

School of Education Ethnic Study Requirement Reform

PROPOSAL

The purpose of this meeting is to acknowledge the current curriculum gap that is present within the School of Education at UW-Madison. We propose that the following requirements should be enacted into the current curriculum in the School of Education in order to educate and prepare students on current racial issues and how to communicate them to the masses. The university-wide academic requirements include an ethnic studies course. Although this requirement is beneficial towards the development of students and is one of the only schools in the country that has this requirement, it does not always cover current racial injustice. We believe this is an important requirement that needs to be included specifically for those looking to major in education. The overall reason for making this change is due to the perpetuating racial injustice in society. We believe the main reason for this is because of the lack of requirements for topics such as race, diversity, and ethnicity within the Department of Public Instruction (DPI). Because of this, teachers are not required to talk about racial issues and are, therefore, not educated on such topics within their own education. By adding a requirement to the School of Education, educators are then able to learn how to incorporate such topics into their already determined curriculum. The following requirements should be enacted:

- An additional 25% of the course material to contemporary racial issues in the United States and solutions to such problems.
- Syllabus must also included an emphasis on current racial injustice.
- Additional learning goals of how privilege shapes opportunities in society and ability to counter such privilege

We believe that this is the most effective way to intervene and confront current racial injustice in society.

REASONING

The School of Education was chosen as our target for enacting this additional ethnic study requirement due that fact that the school is producing teachers that have daily access to educating children. Children learn of their racial standing at a young age, and it is only emphasized as they mature. Many years of research have shown that young children are not color blind and have sophisticated knowledge of how racial categories form and link to power and superiority. During this same time white children begin making assumptions of superiority and entitlement at this early stage of life (Derman-Sparks, 2011). In a paper by George Lipsitz, he touches on a research study conducted by Karyn McKinney a teacher where her students “read Peggy McIntosh's generative work on the taken-for-granted privileges that white people enjoy daily because of their race, the students zero in only on the micro-level privileges McIntosh identifies.” (Lipsitz, 2006). This ignorance comes with white privilege that is enacted at a young age and is sustained through adolescence, however we have to disrupt it. For this reason teachers have the responsibility not only to teach students the district approved curriculum, but also the social construct of race, especially since this topic is not on the forefront of district requirements. However, for teacher to be able to educate properly, they must, themselves, understand the topic fully, and that is what this requirement will allow for. Figure 1 is a representative path in the School of Education that a student could take and encounter minimal to no racial discussion. Therefore, an extra ethnic requirement, with a focus on contemporary racism, needs to be

enacted. In addition, by executing this requirement in the School of Education it could open a door to other schools within UW-Madison to add it as well, allowing more students to be subjected to this important issue.

To supplement this view, we interviewed current students and alumni in order to get primary accounts of their experience concerning education on racial injustice during their time at UW-Madison. One of the alumni we interviewed felt that although she was comfortable dealing with racial issues in her classroom, she did not credit her ability to deal with these situations because of courses she took at UW-Madison. These skills were acquired through her own life experience as she came from a diverse background. In addition, when asked about her student-teaching experience she commented the following, “I would have wished to have worked with a CT who was culturally competent and able to work with diverse backgrounds”. When asked what she would implement to the School of Education, she responded “definitely there should be more outreach to both students of color and faculty of color. In terms of working with CTs, I wish we could give them feedback about their performance in and out of the classroom”. The second alumni we interviewed shared a similar sentiment, “there is a big push from the School of Education to make their teachers culturally competent and although they do provide courses that attempt to cover multiculturalism in teaching, I do not think that most students actually know how to deal with such sensitive situations”. Similarly, she thought that the School of Education could make a greater effort to recruit students of color, “I wish there had been more diversity within my cohort, I think it is important to prioritize ethnic studies but it is even more crucial to actually have students of color in our cohorts”.

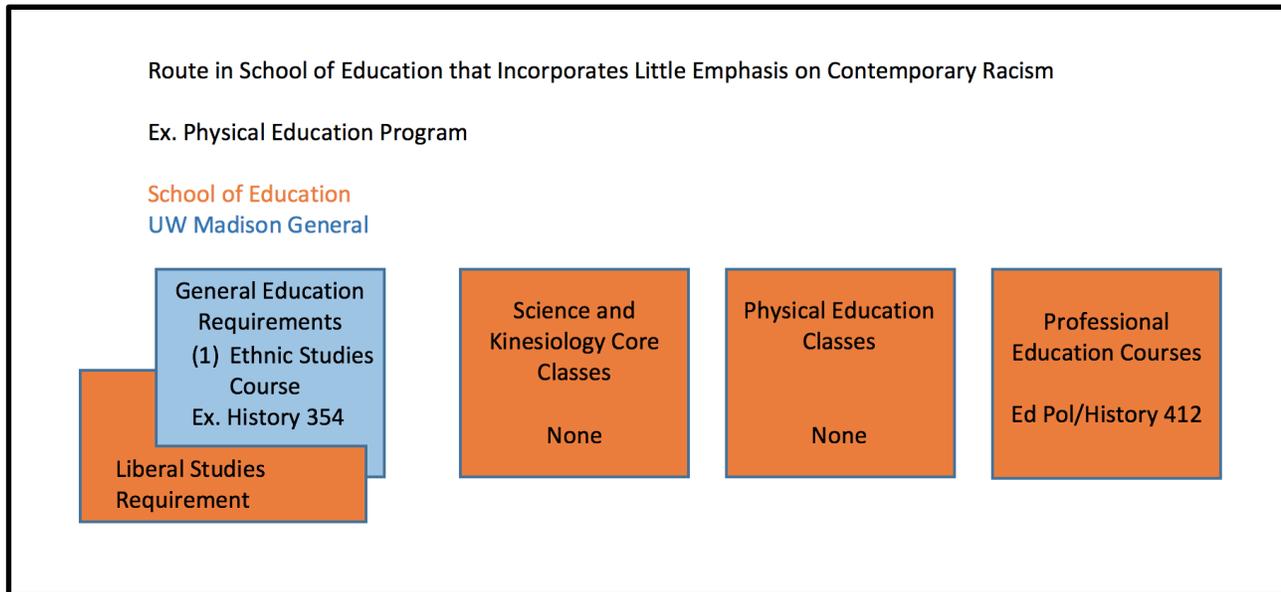
PLAN OF ACTION

Our major route of change to the current School of Education requirements is to enact an extra three credit ethnic study course that has an emphasis on contemporary racism. These three credits would go toward the Liberal Studies 40 credit requirement within the School of Education. This extra requirement should be emphasized to be taken during a student’s first year in the education school or before admittance, allowing students early exposure to understand the knowledge gaps in current education and how to address racism. Research has shown that time per topic is proportional to adequately master the topic (Dougherty, 2013). Therefore, if students are not exposure to the root and methodical metamorphosis of racism during their early years of college, the lesson will be lost among the mass of knowledge they are accessing. The classes that will be selected for this category will have to be approved among several categories, the main one being that the class addresses historical racism and how to has reformed in the contemporary racism we see today and active ways to participate in fighting it. Specific proposed requirements are included in Figure 3. Some currently offered examples of these classes are listed in Figure 4 that we have identified. We are aware some classes such as Ed Pol 300 touch on this topic, however, with this semester being cut down by a week and professors already being pressed for time to get through course information, racial injustice can be brushed over.

CONCLUSION

The Ethnic Studies requirement at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the School of Education sets our students and university apart from the rest of the country in the education of circumstances, conditions, and experiences of persistently marginalized racial and ethnic minorities and/or indigenous peoples in the United States. However, ethnic studies has the responsibility to adapt its curricula to the current racial and ethnic climates it educates on. To solve this problem, we believe that educating the future teachers of this nation is our greatest weapon. Being that the University of Wisconsin has the #1 public university education program in the nation, we believe that it should accept the challenge of producing culturally competent educators. Educators are going to have the most impact on our youth's lives regarding race and shaping their thoughts, beliefs, morals and actions, and in this way they can be fully prepared to fight white supremacy. For this reason, the addition of a three credit ethnic study course with concentration on current racial issues will successfully accomplish this.

Figure 1: A table of current requirement blocks for students in the physical education program at the School of Education of UW Madison. Ethnic Studies course are listed below in each cube and overlaps of credits can be seen by overlaps in cubes. Only two Ethnic Studies classes are required in this path, and, depending on class section, neither can pertain directly to



contemporary racism as a substantial section of the material.

Figure 2: Survey Question for Students/Alumni

1. How was your overall experience in the ethnic studies classes you took?
2. Do you think the ethnic studies courses you took were enough?
3. How prepared did you feel to discuss race and ethnicity in your classroom?
4. Would you recommend UW-Madison's School of Education for a highschool hoping to become a teacher?
5. What is your biggest critique about the School of Education related to race and ethnicity?
6. Is there something you would hope the School of Education could implement to make your experience more fruitful?

Figure 3: Our Approved Course Requirements

Current Ethnic Studies Requirements	Additional Ethnic Studies Requirements
<p>Four main learning goals for ESR courses :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Awareness of History’s Impact on the Present ● Ability to Recognize and Question Assumptions ● A Consciousness of Self and Other ● Effective Participation in a Multicultural Society 	<p>Additional learning goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How privilege shapes opportunities in society ● Ability to counter such privilege
<p>Syllabus and reading list must demonstrate that the course material is centrally focused on the circumstances, conditions, and experiences of persistently marginalized racial and ethnic minorities and/or indigenous peoples in the United States.</p>	<p>Syllabus must also included an emphasis on current racial injustice.</p>
<p>50% of the course (syllabus, reading list, course content, and student assessment) to exploring the experiences and concerns of persistently marginalized groups in the United States.</p>	<p>An additional 25% of the course material to current racial issues in the United States and solutions to such problems.</p>

Figure 4: List of Possible Example Classes that Meet Requirements

1. Global Hip Hop And Social Justice (Afro-American Studies 233)
2. Problems of American Racial and Ethnic Minorities (Sociology 134)
3. Race And American Politics From The New Deal To The New Right (Afro-American Studies 272)
4. Race, Ethnicity, and Inequality in American Education (Ed Pol 200)
5. The Problem with Whiteness (African 405)

Derman-Sparks, Louise, and Patricia G. Ramsey. *What If All the Kids Are White?: Anti-Bias Multicultural Education with Young Children and Families*. Teachers College Press, 2011.

Dougherty, Chrys. *College and Career Readiness: The Importance of Early Learning*. ACT Research and Policy. 2012.

Lipsitz, George. "Introduction" and "Chapter 5." In *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. 2016