

Ethnic Studies

Founded in 1984, the graduate program in Ethnic Studies is the first interdisciplinary PhD program in the U.S. dedicated to the study of comparative race and ethnicity in national, hemispheric, and global contexts. It continues to be a premier PhD program that provides rigorous interdisciplinary training as well as critical grounding in comparative, relational, and intersectional analysis made possible by the core subfields of the department: Asian American and Asian Diaspora Studies, Chicana and Latinx Studies, Native American Studies, and Comparative Ethnic Studies.

The graduate program draws on faculty strength in a wide range of fields, including studies of race, ethnicity, indigeneity, gender, and sexuality; citizenship, migration, and borders; diaspora and transnationalism; sovereignty and decoloniality; representation and performance; social movements and cultural politics; religion, food, museums, labor, and war. Students learn social science and humanities methodologies, including archival research, ethnography, oral history, and textual and visual analysis. Students also have the opportunity to pursue a "Designated Emphasis (<http://grad.berkeley.edu/policy/degrees-policy/#21-doctoral-degrees-with-a-designated-emphasis>)" in such areas as Critical Theory, Film Studies, New Media, and Women, Gender, and Sexuality.

Admission to the University

Applying for Graduate Admission

Thank you for considering UC Berkeley for graduate study! UC Berkeley offers more than 120 graduate programs representing the breadth and depth of interdisciplinary scholarship. The Graduate Division hosts a complete list (<https://grad.berkeley.edu/admissions/choosing-your-program/list/>) of graduate academic programs, departments, degrees offered, and application deadlines can be found on the Graduate Division website.

Prospective students must submit an online application to be considered for admission, in addition to any supplemental materials specific to the program for which they are applying. The online application and steps to take to apply can be found on the Graduate Division website (<https://grad.berkeley.edu/admissions/steps-to-apply/>).

Admission Requirements

The minimum graduate admission requirements are:

1. A bachelor's degree or recognized equivalent from an accredited institution;
2. A satisfactory scholastic average, usually a minimum grade-point average (GPA) of 3.0 (B) on a 4.0 scale; and
3. Enough undergraduate training to do graduate work in your chosen field.

For a list of requirements to complete your graduate application, please see the Graduate Division's Admissions Requirements page (<https://grad.berkeley.edu/admissions/steps-to-apply/requirements/>). It is also important to check with the program or department of interest, as they may have additional requirements specific to their program of study and degree. Department contact information can be found here (<https://guide.berkeley.edu/archive/2024-25/graduate/degree-programs/>).

Where to apply?

Visit the Berkeley Graduate Division application page (<http://grad.berkeley.edu/admissions/apply/>).

Admission to the Program

Criteria for Admission

Applicants are evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:

1. **Academic achievements:** These include but are not limited to undergraduate (and, if applicable, graduate) GPA, instructors' written evaluations on performance in areas such as coursework, academic honors received, and publications. GRE scores are not required. The typical minimum GPA is 3.0. If your GPA falls below 3.0, please provide an explanation in your statement of purpose.
2. **Statement of purpose:** The statement of purpose should give a clear description of the applicant's academic preparation and intellectual development, research interests, motivation for and commitment to graduate study in this program, professional goals, and other matters that would help the Admissions Committee evaluate his/her aptitude for advanced academic work and research. Preference is given to applicants who express clear plans and an understanding of the field of ethnic studies. Applicants whose undergraduate majors may not be directly relevant to ethnic studies should give an account of their decision to pursue the field.
3. **Personal History Statement:** The Personal History statement should describe how your own background and experiences influenced your decision to pursue a Ethnic Studies graduate degree.
4. **Writing sample:** The writing sample should be an expository piece about 20 pages in length that can showcase the applicant's ability to conduct research, sustain an intellectual analysis, and make a persuasive argument using the conventions of academic discourse. The sample can be a complete paper, such as a term paper from a course; an excerpt from a longer piece, such as a chapter from a thesis; or an essay written specifically for the purpose of application. No more than two shorter pieces may be substituted for one 20-page piece, but the latter is preferred. Non-expository work, such as creative writing, journalistic writing, or co-written pieces, may be submitted in addition to, but not in place of, the expository writing sample.
5. **Letters of recommendation:** Please provide three letters from people familiar with your academic performance, ideally from tenure-track professors. Letters from graduate student instructors (teaching assistants), non-academic supervisors or employers will also be considered but don't carry as much weight as those from professors. Recent letters are preferred. If you are a re-entry student without recent letters from professors, please explain your situation in your statement of purpose.
6. **Match of research interest to faculty expertise and research interests:** Applicants who are academically superior but whose research interests are a poor match with the expertise and research interests of the faculty will not necessarily be selected.
7. **Promise of extending Ethnic Studies scholarship:** Preference is given to applicants whose proposed research promises to move Ethnic Studies scholarship in new directions.
8. **Disadvantages overcome:** The admissions committee takes into consideration significant socioeconomic and educational disadvantages overcome by an applicant, with a view to enhancing graduate student diversity.

9. **Record of community service:** The admissions committee takes into consideration an applicant's track record of serving various communities, such as student populations, disadvantaged groups, and ethnic communities with a view to enhancing graduate student diversity.

Normative Time Requirements

Normative time to advancement is six semesters.

Normative time in candidacy is six semesters.

Total normative time is twelve semesters.

Time to Advancement

Curriculum

Course requirements

Total number of units required: 50.

Core Requirements (5 Courses, 18 Units)

ETH STD 200	Critical Terms and Issues in Comparative Ethnic Studies	4
ETH STD 201	History and Narrativity: Contemporary Theories and Methods	4
ETH STD 202	Cultural Texts: Contemporary Theories and Methods	4
ETH STD 203	Social Structures: Contemporary Theories and Methods	4
ETH STD 302	Professional Orientation	2

Note: The core 200-201-202-203 series must be taken in sequence in the company of your cohort, as the comprehensive exam for each cohort will be tied to the content of these courses. ETH STD 200/ETH STD 201 and ETH STD 202/ETH STD 203 are offered in alternate fall semesters. The comprehensive exam is taken at the end of the second year in the program.

No outside students are allowed in this series, and no exceptions will be made to the sequence.

Research Seminar Requirements (8 Courses, Typically 32 Units)

Five courses must be taken from within the program and three courses from outside the program.

ETH STD 240	Series in Comparative Transnational Theories and Methods	4
ETH STD 250	Research Seminar: Selected Issues and Topics	4

Choices outside ES: Students may take graduate-level research seminars from departments in traditional disciplines (such as History and English), certificate-granting programs (such as the designated emphasis in Gender and Sexuality through the Women's Studies Department), and a coherent, interdisciplinary program created in consultation with (and with approval from) the graduate adviser.

Directed reading courses taken inside or outside ES may *not* be substituted for research seminars to fulfill this requirement. Except for professional orientation, all the above courses must be taken for a letter grade.

Professional Series

The following series of 2 unit courses related to professional training are graded Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory:

- Professional Orientation (required in the first semester);
- Professional Training: Pedagogy;
- The Qualifying Examination—Preparation;
- Researching and Writing Conference Papers, Research Articles;
- Researching and Writing Dissertations;
- Encountering the Job Market.

Note: Professional Orientation is required for all incoming students. Professional Training: Pedagogy is required for all students who wish to teach in the ETH STD 103 series, regardless of previous teaching experience in other institutions.

Other Courses

In addition to the above courses, students may take any courses they feel are needed to complete their training. Students entering ES without prior ethnic studies training often take upper division undergraduate courses to strengthen their background in the field. In such cases, they may arrange with the instructor to do additional readings or writing assignments in order to take the course as a ETH STD 299. These arrangements are strictly between individual students and instructors and do not involve ES. Foreign language courses taken during your graduate career in ES to fulfill the foreign language requirement may not be used to fulfill degree requirement.

Designated Emphasis courses

Students may elect to obtain a designated emphasis (e.g., Women, Gender and Sexuality or Film Studies) offered by another UC Berkeley department to augment their professional training in ES. The commitment to obtain a designated emphasis is made in addition to a student's commitment to complete the requirements for the PhD in ES. Questions on designated emphasis requirements should be directed to the department concerned and not to the ES graduate adviser.

Affiliate Discipline

Graduate seminars in one or more departments outside Ethnic Studies and African American Studies. These courses should constitute a coherent theoretical and methodological perspective that articulates with a traditional discipline (e.g., history, sociology) or an emergent field drawing from more than one traditional discipline (e.g., women's studies, cultural studies, immigration studies), consonant with the student's chosen focus in Ethnic Studies. Students entering with an MA may transfer one graduate course from another institution to fulfill the affiliated discipline requirement with approval from the graduate adviser.

Foreign Language Requirement

Proficiency in a language other than English is required. The foreign language requirement must be fulfilled before a student takes the doctoral qualifying examination. It may be fulfilled by one of the following means:

1. Passing a written translation examination administered by an appropriate language department on campus or by faculty in the Department of Ethnic Studies;
2. Providing evidence of having satisfactorily completed a four-semester (or six-quarter) sequence in the foreign language at the undergraduate level;

3. For a native speaker of a foreign language that has professional value for studies, providing evidence of proficiency such as secondary school or university transcripts.

Course units taken to fulfill the foreign language requirement count toward a full course load but not toward the degree.

Masters Comprehensive Examination

The master's comprehensive examination (or comp exam for short) tests the student's mastery of theories and methods in Comparative Ethnic Studies as covered in the core requirements. This written test is normally taken at the end of a student's second year in the program. Students entering the Ethnic Studies Graduate Group doctoral program with an MA degree must still take the core requirements and the comprehensive examination.

Doctoral Qualifying Examination

The doctoral qualifying examination (or orals for short) tests the student's readiness to pursue advanced independent research in comparative ethnic studies with appropriate concentrations. It is normally taken at the end of a student's third year in the program. The written examination consists of three essays, each drawn from a bibliography of approximately 20-30 scholarly sources (articles, books, and in some cases, other primary materials). Students create each examination list in consultation with the QE committee member assigned to supervise that list. Usually, QE topics correspond to academic fields that the student needs to master in order to undertake dissertation research. In the three-hour oral portion of the exam, students demonstrate mastery of the three QE lists, the relationships among them, and their relevance to the proposed dissertation project.

The written doctoral qualifying examination consists of three essays,

Two of these essays must be field statements, each approximately 12 double-spaced pages, or 3500 words, in length, with one-inch margins.

Field statements provide concise histories of the QE fields and the intellectual questions, critical debates, and methodologies that define them.

The third written exam must be an article-length essay, approximately 17-25 double-spaced pages, or 5000-7500 words, in length, with one-inch margins. The article-length essay must be of publishable quality. Two members of the QE committee (a first and second reader) will meet with the student to discuss their assessment of the paper and to provide advice on publication. Both members must approve the paper before the student is allowed to proceed to the oral portion of the exam.

At least one of the three essays must be interdisciplinary. For example, students specializing in the social sciences must demonstrate interdisciplinary mastery of relevant key humanities texts and methodologies. At least one essay must be comparative across racial and ethnic groups.

Time in Candidacy

A dissertation prospectus of approximately fifteen pages, excluding bibliography, will be due the semester following the QE exams. Thus, for those taking their QE exams in the spring, the prospectus will be presented in the fall semester to the entire dissertation committee in a one and a half hour meeting. All members of the committee must receive a hard copy or electronic copy of the prospectus no later than one full week before the exam. Exams should be scheduled by the student at the

beginning of the semester, in consultation with the graduate officer, who will organize room scheduling.

Finally, please note that the QE list is organized alphabetically per section and that each section collects an interdisciplinary array of texts. The organization of a student's QE bibliography will instead reflect particular disciplines or areas of studies, such as contemporary literature; transnational feminist theories; visual culture and racialization; literature and critical legal studies; history of civil rights youth movements; gender and sexuality in 20th century immigration; contemporary queer politics and religion, partially drawn from across the master list.

Dissertation

Upon advancement to candidacy, the student submits a dissertation prospectus to members of the dissertation committee, who will discuss it in a meeting with the student.

The dissertation should be a product of original research on a topic of significance in Comparative Ethnic Studies. It must be analytical rather than merely descriptive in nature and must incorporate a comparative element either in its choice of ethnocultural groups or in its analytical outlook. Upon final acceptance of the dissertation as an original piece of scholarly research by each of the committee members and approval by the dean of the Graduate Division, the degree of Doctor of Philosophy is awarded.

Required Professional Development

Graduate Student Instructorships (GSIs)

As part of their training, all students will be expected to serve as a graduate student instructor, also known as a Teaching Assistant (TA) for a minimum of one semester and a maximum of eight semesters. The Head Graduate Advisor may approve GSIs for the 9th and 10th semesters, and the Graduate Division may approve GSIs for the 11th and 12th semesters. Summer Session GSIs are excluded from this maximum.

The Department of Ethnic Studies offers a number of graduate student instructorships (teaching assistantships). GSI applications are available from the student affairs officer.

Students must be registered during the term in which they teach, have a GPA of at least 3.0, and have no more than two incompletes in coursework taken during the time of their employment. GSIs are eligible for partial fee remission and remission of the Graduate Student Health Insurance Plan (GSHIP) premium fee if their payroll appointment is 25% time or greater for an entire semester. Students on filing fee status are not eligible to teach.

Note: before you commit to serve as a GSI for a course, *you are responsible* for checking your own records to ensure that you have no more than two outstanding incompletes. Also, check with faculty to ensure that the necessary removal of incomplete forms has been filed.

PhD Placements

Graduates of Berkeley's Ethnic Studies PhD program currently hold positions at the nation's most prestigious research universities, including Yale, Cornell, NYU, Rutgers, UCLA, UCSD, and Berkeley; others have pursued careers at tribal colleges and liberal arts colleges. Some graduates have chosen paths other than academia and work in areas such as public policy and museum administration. For a glimpse of what

our graduates have accomplished, see the alumni directory (<https://ethnicstudies.berkeley.edu/team/graduate-student-alumni/>).

Our graduate program has trained generations of award-winning scholars, dedicated teachers and social-cultural critics who now work in a wide range of academic, cultural, private, and public institutions. Our graduate students continually receive the most prestigious national fellowships and awards, such as those granted by the Ford Foundation, the National Science Foundation (NSF), and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Please visit the Ethnic Studies website (<https://ethnicstudies.berkeley.edu/team/core/>) to see a current list of core faculty, lecturers, and emeriti.

Ethnic Studies

ETH STD 200 Critical Terms and Issues in Comparative Ethnic Studies 4 Units

Terms offered: Fall 2025, Fall 2023, Fall 2021

Introduction to the field examining the critical practices and salient terms and issues in the study of contemporary cultural and social formations. The focus is interdisciplinary.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 4 hours of seminar per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Ethnic Studies/Graduate

Grading: Letter grade.

Formerly known as: Ethnic Studies Graduate Group 200

ETH STD 201 History and Narrativity: Contemporary Theories and Methods 4 Units

Terms offered: Spring 2024, Spring 2022, Spring 2020

The course examines critical theories and methods in the production of historical narratives, social myths, and ideologies dealing with racialization and ethnicity. Special attention is given to employment strategies, tropes, and allegorical forms in the construction of historical events and narratives.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 4 hours of seminar per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Ethnic Studies/Graduate

Grading: Letter grade.

Formerly known as: Ethnic Studies Graduate Group 201

ETH STD 202 Cultural Texts: Contemporary Theories and Methods 4 Units

Terms offered: Spring 2025, Fall 2022, Fall 2020

The course examines critical theories and methods in the production of cultural knowledge in the humanities. Special attention is given to transdisciplinary articulation with theories and methods in the social sciences.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of seminar per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Ethnic Studies/Graduate

Grading: Letter grade.

Formerly known as: Ethnic Studies Graduate Group 202

ETH STD 203 Social Structures: Contemporary Theories and Methods 4 Units

Terms offered: Spring 2025, Fall 2022, Fall 2020

The course examines critical theories and methods in the production of knowledge relevant to social, political, economic, and institutional structures. Special attention is given to transdisciplinary articulation with theories and methods in the humanities.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of seminar per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Ethnic Studies/Graduate

Grading: Letter grade.

Formerly known as: Ethnic Studies Graduate Group 203

ETH STD 230 Series in Transdisciplinary Comparative Theories and Methods 4 Units

Terms offered: Prior to 2007

Research seminar focus is on critical history and practices across disciplines.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 4 hours of seminar per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Ethnic Studies/Graduate

Grading: Letter grade.

Formerly known as: Ethnic Studies Graduate Group 230

ETH STD 240 Series in Comparative Transnational Theories and Methods 4 Units

Terms offered: Fall 2024, Spring 2023, Fall 2020

Research seminar focus is on critical theories and practices in transnational comparative frameworks.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 4 hours of seminar per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Ethnic Studies/Graduate

Grading: Letter grade.

Formerly known as: Ethnic Studies Graduate Group 240

ETH STD 250 Research Seminar: Selected Issues and Topics 4 Units

Terms offered: Fall 2025, Spring 2025, Fall 2024

A seminar course designed to involve Ethnic Studies students directly in the research process. Emphasis on examination and analysis of primary sources, methodology, and the development of theoretical constructs. A major research paper is required.

Rules & Requirements

Prerequisites: 200 or consent of instructor

Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit without restriction.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 4 hours of seminar per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Ethnic Studies/Graduate

Grading: Letter grade.

Formerly known as: Ethnic Studies Graduate Group 250

ETH STD 296 Directed Dissertation Research 4 - 12 Units

Terms offered: Summer 2018 8 Week Session, Summer 2017 8 Week Session, Spring 2017

For qualified students directly working on the doctoral dissertation.

Rules & Requirements

Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit without restriction.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 4-12 hours of independent study per week

Summer:

6 weeks - 10-30 hours of independent study per week

8 weeks - 7.5-22.5 hours of independent study per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Ethnic Studies/Graduate

Grading: Offered for satisfactory/unsatisfactory grade only.

Formerly known as: Ethnic Studies Graduate Group 296

ETH STD 299 Directed Reading 2 - 4 Units

Terms offered: Summer 2018 8 Week Session, Spring 2018, Summer 2017 8 Week Session

A term paper is required.

Rules & Requirements

Prerequisites: Consent of instructor

Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit when topic changes.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 2-4 hours of independent study per week

Summer:

6 weeks - 5-10 hours of independent study per week

8 weeks - 3-7.5 hours of independent study per week

10 weeks - 3-6 hours of independent study per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Ethnic Studies/Graduate

Grading: Letter grade.

Formerly known as: Ethnic Studies Graduate Group 299

ETH STD 302 Professional Orientation 2 Units

Terms offered: Fall 2025, Fall 2024, Fall 2023

This seminar is intended to instruct new graduate students in the behavior of professional academics including research, teaching, and academic ethics.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 1.5 hours of seminar per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Ethnic Studies/Professional course for teachers or prospective teachers

Grading: Offered for satisfactory/unsatisfactory grade only.

Formerly known as: Ethnic Studies Graduate Group 302

ETH STD 303 Professional Writing 2 Units

Terms offered: Fall 2025, Fall 2023, Spring 2023

This course trains graduate students in writing for professional purposes, such as preparing conference presentations, articles for publication in journals, applications for funding, prequalifying exam position papers, dissertation prospectuses, dissertation chapters, book prospectuses, job applications, etc. Students bring in drafts of their writing for intensive critique by the instructor and fellow students.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 1.5 hours of seminar per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Ethnic Studies/Professional course for teachers or prospective teachers

Grading: Offered for satisfactory/unsatisfactory grade only.

Formerly known as: Ethnic Studies Graduate Group 303

ETH STD C375 Critical Pedagogy: Instructor Training 4 Units

Terms offered: Fall 2025, Fall 2023, Fall 2022

The seminar provides a systemic approach to theories and practices of critical pedagogy at the university level. Examines the arts of teaching and learning and current disciplinary and cross-disciplinary issues in African/diaspora and Ethnic Studies. Participation two hours per week as practicum in 39, "Introduction to the University: African American Perspectives" is mandatory. The course is required for students expecting to serve as graduate student instructors in the department.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 2 hours of seminar per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Ethnic Studies/Professional course for teachers or prospective teachers

Grading: Letter grade.

Formerly known as: Ethnic Studies Graduate Group C375/African American Studies C375

Also listed as: AFRICAM C375

ETH STD 601 Individual Study for Master's Students 4 Units

Terms offered: Spring 2017

Individual study, in consultation with Group faculty, to prepare students for master's examinations.

Rules & Requirements

Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit up to a total of 8 units.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 0 hours of independent study per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Ethnic Studies/Graduate examination preparation

Grading: Offered for satisfactory/unsatisfactory grade only.

Formerly known as: Ethnic Studies Graduate Group 601

ETH STD 602 Individual Study for Doctoral Students 2 - 8 Units

Terms offered: Spring 2017

Individual study, in consultation with Group faculty, to prepare students for the doctoral oral examinations. A student will be permitted to accumulate a maximum of 16 units in 601 and 602, respectively, toward examination preparation. Units earned in these courses may not be used to meet academic residence or unit requirements for the master's or doctoral degree.

Rules & Requirements

Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit up to a total of 8 units.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 0-0 hours of independent study per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Ethnic Studies/Graduate examination preparation

Grading: Offered for satisfactory/unsatisfactory grade only.

Formerly known as: Ethnic Studies Graduate Group 602