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.
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
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 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.
What is Asian America, and who are Asian Americans? How has Asian America been imagined and represented in historical, literary, and visual texts? What are the aesthetics of Asian America? How has the definition of Asian America changed in the 21st century with shifting borders, globalization, and new media technologies? These are some of the questions that we will explore as we study the experiences of Asian American and Pacific Islander communities from the late 19th century to the present.

This course introduces students to a diverse set of cultural productions through which students will learn about the heterogeneity and the shifting dynamics and definitions of Asian America. We will address themes including immigration, citizenship, memory, race, gender and sexuality, transnationalism, cosmopolitanism, and food and social justice.

Texts include novels by Kao Kalia Yang and Mohsin Hamid; poetry by Michelle Brittan Rosado, Clarissa Mendiola, Craig Santos Perez, and Naomi Shihab Nye; short stories by Viet Nguyen; and, a graphic novel by GB Tran. Films include Spencer Nakasako’s *A.K.A. Don Bonus*, Christine Choy’s *Who Killed Vincent Chin?*, Andrew Ahn's *Spa Night*, Cherin Dabis’ *Amreeka*, and Gregg Araki's *Totally F***ed Up*. We will also view selected performances by Zavé Martohardjono, Ali Wong, the Rice Rockettes, Awkwafina, Far East Movement, and others.
This course examines black social movements for freedom, justice, equality, and self-determination. Beginning with the movements to end slavery and bring about full citizenship, we will examine the role of resistance, institution building, social thought, and the expressive arts in the collective action of African Americans and their allies from the 19th through the 21st century. We closely examine the manifestos and agendas of black abolitionists, women’s rights organizations, Black Nationalist, radical, and mainstream civil rights groups ranging from socialists to hip hop adherents, and from presidential campaigns to prisoners’ rights groups.
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).
Is there such a thing as “Black American Islam?” Can there be? Should there be? What would distinguish it from historical Islam, and how will/should it relate to the global Muslim community? How do Black American Muslims relate to those Muslims who came to America from the Muslim world? What about Black American Muslim women? And how has 9-11 affected all of these relationships? As for Hip Hop, what role have/do Muslims play[ed] in its development and substance, and what challenges or opportunities does Hip Hop pose for Black American and other Muslims? Finally, what does all of this tell us about the future of Islam in Black America?
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.
This seminar is designed to allow students to explore the complex and contested interactions between the law and the construction of group and individual identities. Students will study theories of identity and community including racial, gender, religious, national, and sexual and will focus upon how the law has been central in defining, rewarding, and punishing difference. After a general examination of how diverse communities define themselves and their legal and contemporary problems, the class will examine cases studies.
Examination of Los Angeles diverse food cultures as well as the food justice issues that affect many low-income residents of neighborhoods surrounding USC campus.
Native Nations across North America hold a unique legal relationship with the United States federal government. This course examines the social, cultural, legal, and historical contexts in which that relationship was created and persists.

Students across disciplines are welcome to engage in this 500-year old conversation about Indigenous rights to land, water, and sovereignty.
AMST 350 (no prerequisites are required!) will explore narratives of freedom and abolition within the context of settler colonialism, white supremacy, the prison industrial complex, education, and heteropatriarchy. This course uses film, history, immigration law, LA museums, art, music, memoirs, political movements, women of color feminisms, and queer theory to address historical inequalities and how oppressed communities have struggled for freedom, humanity, representation, and justice. We will attempt to answer these questions: How and where can we imagine freedom in this historical moment? What work do we need to do together to make this a reality for all peoples?
**American Studies & Ethnicity**

**Senior Honors Option 2020-21**

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**ASE MAJORS:**
- American Studies (ASE)
- African American Studies (ASAF)
- Asian American Studies (ASAS)
- Chicana/o and Latina/o American Studies - CALAS (ASCL)

**OTHER MAJORS:**
- Contemporary Latino & Latin American Studies (CLLA)
- Other Selective Interdisciplinary Majors

For more information contact ASE Academic Advisor Eric Greer at erigree@usc.edu or 213.740.2534

2020-21 ASE Senior Honors Thesis Application Deadline:

**April 15, 2020**

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 emailing to aseinfo@usc.edu or calling to (213)740-2426.