

Ethnic Studies

“With Ethnic Studies being such an interdisciplinary major, I find myself studying everything from history to art and politics to psychology. When all of these courses come together, they represent a true liberal arts experience, one that works to widen one’s view of the world.”

Jillian Schulte '19

Cornell College’s ethnic studies program addresses questions of ethnic identity and relations between ethnic groups through a wide variety of courses in a range of disciplines, with core courses in anthropology, education, psychology, gender and sexuality studies, and sociology, plus a variety of electives in additional disciplines including art, politics, history, and music.

Courses eligible for credit toward a major in ethnic studies devote a significant portion of content to the study of subordinate racial or ethnic groups, where a subordinate group is understood as one whose members are, or have historically been, disadvantaged and subjected to unequal treatment by the dominant group in a society. Specific courses may emphasize the cultural practices of one or more racial or ethnic groups, or on the interrelationships between subordinate and dominant racial or ethnic groups.

Ethnic studies is an increasingly marketable major. Students who major in ethnic studies often go on to pursue careers in teaching, social work, and law. However, a background in the social, political, and legal status of ethnic groups is useful in many different careers, including psychology, counseling, health care services, journalism, public history, community organizing, and a wide variety of civil service positions in all levels of government.

Many students at Cornell complete double majors, and the ethnic studies program is flexible enough to be easily

paired with another major, such as anthropology, education, political science, psychology, history, sociology, economics, or English. Cornell also offers a minor in ethnic studies to accommodate students’ desire to study in depth ethnic relations, but who may not have the time needed to fulfill the courses required for a major in the field.

BENEFITS OF ONE COURSE AT A TIME

FOCUS AND DEPTH

Cornell’s One Course At A Time curriculum meshes well with the interdisciplinary approach of the ethnic studies program and helps to develop a fuller, more holistic vision of the ethnic experience. Each course gives the opportunity to focus on a unique perspective, and students have time to work their way through literary texts, video, and research. Longer class meeting times allow for in-class debate and discussion, as well as visits from outside experts. Recently, for example, Guatemalan-American filmmaker Luis Argueta returned to Cornell for his third visit to campus to screen his documentary, “The U-Turn,” the final installment in his immigration trilogy about the devastating consequences of the 2008 Customs Enforcement (ICE) raid in Postville, Iowa. In spring of 2018, Lyla June Johnston, a descendent of Diné (Navajo) and Tsétséhestáhesé (Cheyenne) lineages, and a fellow with the Original Caretakers Initiative at the Center for Earth Ethics, visited Cornell to speak with students and faculty about “Standing Rock and the Growing Pan-Indigenous Movement for Life.”

OFF-CAMPUS STUDY

One Course At A Time provides unparalleled flexibility for off-campus study and research, since each course

cont. >

Faculty Bios & Courses

MICHAEL MOSIER

Assistant Professor of Spanish

Serves as program advisor and teaches courses in Spanish language, literature, culture, and Latin American Studies, as well as off-campus classes in Argentina and Guatemala. Courses include Resistance and Revolution in the Caribbean, The Boom and Post-Boom, Identity and Alterity in Latin American Literature, Cuba: Collision of Cultures, and Introduction to Latin American Studies. Research interests include connections between detective fiction and the politics of populism, theories of race and ethnicity, Hispanic cinema, 20th and 21st century Latin American narrative, and cultural studies. Ph.D., Hispanic literature, Indiana University.

MARCELA OCHOA-SHIVAPOUR

Professor of Spanish

Teaches electives Latinos in the U.S.; Latin American Culture and Civilization; and an intermediate Spanish class focused on immigration issues. Ph.D., Spanish, University of Iowa

MARY OLSON

Professor of Sociology

Teaches the core course Race and Ethnic Relations, and the electives Contemporary Native Americans; Women: Oppressions and Resistances; and Civil Rights and Western Racism. Ph.D., sociology, University of Wisconsin at Oshkosh



is self-contained with no competing courses. Off-campus courses with an ethnic studies perspective include:

- Applied Anthropology: NGOs, Development, Tourism and Culture (the Bahamas).
- Slavery and Environment in a Comparative Context (the Bahamas).
- Women and Politics (India).
- Literature and Social Justice (Chicago).
- Economic Development in Rural Tanzania.
- Psychology of the Holocaust (Eastern Europe).
- Comparative Education in Belize.

Students may also conduct research at Chicago's prestigious Newberry Library and other historical locations during an on-site history course, studying the urban transformation of Chicago.

CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS

CAPSTONE PROJECT

The capstone experience is designed to be a meaningful conclusion to a student's major, and every project is approved by the ethnic studies committee, which provides help and varied perspectives. Past capstone projects include "The Black Panther Party and Gender Issues," "Spanish Speakers in California Primary Schools," "The Indian Child Welfare Act and Issues of Discrimination," and "The Political Process and Restoration of South Africa."

INTERNSHIPS/FELLOWSHIPS

Recent internships and Cornell Fellowships have included a Fellowship and internship at the Chicago Field Museum, a Fellowship in museum studies at the African American Museum of Iowa in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, a Fellowship at the Gerace Research Center and the National Archives of the Bahamas, and an internship at an inner-city youth center in Texas.

AFTER CORNELL

ALUMNI CAREERS

AmeriCorps VISTA, Shelter House, Iowa City, Iowa (Class of 2015)

Associate producer, Shiraz Events, New York City, New York (Class of 2014)

Math teacher, Teach for America, Houston, Texas (Class of 2013)

Physician assistant, Physicians Immediate Care, Chicago, Illinois (Class of 2013)

Emergency Room Technician, St. Luke's Hospital, Cedar Rapids, Iowa (Class of 2013)

Dance instructor, Dance New York, New York City, New York (Class of 2013)

Health literacy program coordinator, Children's Medical Center, Dallas, Texas (Class of 2011)

Executive director, EmpowHER Microfinance, Nigeria (Class of 2010)

Talent recruiter, KIPP, San Antonio, Texas (Class of 2010)

Minneapolis area director, N2 Publishing, Minneapolis, Minnesota (Class of 2010)

Associate attorney, Babich Goldman, Des Moines, Iowa (Class of 2009)

Museum Collections Manager, Chemical Heritage Foundation, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (Class of 2008)

Police officer, River Forest, Illinois (Class of 2008)

Project Manager, Human Services Research Institute, a national nonprofit research and consulting firm (Class of 2007)

Bilingual liaison, Yamato Transport USA, Inc., Wood Dale, Illinois (Class of 1994)

GRADUATE SCHOOLS ATTENDED

Master of Social Sciences, anthropology and development studies, Radboud University, Nijmegen, Netherlands (Class of 2015)

Master of Public Affairs, LBJ School of Public Affairs, University of Texas, Austin, Texas (Class of 2014)

M.S., physician assistant practice, Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science, Chicago Illinois (Class of 2013)

M.S., applied anthropology, University of North Texas, Denton, Texas (Class of 2011)

M.A., anthropology, University of Denver, Denver, Colorado (Class of 2011)

M.A., elementary education and teaching, Delta State University, Cleveland, Mississippi (Class of 2009)

CHRISTINA MORRIS PENN-GOETSCH

Professor of Art History

Teaches elective courses in African, African American, and Native American art history, as well as other topics courses in non-Western art history. Ph.D., art history, University of Iowa

MISHA QUILL

Assistant Professor of Anthropology

Teaches the core course Cultural Anthropology and the elective Cross-Cultural Love and Family. Ph.D., cultural anthropology, University of Iowa

CATHERINE STEWART

Professor of History

Teaches the core course Introduction to Ethnic Studies, as well as the electives Slavery and the Environment in a Comparative Context (Bahamas), America's Second City: The Urban Transformation of Chicago (Newberry Library in Chicago), U.S. Social History Since 1940, African-Americans in U.S. History, and American Lives: African American Autobiography. Ph.D., history, State University of New York at Stony Brook