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### **Cal Poly Adds Bachelor's Degree in Ethnic Studies**

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- Cal Poly will begin offering an undergraduate degree in ethnic studies in fall 2006.

The Bachelor of Arts degree in comparative ethnic studies was recently approved by California State University Chancellor Charles Reed. Among the 23 CSU campuses, more than half offer an ethnic studies major.

Cal Poly has been working toward this goal since 1992, when ethnic studies was established as a university program. The program evolved into a department in 1994, when students could opt to minor in ethnic studies.

The major offers students an opportunity to study the historical development and social significance of race and ethnicity in the United States. Comparative ethnic studies uses an interdisciplinary approach to examine the experiences and cultures of African-, Asian-, Latino-, and Native-Americans in a national and international context. The degree program is designed for those who are interested in addressing and exploring issues of diversity locally and globally.

According to Department Chair Charise Cheney, courses in ethnic studies survey how race and ethnicity affect access to political power and economic resources as well as how race and racism influence cultural expression. "Not only will students develop a greater understanding of the legacy of racism and discrimination in this country," she said, "but they will also become knowledgeable of new and emerging information about diverse Americans and their transnational connections."

Major classes include introductory courses on Indigenous, Africana, Latino and Asian-American studies, as well as courses on race, culture and politics in the United States; the global origins of United States cultures; hip-hop poetics and politics; gender, race, science, and technology; ethnicity and the land; the social construction of whiteness, and critical race theory.

Ethnic studies is one of 17 departments in Cal Poly's College of Liberal Arts. In all, Cal Poly offers 66 bachelor's degree programs, 23 master's degree programs, one doctorate of education in association with UC Santa Barbara, 63 minors and 8 credentials.

For more information, contact Cheney at 756-1707 or [ccheney@calpoly.edu](mailto:ccheney@calpoly.edu).

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