW DO YOU TEACH ETHNIC STUDIES IN A K-12 ENVIRONMENT?

Ethnic studies teaching should promote diverse perspectives by:

1. presenting topics from multiple points of view
2. using teaching resources that represent a range of perspectives
3. structuring lessons that encourage students to examine materials from multiple perspectives and form their own conclusions

GUIDING VALUES AND PRINCIPLES OF ETHNIC STUDIES

Ethnic studies values **humanization** (love, respect, hope, and solidarity) and **critical consciousness**, which should guide the development of courses and teaching. The goal is to foster a holistic understanding of ethnicity and to challenge systemic inequalities. Ethnic studies courses, teaching, and learning are intended to do the following:

1	Cultivate empathy, community actualization, cultural perpetuity, self-worth, self-determination, and the holistic well-being of all participants, particularly Native People/s and BIPOC.
2	Celebrate the success, community collaboration, and solidarity of Native People/s and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color by providing a space to share their stories and intellectual and cultural wealth.
3	Emphasize the importance of ancestral knowledge, stories, and experiences of Native People/s and marginalized communities of color in shaping their identity and culture.
4	Critique the history of empire building and its relationship to white supremacy, racism, and other forms of power and oppression.
5	Challenge racist, bigoted, discriminatory, and imperialist/colonial beliefs and practices on multiple levels.
6	Connect to social justice movements, imagine a post-racist society, and build narratives of transformative resistance, critical hope, and radical healing.

*The information above is explored in more depth in **Chapter 1: Introduction and Overview of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum***

EIGHT OUTCOMES OF ETHNIC STUDIES TEACHING

Pursuit of Justice and Equity	Ethnic studies is a discipline focused on the experiences and perspectives of marginalized groups, examining issues of injustice, discrimination, and systemic racism. Its goal is to promote a deeper understanding of inequality and to work towards greater equity and inclusivity through education and social change.
Working Toward Greater Inclusivity	The ethnic studies movement aims to promote inclusion in education, with a focus on the experiences and contributions of various ethnic groups, while prioritizing educational equity. Curriculum choices must consider time constraints, with an emphasis on foundational disciplines and student diversity.
Furthering Self-Understanding	Ethnic studies helps students understand their identities and roots through exploring ethnic heritage and ancestors' history. It aims to empower students to become self-advocates and allies for others, but educators must respect privacy due to complex factors that can complicate heritage exploration.
Developing a Better Understanding of Others	Ethnic studies aims to help students understand their own and others' heritage and backgrounds through diverse perspectives and personal stories, with the goal of promoting intergroup understanding, appreciation of diversity, and community building through action.
Recognizing Intersectionality	Ethnic studies looks at the role of race and ethnicity in shaping personal identity and group identification. People belong to multiple social groups based on factors like religion, class, gender, etc., and these groups intersect to form a unique identity for each individual. Intersectionality highlights intragroup variations and helps challenge stereotypes. It also sheds light on systemic racism in institutional treatment of certain racial and ethnic groups.
Promoting Self-Empowerment for Civic Engagement	Ethnic studies aims to help students become informed, engaged and effective advocates for social justice by teaching critical thinking, effective communication and problem-solving skills, and promoting a deeper commitment to lifelong civic engagement for community and equity.
Supporting a Community Focus	Ethnic studies in schools should cover the experiences and events of ethnic groups nationally and statewide, with the option to focus on significant local groups for increased learning opportunities and civic engagement.
Developing Interpersonal Communication	California ethnic studies aims to develop effective communication skills, promote empathy and critical thinking, and help students understand the concepts of race and ethnicity and their impact on society. The goal is to address issues hindering intergroup communication and understanding.

The following guidelines should inform the development of ethnic studies courses, whether they treat one group or several, and whether they are integrated into other content areas or stand alone.

- In K–12 education it is imperative that students are exposed to multiple perspectives and taught to think critically and form their own opinions.
- Curriculum, resources, and materials should include a balance of topics, authors, and concepts, including primary and secondary sources that represent multiple, and sometimes distinctive, points of view or perspectives.
- Students should actively seek to understand, analyze, and articulate multiple points of view, perspectives, and cultures.
- The instruction, material, or discussion must be appropriate to the age and maturity level of the students and be a fair, balanced, and humanizing academic presentation of various points of view consistent with accepted standards of professional responsibility, rather than advocacy, personal opinion, bias, or partisanship.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR DISTRICT AND SITE ADMINISTRATORS

Develop a definition of what ethnic studies means to your district.
Ensure alignment of the district course(s) to state and local policy, district resources, and community needs.
Consider the local history, demographics, and particular needs of your district's or site's students and their respective communities, including recognition of the Indigenous Peoples wherever a course is being taught.
Develop a clear funding model that includes the resources available for the program and how those resources will be allocated (e.g., teacher training, classrooms, administrative support, purchase of instructional materials).
Be grounded and well versed in the purpose and impact of ethnic studies.
Ensure that students receive appropriate and nondiscriminatory instruction and materials.
Ensure fair, balanced, and humanizing pedagogy.
Identify teachers who are willing and committed to invest in developing an ethnic studies curriculum and pedagogy.
Develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate instructional support.
Tribal consultation is important in the development and implementation of local ethnic studies programs. The consultation should involve Native American tribes, tribal organizations, Native American and Indigenous organizations within the district, as well as Native American scholars and educators.
Ensure a balance of advisors from multiple communities.
Use longitudinal student data to determine student outcomes and assess the effectiveness of the new program over time, and continue teacher professional development to strengthen content knowledge and ensure a smooth transition of new teachers into the program.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR LOCAL CURRICULUM WITH ETHNIC STUDIES PRINCIPLES

- Ethnic studies is by its very nature interdisciplinary, and ethnic studies teachers can collaborate with teachers in history–social science, language arts, visual and performing arts, and other subjects as well. This ensures that the concepts and principles of ethnic studies are present throughout the curriculum and are not limited just to the ethnic studies classroom.
- Having a process in place to include opportunities for the continual development and refinement of the curriculum after its initial development is beneficial.
- Engage students and the community in the curriculum development process.
- The History–Social Science Framework and the English Language Arts/English Language Development Framework contain useful guidance for current or potential teachers of ethnic studies.
 - The History–Social Science Framework is of particular importance and should be considered an essential companion document to this model curriculum for current and prospective ethnic studies teachers.
- High schools are not required to select materials from the State Board of Education list as K-8 schools are required to, giving a great deal of flexibility to the local education agency in the selection of instructional materials.
 - These materials must, “accurately portray the cultural and racial diversity of our society.”

DEVELOPING AN ETHNIC STUDIES PEDAGOGY FOR K–12 EDUCATION

Ethnic Studies is an educational approach aimed at transforming society through critical thinking and active engagement. It emphasizes the importance of considering *purpose, identity, content and skills, context, and methods* in teaching to achieve its goals. The curriculum and instruction must reflect these elements and take into account the context in which it is taught and the **educator's identity and potential biases**.

<p>Purpose</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Access <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ethnic Studies offers students the chance to learn about diverse ethnic material and content in the classroom, promoting exposure to a rich and meaningful curriculum. ● Relevance - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ethnic Studies offers students an education that is relevant to their culture and community, based on their individual lived experiences and material realities. ● Community - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ethnic Studies connects education to community by encouraging students to use their knowledge for social justice activism, advocacy, and civic engagement at various levels.
<p>Identity</p>	<p>Ethnic Studies is a teaching approach that prioritizes self-awareness and cultural understanding in the classroom. Teachers engage in self-reflection to better understand Ethnic Studies and the impact of race and identity. The curriculum includes diverse perspectives and marginalized voices to develop students' critical literacy skills and broaden their understanding of others. Teachers strive to create a supportive community atmosphere, share their own experiences, and view students' experiences as valuable assets.</p>
<p>Content and Skills</p>	<p>Ethnic Studies is an interdisciplinary approach that teaches students about the contributions, experiences, and histories of people of color. It covers a range of academic disciplines and emphasizes critical thinking skills by exposing students to diverse sources of information and teaching them how to analyze and contextualize this information.</p>
<p>Context</p>	<p>Ethnic studies educators must be aware of the context in which the course is being taught and consider dynamics such as the familiarity of the community with the subject, opportunity gap, students' comfort level in discussing race and ethnicity, and current racial tensions. To address these dynamics, the educator may create lessons that reflect on the factors contributing to disparities in student success, provide training and resources for handling negative emotions or traumas, and involve students in reflective activities.</p>
<p>Methods</p>	<p>Ethnic studies educators should consider different pedagogical approaches such as culturally responsive teaching and important instructional shifts outlined in California's History-Social Science and English Language Arts frameworks.</p>
<p>Inquiry</p>	<p>The inquiry-based approach in Ethnic Studies emphasizes student-led learning, where students take an active role in exploring and investigating topics related to race and ethnicity. Teachers serve as facilitators, guiding students in forming questions, conducting research, and reaching their own conclusions. This approach has been successful in closing the opportunity gap, improving English language proficiency, and engaging underrepresented students. It emphasizes critical examination of content and the use of research-based lessons, including primary sources, youth participatory action research, and service learning projects.</p>

<p>Democratizing the Classroom and Citizenship</p>	<p>Ethnic studies classrooms prioritize democracy and equality by treating students and teachers as equal knowledge co-creators. This emphasis on citizenship prepares students for civic engagement in society and encourages them to identify and advocate for change in their communities. Through community engagement projects, students are empowered and gain a sense of civic efficacy. By democratizing the classroom and embracing theories such as intersectionality, students develop an appreciation for diverse identities and are equipped to engage and advocate for marginalized communities.</p>
<p>Reinforcing Literacy</p>	<p>Ethnic studies aims to develop students' literacy skills, including critical thinking, strong verbal and written communication, and exposure to literature and texts from authors of color. To achieve these goals, ethnic studies educators should incorporate literary texts that align with ethnic studies principles and collaborate with other teachers to integrate ethnic studies with other subjects.</p>
<p>Culturally/Community Relevant and Responsive</p>	<p>Ethnic studies teachers should approach their teaching with a culturally responsive and community-oriented mindset, taking into consideration the cultural backgrounds of their students and being aware of relevant cultural norms and issues. Building relationships with students, tailoring lessons to their experiences, and staying informed on current trends and challenges impacting their communities is key to delivering effective ethnic studies education.</p>
<p>In-Class Community Building</p>	<p>Building trust and community in the classroom is crucial. Ethnic studies educators should adopt a pedagogy that values students' humanity, respects diverse views, prioritizes empathetic listening, and nurtures the student voice. Classroom norms should be established in collaboration with students, and community building activities should be incorporated. Educators also have a responsibility to prepare students to be informed and active citizens. Difficult discussions can be facilitated through student-centered approaches and diverse discussion protocols.</p> <p>Teachers can improve their skills and build reflective communities for their students through participation in professional development programs that enable reflection and learning with colleagues. These programs provide opportunities to explore core concepts, history, and personal identity, and to collaborate with other educators for insights and relationship building.</p>

Approaches to Ethnic Studies

<p>Useful Theory, Pedagogy, and Research</p>
<p>Educators and administrators should analyze their own identities, study ethnic studies research and its key theoretical frameworks, and engage in ongoing learning through various resources, including ethnic studies coordinators and professional development programs. They should also consider trauma and healing-informed practices, as well as align their learning with state guidelines and education code.</p>
<p>Ethnic Studies Content</p>
<p>Teachers should include diverse stories, perspectives, and sources from various groups in America to help all students see themselves as a part of the American narrative. To achieve this, teachers should utilize diverse texts and be open to learning from students (Asset Based Approach).</p>
<p>Academic Skill Development</p>
<p>To make education meaningful, students need the ability to engage in their own learning through reading, writing, speaking, listening, and collaboration. Ethnic studies teachers should create lessons that engage students with the subject while improving their academic skills.</p>

The information above is explored in more depth in Chapter 3: Instructional Guidance for K-12 Education of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Stand-Alone Courses

African American Studies

African American Studies focuses on the history, culture, politics, and socialization of people of African descent. An African American Studies course can introduce students to the study of people of African descent in the United States and explore the history, culture, and politics of the African American and African diaspora experience. The course can also highlight Black American contributions in various fields.

Chicana/o/x and Latina/o/x Studies

The study of Latinx people is an interdisciplinary field that encompasses a wide range of academic disciplines including history, culture, politics, and socialization. The coursework focuses on the experiences, contributions, and identities of Latinx populations from Mesoamerica, South America, the Caribbean, and the US Southwest. The course covers topics such as Indigeneity, migration, identity formation, culture, social movements, and contributions to social systems and culture.

Asian American and Pacific Islander Studies

Asian American and Pacific Islander Studies provides a comprehensive understanding of the experiences and contributions of people of Asian descent in the US, and how their history and experiences have shaped their identities and cultures. The course may examine the impact of immigration, race, gender, class, and historical events on the lives of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and challenge stereotypes and myths about these communities.

Native American Studies

These courses teach about the Native and Indigenous people, their history, culture, and politics, and the impact of colonialism and genocide on them. The goal is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the experiences and achievements of different Native American tribes, and to explore their values, traditions, and activism. The course also aims to foster relationships with local Native American tribes in California.

Thematic/Comparative Race and Ethnic Studies Approach

The thematic/comparative approach allows students to learn about similarities and differences among different groups. The goal is to identify key themes and concepts (*such as: identity, colonialism, systems of power, and social justice*) to investigate the experiences of multiple groups. This approach emphasizes the importance of understanding shared struggles, building unity, and developing intercultural communication and competence. Considerations should be made around the local student and community demographics when building the content of these courses.

Integrating Ethnic Studies into Existing Courses

Incorporating ethnic studies concepts into existing courses, such as history, social studies, geography, and even math and science, can provide a more intersectional and inclusive perspective to existing curriculum. Ethnic studies content must be the primary driver of the classroom curriculum.

Grade Level

Ethnic studies is taught at various education levels, from high school to college/university, with some schools offering it for grades 6-8 and even K-5. The Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum is designed for high school students and aligns with UC and CSU requirements. To adapt the curriculum for different grade levels, adjustments to assignments, assessment, readings, and teaching methods are important to ensure developmental appropriateness.