

Fall Semester: Community and Ethnic Studies Syllabus

Teacher: Annie Johnston

Course Description:

With which communities do I identify? What makes a community? How does my culture affect my identity? How does ethnicity affect culture? Community and Ethnic Studies focuses on issues that are important to all teenagers and to all people: identity, community, ethnicity, culture and power. In this class we use history, anthropology, sociology, and political science to examine these questions. This class also emphasizes reading, writing, and social science research skills. Many of the lessons and assignments will be integrated with other classes, especially English and Art.

Course Content:

Unit One: Culture, Identity and Community

- What does it mean to belong to a community?
- What is culture? How is culture created?
- How is culture related to ethnicity and nationality?
- How powerful is culture? How does it affect the attitudes and actions of individuals in societies?
- How can culture form a basis for uniting communities and organizing resistance?
- Case Study: the Harlem Renaissance

Unit Two: Race in the United States

- Race as a social construct - How did race become a defining factor in access to power and resources in America?
- Case Study: Asian American and South Asian legal challenges to "whiteness"
- Individual versus Institutional Racism -- Does race still matter?

Unit Three: Race and border issues

Assessments:

*"Where I'm From"
Poem*

*BHS cultural
observation
assignment*

***Autobiographical
incident/book
(CES/English/Art
)***

*Research-based
Debate - impact
of race and
racism today?*

*Family Migration
Push/Pull map*

- What factors push and pull migrants and immigrants, setting cultures in motion and often in conflict?
- How have racial constructs affected acculturation, assimilation and ethnic identity?
- Case Study: La Raza

Unit Four: Media Literacy

- How does the media portray the characteristics of various communities?
- What is the role of the media in shaping cultural beliefs and behaviors?
- What motivates the media to portray racially or sexually derogatory images?
- How can cultural media be used to posit positive, empowering images?

Spring Semester: Introduction to Psychology

Teacher: Annie Johnston

Course Description:

Introduction to the field of psychology; its basic concepts, theories, research methods and contributions to the understanding of human behavior. Topics include psychological aspects of human development, learning and memory, personality, gender and socialization, sexuality, human relationships, stress, coping, and addictive behaviors. Many of the lessons and assignments will be integrated with other classes, especially English and Art.

Unit One: Developmental Psychology

- How do the major theories of psychological development explain the adolescent experience?
- How do the physiological changes of adolescence affect how young people think and feel?
- How do cultural values regarding family and social roles affect adolescent behavior?

Unit Two: Gender and American Society

- Are the psychological differences between males and females the result of biology or society?
- How does gender affect socialization and education in American society?
- How does ethnicity and culture affect gender socialization in American society?

Unit Three: Sexuality and Relationships

- What physiological changes are involved in adolescent sexual development?
- How does adolescent sexual development affect familial and peer relationships?
- What psychological drives contribute to sexual harassment, domestic violence, assault, rape, and abuse?
- What do you need to know to make healthy decisions about relationships and sex?

Students will select a current social issue to research, develop a thesis and argue it in a 5 - 7 page research paper, including a bibliography using MLA citation format.

Each unit will also have a major project

Unit Four: Stress, Coping, Drugs and Addiction

- What psychological factors make adolescence such a stressful time of life?
- What skills and behaviors are important to managing stress in a healthy way?
- What impact does reliance on drugs and alcohol for stress management have on individuals and communities?
- What strategies are productive in addressing individuals with self-destructive addictive behaviors, or communities in which drugs and alcohol have a serious impact?

Adolescent Psychology and Ethnic Studies Outcomes

- Students will learn what it means to be part of a community of learners, building relationships with each other and their teachers through classroom work and off campus activities.
- Students will practice and strengthen their communication (speaking and listening) skills in small group and whole classroom formats.
- Students will explore and analyze the difference between culture and race as it applies to contemporary America.
- Students will examine American society through the lenses of sociology and psychology, specifically analyzing how individuals and groups of people effect change in larger society.
- Students will explore psycho-social development, particularly in adolescence, examining how young adults learn decision-making skills.
- Students will learn about the biological and social aspects of sexuality including reproduction, the impact of unwanted pregnancies, and the global spread of STIs and HIV.
- Students will compare and contrast the effect of substance abuse, specifically examining the effectiveness and social consequences of the U.S. government's War on Drugs.
- Students will practice the transition between formal and informal writing assignments, culminating in a collegiate level research project.

Instructional Materials:

- 8 ½ x 11" journal, which must be brought every day to class.
- A section in a binder for notes, with a pocket divider where handouts can be stored.

Because this class is unique to Berkeley High School, there is no textbook. We will be reading newspaper articles, essays, short stories, poetry and excerpts from longer fiction and non-fiction books related to the course material. (Do NOT lose these readings!) We also will view documentary and feature films.

Grades/Credit -- Your grade will be based on:

Journal, including in class and homework assignments: 25%

Class work: 20%

Unit tests and major assignments: 35%

Attendance and participation: 20%

You will receive regular feedback and an opportunity to correct and improve your grades a minimum of once a month.

Homework will be done in your journal. It is due the day after it is assigned, unless another due date is given. Homework will be stamped for completion at the beginning of class. In class journal assignments will also be given. Your journal will be collected approximately once a month for evaluation. Keep all assignments in your journal in order and number them. All homework, including papers and other projects, will be due at the beginning of the period on the due date.

All journal assignments will be posted by number on the wall in H202. Homework and major assignments will be posted on the CP Academy website at www.bhscpa.org.

Late Policy:

You are responsible for making up all assignments missed during excused absences. You may have an extra day to make up work for each day of an excused absence. In the case of absences of more than three days, talk to me to make arrangements. When you return from an absence, refer to the class journal to find out what you missed, and pick up any readings or assignments from the handouts file.

Major Assignments will be downgraded 10% for each day of lateness and will not be accepted after three days without an excused absence. Extensions for excused absences must be

Other policies:

1. No one will be allowed to leave class without a pass, ever.
2. Cell phones, music devices, games, etc. must be turned off and out of sight. Consequences for violation range from loss of participation credit to confiscation of the device by campus safety officers, to be picked up by a parent at the end of the day.
3. Students will earn a participation grade for every class day. This grade will average 30 points per week. A student may earn the highest possible participation grade if s/he
 - a. is on time (in classroom before late bell rings)
 - b. participates appropriately (raises hand, speaks in turn, makes relevant and focused comments, observes equal time for classmates)
 - c. is respectful in all interactions; does not participate in distractions
 - d. has all materials in class

Bring syllabus home for parent/guardian to read. Have them sign below and put syllabus in your binder, at the front of the section for CES notes (10 points).

Parent/Guardian Name: _____ Phone _____

I, parent/guardian of _____ have read this syllabus and understand what is expected of my student in CP Academy's freshman social studies classes, Community and Ethnic Studies and Introduction to Psychology.