

Ethnic Studies Minor Update
Proposal submitted to the Academic Senate of Westmont College
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Proposal Summary and Rationale

We propose an update to the Ethnic Studies Minor as it is currently listed in the College Catalog. Our aim is to better reflect our current course listings, reinvigorate attention to scholarly work around race and ethnicity, and provide institutional support and faculty expertise for campus conversations concerning race and ethnicity. We propose to keep the existing structure of the Minor, but to update the elective offerings and provide an institutional home for the Minor. We also request additional institutional support to allow the Minor to thrive as a vibrant intellectual community within the College that will prepare students to engage with issues of diversity and equity with greater depth and breadth of knowledge. In addition to better serving our current students, we also anticipate that the Ethnic Studies Minor can become an attractive feature of our college curriculum as the changing demographic trends for incoming students will bring in more students, especially students of color, who may particularly be interested in pursuing this minor.

We see this Minor as essential to Westmont's mission as a Christian liberal arts institution that seeks to prepare our students faithfully to engage and to lead in the pluralistic environment that is our contemporary world. Fundamentally interdisciplinary and concerned with issues of both historical and contemporary significance, the Ethnic Studies Minor provides needed institutional space and support for intellectual inquiry around complex and pressing issues faced both by American society generally and American Christianity specifically. It affirms the necessity for Christian engagement in such topics as racial inequality and injustice, racial and ethnic identity, the intersections of religious and racial identity, and theologies of peoplehood. We hope that updating the Minor not only better reflects our current realities but also helps to give shape to the College we hope to continue to be and become.

Proposal Explanation and Details

- 1) Keep the existing structure of the minor.
 - a) The minor currently has two required courses (8 units) and a list of elective offerings (16 units).
 - b) The total credit hours of 24 is in the middle range for Westmont College minors (minors typically range from 20 to 28 units) and is comparable to other Ethnic Studies minors at peer institutions.
 - c) We believe that keeping the basic structure of the minor, but updating its content in terms of the elective offerings, provides students with essential core knowledge, allows them to specialize in particular areas of interest, and equips them to graduate with a recognizable Ethnic Studies Minor, one that is comparable to those offered at peer institutions.
 - d) We propose modifying IS 196 Ethnic Studies Seminar from an upper-division seminar to a lower-division course that serves as an introduction to Ethnic Studies and provides interdisciplinary framing for the Minor. SOC 189 remains, then, an upper-division course that anchors the Minor in studies of the construction of racial groups in the US and provides a seminar-style engagement with crucial texts and arguments around race & ethnicity.

- 2) Update elective offerings
 - a) We reached out to Department Chairs to solicit courses for consideration of inclusion in the Minor. Many of these courses are included in the new suggested list. Some (new courses that have been offered as Special Topics and are not official yet; courses that did not substantively engage issues of race & ethnicity) were not included. We will continue to be in conversation with Departments to ensure that the course offerings remain current.
 - b) We discussed the possibility of organizing courses according to Division (social sciences & humanities), according to whether they are U.S.-focused or not, and other schemes. However, we are concerned that the courses do not neatly cluster according to these organizing principles, so we propose leaving the list as is, and will revisit this question in future if needed.

- 3) Provide an institutional home for the minor
 - a) The Sociology & Anthropology Department is pleased to provide an institutional home for the minor as it is updated and reinvigorated.
 - i) Meredith Whitnah already regularly teaches SOC 189 (one of two required courses for the Minor).
 - ii) Our department is prepared to continue to advise students who are coming to us with a desire to complete the Minor, and to welcome new students who wish to declare it.
 - iii) We will have ongoing conversations as an Advisory Group about ensuring equity in advising, should the Minor grow significantly as, indeed, we hope it will.
 - iv) While the SOC/AN dept will serve as the institutional home for the minor now, we can also imagine a time in coming years when it may be appropriate to move the institutional home to another department. We will have ongoing conversation

about this within the Advisory Group so that we can ensure the Minor's sustainability.

- 4) Request for institutional support
 - a) There is no need for funding for additional faculty; this is all part of current course loads.
 - b) Speaker series with funding
 - i) One speaker per semester at \$750 per term (honorarium + travel expenses)
 - ii) We have been in conversation with the Gaede Institute and they are eager to help publicize this and provide other institutional support
 - c) Funding for hospitality
 - i) \$450/year
 - ii) Food at event for students to help publicize the minor, and/or snacks at the speaker series
 - d) Library budget
 - i) \$500/year to acquire new sources