

RACE AND ETHNIC STUDIES, B.A.

Begin Campus: Any Penn State Campus

End Campus: Abington

Program Description

The Race and Ethnic Studies major is an interdisciplinary liberal arts degree that prepares students to think critically about complex issues, become informed and engaged citizens, and thrive in the diverse workplaces of the 21st century. Students in the major complete several courses that will provide them with a comprehensive introduction to key concepts, theories, and debates that inform the study of race and ethnicity in the United States and beyond. In addition, they select supporting courses that are distributed equally across two areas, a Social Group Area and a Thematic Area. The Social Group Area includes courses that focus on major ethnic and racialized groups, while the Thematic Area includes courses drawn from three broadly defined fields, including History, Culture, and Society; Communication, Media, and the Arts; and Gender and Sexuality. This distribution enables students to focus on a particular social group and issue while ensuring that their studies have thematic and disciplinary breadth.

This interdisciplinary major provides students with excellent preparation for careers and graduate school in fields that include education, law, history, communications, government, sociology, psychology, social work, and business.

You Might Like This Program If...

- You are interested in examining race and ethnicity across disciplines
- You want to gain an understanding of race, racialization, and racial inequalities in the United States and beyond
- You would like to study the experiences of diverse people and communities from various perspectives
- You want to develop skills to lead and advocate for social change

Entrance to Major

In order to be eligible for entrance to this major, a student must:

1. attain at least a C (2.00) cumulative grade-point average for all courses taken at the University; and
2. have at least third-semester classification (<https://www.registrar.psu.edu/enrollment/semester-classification.cfm>).

READ SENATE POLICY 37-30: ENTRANCE TO AND CHANGES IN MAJOR PROGRAMS OF STUDY (<https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/37-00-entrance-to-a-college-or-major/>)

Degree Requirements

For the Bachelor of Arts degree in Race and Ethnic Studies, a minimum of 120 credits is required:

Requirement	Credits
General Education	45
Electives	17-18

Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirements	24
Requirements for the Major	33-34

3 of the 24 credits for Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirements are included in the Requirements for the Major, General Education, or Electives and 0-12 credits are included in Electives if world language proficiency is demonstrated by examination.

Requirements for the Major

A grade of C or better is required for all courses in the major. To graduate, a student enrolled in the major must earn at least a C grade in each course designated by the major as a C-required course, as specified by Senate Policy 82-44 (<https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/>).

Code	Title	Credits
Prescribed Courses		
<i>Prescribed Courses: Require a grade of C or better</i>		
AMST 432	Ethnicity and the American Experience	3
SOC 119N	Race, Ethnicity and Culture	3-4
SOC/CRIMJ/EDUC 205N	Critical Race Theory in the Humanities and Social Sciences	3
Supporting Courses and Related Areas		
<i>Supporting Courses and Related Areas: Require a grade of C or better</i>		
In consultation with adviser, select 12 credits from departmental lists of approved courses in Social Group Area: ^{1,2}		12
Black Studies		
Latin American/Caribbean/Latina/o Studies		
Asian/Asian American Studies		
Middle Eastern/Arab American Studies		
Native American/Indigenous Studies		
Jewish Studies		
In consultation with adviser, select 12 credits from departmental lists of approved courses in Thematic Area: ^{1,2}		12
History, Culture, and Society		
Communications, Media, and the Arts		
Gender and Sexuality		

¹ Within each Area, no more than 9 credits may be in any single discipline.

² Within each Area, no more than 9 credits may be from courses in any one of the listed topics/fields.

Additional Information:

- At least 12 credits from Supporting Courses and Related Areas must be at the 400-level.

General Education

Connecting career and curiosity, the General Education curriculum provides the opportunity for students to acquire transferable skills necessary to be successful in the future and to thrive while living in interconnected contexts. General Education aids students in developing intellectual curiosity, a strengthened ability to think, and a deeper sense of aesthetic appreciation. These are requirements for all baccalaureate students and are often partially incorporated into the requirements of a program. For additional information, see the General Education

Requirements (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/baccalaureate-degree-general-education-program/>) section of the Bulletin and consult your academic adviser.

The keystone symbol appears next to the title of any course that is designated as a General Education course. Program requirements may also satisfy General Education requirements and vary for each program.

Foundations (grade of C or better is required and Inter-Domain courses do not meet this requirement.)

- **Quantification (GQ):** 6 credits
- **Writing and Speaking (GWS):** 9 credits

Breadth in the Knowledge Domains (Inter-Domain courses do not meet this requirement.)

- **Arts (GA):** 3 credits
- **Health and Wellness (GHW):** 3 credits
- **Humanities (GH):** 3 credits
- **Social and Behavioral Sciences (GS):** 3 credits
- **Natural Sciences (GN):** 3 credits

Integrative Studies

- **Inter-Domain Courses (Inter-Domain):** 6 credits

Exploration

- **GN**, may be completed with Inter-Domain courses: 3 credits
- **GA, GH, GN, GS, Inter-Domain courses.** This may include 3 credits of World Language course work beyond the 12th credit level or the requirements for the student's degree program, whichever is higher: 6 credits

University Degree Requirements

First Year Engagement

All students enrolled in a college or the Division of Undergraduate Studies at University Park, and the World Campus are required to take 1 to 3 credits of the First-Year Seminar, as specified by their college First-Year Engagement Plan.

Other Penn State colleges and campuses may require the First-Year Seminar; colleges and campuses that do not require a First-Year Seminar provide students with a first-year engagement experience.

First-year baccalaureate students entering Penn State should consult their academic adviser for these requirements.

Cultures Requirement

6 credits are required and may satisfy other requirements

- United States Cultures: 3 credits
- International Cultures: 3 credits

Writing Across the Curriculum

3 credits required from the college of graduation and likely prescribed as part of major requirements.

Total Minimum Credits

A minimum of 120 degree credits must be earned for a baccalaureate degree. The requirements for some programs may exceed 120 credits. Students should consult with their college or department adviser for information on specific credit requirements.

Quality of Work

Candidates must complete the degree requirements for their major and earn at least a 2.00 grade-point average for all courses completed within their degree program.

Limitations on Source and Time for Credit Acquisition

The college dean or campus chancellor and program faculty may require up to 24 credits of course work in the major to be taken at the location or in the college or program where the degree is earned. Credit used toward degree programs may need to be earned from a particular source or within time constraints (see Senate Policy 83-80 (<https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/>)). For more information, check the Suggested Academic Plan for your intended program.

B.A. Degree Requirements

World Language (0-12 credits): Student must attain 12th credit level of proficiency in one world language in addition to English. This proficiency must be demonstrated by either examination or course work. See the Placement Policy for Penn State World Language Courses (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information/advising-planning-degree-program/course-placements/placement-policy-world-language-courses/>).

B.A. Fields (9 credits): Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Arts, World Languages, Natural Sciences, Quantification (may not be taken in the area of the student's primary major; world language credits in this category must be in a second world language in addition to English or beyond the 12th credit level of proficiency in the first language). Credits must be selected from the list of approved courses.

World Cultures (0-3 credits): Select 3 credits from approved list. Students may count courses in this category in order to meet other major, minor, elective, or General Education requirements, except for the University Cultural Diversity (US/IL) requirement.

Program Learning Objectives

- Students in the major will develop the ability to analyze and apply theoretical frameworks, theories, and debates related to the study of race and ethnicity.
- Students in the major will gain an understanding of the categories of race and ethnicity within different historical and socio-cultural contexts in the United States and beyond.
- Students in the major will develop and refine strong writing and oral communication skills.
- Students in the major will develop and refine critical thinking skills.
- Students in the major will gain an understanding of the diversity and shared experiences within different ethnic or racialized groups.
- Students in the major will develop the interpersonal skills needed to be effective collaborators and leaders.
- Students in the major will have a foundational knowledge of multidisciplinary theories and concepts used to understand the intersections of race and ethnicity with other forms of power, oppression, and social identity.

Academic Advising

The objectives of the university's academic advising program are to help advisees identify and achieve their academic goals, to promote their intellectual discovery, and to encourage students to take advantage of

both in-and out-of class educational opportunities in order that they become self-directed learners and decision makers.

Both advisers and advisees share responsibility for making the advising relationship succeed. By encouraging their advisees to become engaged in their education, to meet their educational goals, and to develop the habit of learning, advisers assume a significant educational role. The advisee's unit of enrollment will provide each advisee with a primary academic adviser, the information needed to plan the chosen program of study, and referrals to other specialized resources.

READ SENATE POLICY 32-00: ADVISING POLICY (<https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/32-00-advising-policy/>)

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Suggested Academic Plan

The suggested academic plan(s) listed on this page are the plan(s) that are in effect during the 2025-26 academic year. To access previous years' suggested academic plans, please visit the archive (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/archive/>) to view the appropriate Undergraduate Bulletin edition.

Race and Ethnic Studies, B.A. at Abington Campus

The course series listed below provides **only one** of the many possible ways to move through this curriculum. The University may make changes in policies, procedures, educational offerings, and requirements at any time. This plan should be used in conjunction with your degree audit (accessible in LionPATH as either an **Academic Requirements** or **What If** report). Please consult with a Penn State academic adviser on a regular basis to develop and refine an academic plan that is appropriate for you.

First Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
ENGL 15 or 30H [†]	3 CAS 100A or 100B [‡]	3
General Education Course	3 General Education Course	3
General Education Course	3 General Education Course	3
World Language Level 1	4 General Education Course	3
PSU 1	1 World Language Level 2	4
	14	16

Second Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
SOC 119N [*]	3-4 Major Supporting Course from List [*]	3
General Education Course	3 SOC/CRIMJ/EDUC 205N [*]	3
General Education Course (GHW)	1.5 BA Requirement - World Cultures	3
World Language Level 3	4 BA Requirement	3
BA Requirement	3 General Education Course	3
	14.5-15.5	15

Third Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
ENGL 202A or 202B [‡]	3 BA Requirement	3
General Education Course	3 General Education Course	3
Elective	3 Elective	3
Major Supporting Course from List [*]	3 Major Supporting Course from List [*]	3
4XX Major Supporting Course from List [*]	3 4XX Major Supporting Course from List [*]	3
	15	15

Fourth Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
Major Supporting Course from List [*]	3 AMST 432 [*]	3
4XX Major Supporting Course from List [*]	3 4XX Major Supporting Course from List [*]	3
Elective	3 General Education Course	3
Elective ¹	1-2 Elective	3
General Education Course	3 Elective	3
General Education Course (GHW)	1.5	
	14.5-15.5	15

Total Credits 119-121

* Course requires a grade of C or better for the major

‡ Course requires a grade of C or better for General Education

Course is an Entrance to Major requirement

† Course satisfies General Education and degree requirement

¹ Number of credits depends on number of credits earned for SOC 119N (3 or 4) and PSU 1

University Requirements and General Education Notes:

US and IL are abbreviations used to designate courses that satisfy Cultural Diversity Requirements (United States and International Cultures).

W, M, X, and Y are the suffixes at the end of a course number used to designate courses that satisfy University Writing Across the Curriculum requirement.

General Education includes Foundations (GWS and GQ), Knowledge Domains (GHW, GN, GA, GH, GS) and Integrative Studies (Inter-domain) requirements. N or Q (Honors) is the suffix at the end of a course number used to help identify an Inter-domain course, but the inter-domain attribute is used to fill audit requirements. Foundations courses (GWS and GQ) require a grade of 'C' or better.

Bachelor of Arts Requirements:

Bachelor of Arts students must take 9 credits in Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) Fields (Humanities; Social and Behavioral Sciences; Arts; World Languages [2nd language or beyond the 12th credit level of proficiency in the 1st]; Natural Sciences; Quantification). The B.A. Fields courses may not be taken in the area of the student's primary major. See your adviser and the Degree Requirements section (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/>)

undergraduate/general-information/academic-information/) of this Bulletin.

Bachelor of Arts students must take 3 credits in World Cultures. See your adviser and the full list of courses approved as World Cultures courses (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/course-lists/ba-world-cultures/>).

Advising Notes:

- Global/Transnational requirement: At least 6 credits from Supporting Courses must be for courses that have a focus that is transnational or outside the United States.
- Gender/Sexuality requirement: At least 3 credits from Supporting Courses must be for courses that have a focus on gender or sexuality.
- A single course may not be used to meet both the Global/Transnational and Gender/Sexuality requirements.
- 400-level requirement: At least 12 credits from Supporting Courses must be at the 400-level.

Career Paths

The Race and Ethnic Studies major is an interdisciplinary liberal arts degree that prepares students for careers in fields that include education, communications, government, social work, community advocacy, and business. It serves as excellent preparation for graduate programs in areas such as law, history, psychology, sociology, social work, or business.

Professional Resources

- Association for Ethnic Studies (<https://ethnicstudies.org/>)

Contact

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<https://www.abington.psu.edu/academics/majors-at-abington/race-ethnic-studies> (<https://www.abington.psu.edu/academics/majors-at-abington/race-ethnic-studies/>)