The purpose of this course is to examine L.A.’s diverse population, not as isolated, discrete groups but in relation to one another. The city and its environs serves as our laboratory for understanding class, race, gender, political economy, and most importantly, power. We will examine, among other things, how the hierarchies of race and class are produced and reproduced, how gender, ethnicity, nationality, and citizenship shape people’s experience, and how aggrieved communities fight back.

Topics will include:
- Methodological tools for thinking about race, space, and power.
- How globalization transformed Los Angeles from a white city to a multiracial metropolis.
- The racial and class geographies of hip hop and popular culture
- Migration and border politics.
- Environmental and Social Justice in 21st century LA
This course offers an introduction to the people and cultures of the Americas; the social, historical, economic, and cultural formations that together make up the Latino/a American imaginary. This course starts with the U.S. Latino experience then works its way back to understand the origins of contemporary Latin America. Recent statistics show Latinos have become the largest minority group in the nation. We take a closer look into the societies of countries in the Americas and how their economic and historical past has shaped the course of the people of the Americas.
This course surveys film, music, art, and writing about three borderlands in this hemisphere: the U.S.-Mexico border, the Haiti-Dominican Republic divide, and the so-called ‘Northern Triangle’ of Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras. It examines the historical trajectories and contested politics surrounding migration, nationalism, capitalism, technology, race, gender, and sexuality, among other topics, as they appear in the work of theorists of borderlands like Gloria Anzaldúa, films like Sleep Dealer and Sin Nombre, performance art by Guillermo Gómez-Peña and Josefina Báez, and chronicles of crossing by Rita Indiana and Javier Zamora. Course requirements: presentation, midterm paper, and final project (students choose a podcast, video explainer, or essay).

* Fulfills the following requirements:
  - ASCL & ASE Social and Political Issues
  - Elective: ASE Minor
  - GE-C (Social Analysis)
  - GE-G (Citizenship in a Diverse World)
The Viet Nam War remains as the most controversial and divisive war for Americans in the 20th century. The war is still invoked in debates over American wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. This course provides an introduction to the war’s history in order for today’s Americans to understand some of the key factors leading the US into its current geopolitical situation. The course is a multidisciplinary, multicultural and international overview of the war’s history and its afterlife in American and Southeast Asian memory. Student reading will draw primarily from films, literature, art, journalism, historical writing, and political discourse, while lectures will provide necessary historical and political background. The course corrects some fundamental flaws in the American pedagogy and scholarship on the war, beginning with how the name indicates that the war was fought only in Viet Nam. The war was also fought in Cambodia and Laos, and the course examines the war’s impact on those countries and their peoples. Americans have also seen the war purely from the perspective of American self-interest and ethnocentrism. In contrast, this course stresses the diversity of American experiences, the importance of Southeast Asian points of view, and the existence of international actors in the war who were neither American nor Vietnamese.
This course offers an interdisciplinary introduction to American and Ethnic Studies. A principal goal is to help students understand how people in the United States live in and think about their country as well as how the world views them. The central themes and topics addressed will include identity formation, immigration, imprisonment, militarism, cultural production, religion, sexuality, and political change. This course will encourage students to formulate connections between these issues by placing them in their broad historical and cultural contexts. We will consider a variety of types of evidence such as novels, photographs, films, the built environment, and material culture to show that we can and need to analyze everything in the world around us.
This course is designed to give you an overview of Native American studies. Native peoples have and continue to resist settler colonialism. We will study Indigenous intellectualism and resistance through language revitalization, filmmaking, and the recognition of one another. Like other Indigenous scholars will discuss this semester, theories of Indigenous studies are not just for Indigenous peoples but for any person who wants to utilize them respectfully.
This course is a survey of popular culture, designed to introduce students to the broad range of popular cultural productions such as film, television shows, literature, music, social media, emerging technologies, and food. We will explore the roles of popular culture in our life, and think about what popular culture tells us about our contemporary moment, as well as its connections to the past and the future. Who determines what is popular, and why? What are the intersections of popular culture with race and ethnicity, as well as gender and sexuality? In what ways does popular culture engage with social issues? How does global media and digital technologies impact the ways that popular is produced, accessed, consumed, and circulated? These are some of the questions that we will discuss and think about together in relation to an array of popular culture examples from a global and transnational perspective.
This course introduces students to the field of African American studies through the exploration of foundational texts and critical interventions in music, art, and film. Focused on the cultural context of the U.S., our purview will range from foundational slave narratives, to key works of fiction, and contemporary film and popular culture. Along the way we will examine and debate different forms of analysis and methodology as we investigate major approaches from across the social sciences and the humanities. The course aims to impart a base of disciplinary knowledge that will position students to delve more deeply into other classes focused on Black studies across the College. Readings and films will include Harriet Jacobs’s *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl: Written by Herself*; W.E.B. Du Bois’s *The Souls of Black Folk*; Lorraine Hansberry’s *A Raisin in the Sun*; Beyoncé’s *Lemonade*; and Jordan Peele’s *Get Out.*
This course will introduce students to the distinctive histories, cultures and identities that share a connection to Africa as a place of origin. From ancient times to the 21st century, people have both lived in—and left—Africa individually or collectively, for reasons ranging from the Transatlantic slave trade to modern experiences of voluntary or forced migration. Progressing chronologically from the early modern period (narrating slavery, the Haitian Revolution) to the twentieth-century (Panafricanism, the Harlem Renaissance) to last twenty years (recent migrants, cosmopolitanism), this course will examine singular experiences of diasporic subjectivity around the world, as accounted for in a range of different sources. These will include critical theory, fiction, music and the visual arts, as well as other media where diasporic identities are shaped, discussed and circulated. Particular attention will be paid to the ways blackness as a category necessarily intersects with (among many others) issues of space, language, citizenship, gender and sexuality, memory and politics. While focused on the Atlantic world, this course will also underscore the multidirectional scope of African mobility within the African continent and across the globe.

We will read authors such as W.E.B. Du Bois, C.L.R. James, James Baldwin, Frantz Fanon, Barack Obama, Maryse Condé, Junot Diaz, Ta Nehisi Coates, and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. Course material will also include several films (Sembene Ousmane’s Thiaroye, Raoul Peck’s I am not your Nigger, and Ryan Coogler’s Black Panther).
Explore the complexities of race and ethnicity in America through film

What is ethnicity? How is ethnicity shaped, or how does one “become” ethnic? What is at stake in claims and visual representations about ethnicity? What politics surround ethnic representations and performances? How is ethnicity actualized and/or performed? Can there be an “authentic” ethnicity? How are such complexities reflected and/or constructed in film? How did the hashtag #OscarsSoWhite and other movements call attention to the lack of diversity and recognition in the film industry?
This combination of a Humanistic Inquiry GE course and an ASE elective draws upon a wide range of primary materials in history, politics, literature—and some music and movies—to study the rich mix of voices, cultures, and traditions from the region that is our home or where we live and study: the West, California, Los Angeles, USC. A key concern of the course will be to view America, the frontier, and the new West as scenes of collisions of people or as crossroads and intersections where people from different countries, religions, ethnicities have both crashed and merged together. We will emphasize both the frictions resulting from such collisions (e.g., war, ethnic cleansing, riots) and the fusions (e.g., jazz music, the Civil Rights movement, the teriyaki burrito).
This course looks at American political history through the lens of race relations. The course begins by looking at the importance of law/public policy and its relationship to social constructions of race (and “whiteness”) and citizenship. It then turns to look at the historical experiences of different racial/ethnic groups in order to understand the evolution of what it has meant to be an American “citizen” throughout US history, and how that process is related to changing understandings of the “meanings” of different “races.” The goal of this course is to have you spend some time thinking about what it means to be an “American,” what legal, political and social rights should accompany that definition, and what it will mean politically in the United States in the future.
We will learn about the history of Latinx Los Angeles in order to learn about the larger politics of urban formation and transformation and how race and immigration has been central to this story. We will study trends, policies, and movements including Americanization programs, deportation policies, the rise of institutions, such as public health, and how they effect Latinx communities, as well as social movements and resistance. Secondly, we learn how to construct historical narratives through the use of primary sources, such as newspapers, but also cultural productions in the forms of art and music and archival footage.
The Junior Seminar offers advanced study in interdisciplinary theories and methods used in analyzing race, ethnicity, cultural production in the United States, as well as a comparative study of inequality, gender and class.
This course examines the long histories of Latinx social movements that have advocated and fought for equality, justice and inclusion. We will analyze how everyday people in the past and present have expanded the notions of dignity, the definition of citizenship, and the concept of belonging. We will place particular emphasis in the near-present and contemporary activism engaged in fighting for immigrant rights, transnational workers rights, queer activism, and current liberation movements.
Community leadership is fundamentally about empowerment, that is, empowering others to develop the skills, strategies and the confidence to solve their own problems. Study leadership within the context of a community-based organization through a hands-on internship experience. Explore theory and research on leadership, as well as principles of behavioral and social change, using specific examples from your own community leadership efforts.

- In the past, students have been placed with organizations such as ACORN, A Place Called Home, the Boys & Girls Club, the Korean Immigrant Workers Association (KIWA), Planned Parenthood, and the Salvation Army. Students are encouraged to choose their own internship with instructor approval. Those who are already doing an internship should approach the instructor to find out if it qualifies.
- USC Students at all levels (including Freshmen), and from all disciplines, are encouraged to enroll.
- Students who are already doing an internship can approach the Instructor about the possibility of getting course credit.
This course will examine how gender, class, and immigrant status have shaped Mexican American history and culture. We will use language, music, labor struggles, politics, and youth movements to explore how Mexican Americans have made sense of and shaped their experience. The class will include the following topics:

- How the southern border was invented
- The historical connection between migration and American capitalism
- Chicanx? Latinx? Mexican? (but never Hispanic?)
- Mexican American social movements
- Latinx youth cultures: from zoots suits to sonideros to punk and beyond
Why are there so many people incarcerated in the United States and why are young people across the US calling for an end to police violence, some even for the abolition of policing? Is mass incarceration an inevitable product of slavery and Jim Crow? Why has prison expansion and law and order been a rallying cry to make America safe (again) precisely at moments when violent crime rates were going down? This course is designed to explore and explain the role of surveillance, criminalization, policing to historical and contemporary US and across the globe.

This course proceeds from the idea that carceral geographies such as prison towns, detention centers, police departments, welfare agencies, and surveillance apparatuses are spatial fixes for social, economic, and political crises. Students will have an opportunity to build their understanding of the historical and contemporary organization of people, places, ideas and infrastructure that makes up US carceral geographies. Student will also have a chance to familiarize themselves with the history of resistance to prisons and detention.
This class employs interdisciplinary and transnational approaches to examine the movement of people, ideas, and cultural productions in the Americas. We will explore cultural expressions such as music, writing, films, and digital content and how they have been created and circulated by different creators and audiences in the past and present. Most importantly we will examine what these cultural expressions say about the societies and how these question power and injustice, while advocating for more inclusive and nuanced notions of racial, ethnicity, and gender.
In this course, we will think about questions related to Asian America by examining cultural productions including a range of literary works and other closely related media such as film, art, and performance. What can creative expressions like literature and film tell us about Asian America and its politics, culture, and history within the United States but also in relation to the world? How was Asian America formed, and who are Asian Americans? What are the politics of inclusion and exclusion in Asian America? What are the relationships between Asian Americans and other communities within the US and beyond? Alongside these questions, we will address themes such as popular culture and representation, war and memory, feminism and activism, and global and transnational identities.
The American Studies and Ethnicity Department at the University of Southern California offers a two-semester honors program for qualified students, first identified in ASE 350 or by the program advisor. Students spend their first semester in the honors program in an honors senior seminar, ASE 492, focused on developing their research and methods for the honors thesis. During the second semester, all honors students are required to take ASE 493, in which each completes a thesis project on a topic of his or her own choosing under faculty direction. Contact the program advisor for further information.
This course integrates approaches from the arts, the humanities and the social sciences to address questions of power and difference in U.S. society: race, gender, class, sexuality, colonialism, geopolitics. The arts, particularly performance, visual and media culture, will be a key focus. We will see and analyze a play, attend an exhibition, and engage with film, television, and social media as ways of exploring political and social issues. Students will also conduct an interview, offering everyone an opportunity to generate new knowledge about the issues we engage in class. Through multiple registers, students will gain a complex understanding of the workings of power and difference in the U.S. and beyond.

For all ASE majors, AMST 200 is a pre-requisite to take this course. Non-majors interested in taking this course can request to have the pre-requisite requirement removed by calling (213)740-2426.