

Analysis of How and When UW-Madison Undergraduates are Satisfying the Ethnic Studies Requirement

Academic Planning and Analysis, Office of the Provost

The Ethnic Studies Requirement (ESR) is one of five competency requirements required of all undergraduates at UW-Madison. Faculty document 1736, adopted in 2003, explained the purpose of the Ethnic Studies Requirement as follows: “The University of Wisconsin-Madison is committed to fostering an understanding and appreciation of diversity, in the belief that doing so will: 1) better prepare students for life and careers in an increasingly multicultural U.S. environment, 2) add breadth and depth to the University curriculum, and 3) improve campus climate.”

In Fall 2010, Elaine Klein, now Chair of the Undergraduate General Education Committee (UGEC), contacted Academic Planning and Analysis on behalf of the UGEC with a request for information about how and when students are satisfying the Ethnic Studies Requirement. Specifically, the UGEC has an interest in understanding during what term of enrollment students are satisfying the Ethnic Studies Requirement, whether the timing of ESR course taking varies by school/college, and what courses students are using to satisfy the requirement.

Because Ethnic Studies is a requirement to graduate, we used a graduating cohort. All bachelors degree recipients from the two most recent academic years – 2008-09 and 2009-10 – are included (13,368 graduates). We attempted to identify the first term when the Ethnic Studies requirement was satisfied, either by taking a course at UW-Madison or by transferring a course taken at another institution and which Ethnic Studies course was taken.

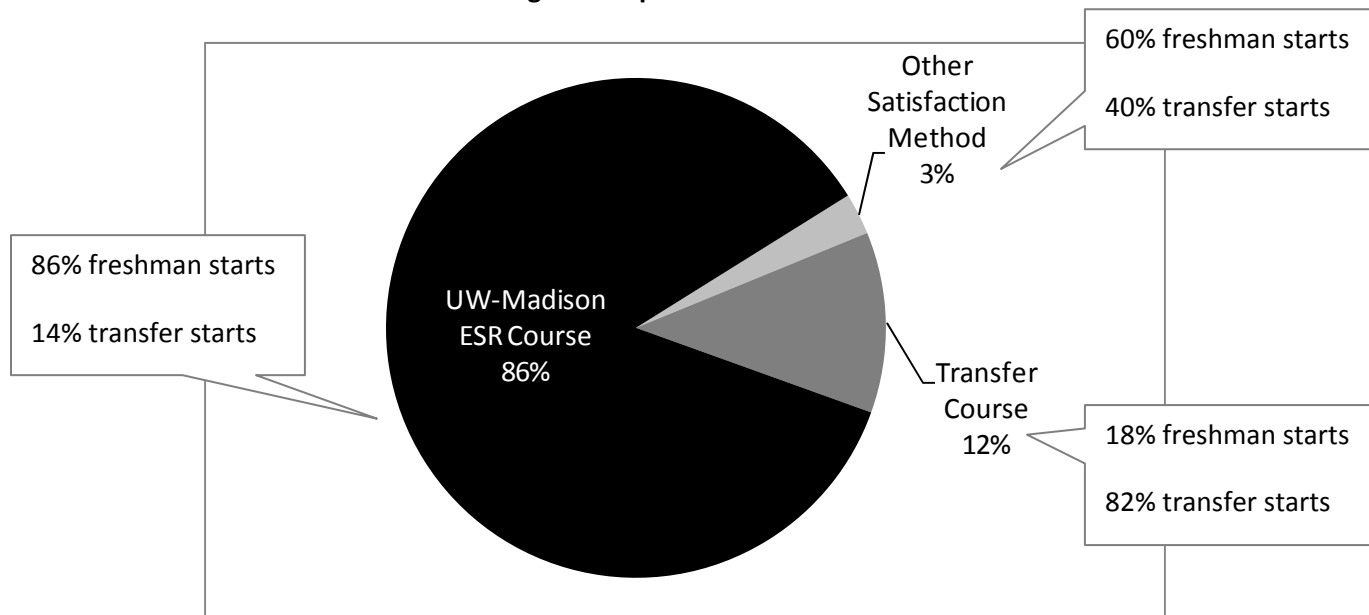
Summary of Findings

1. Most students take a UW-Madison Ethnic Studies course to satisfy the Ethnic Studies graduation requirement. Unlike other General Education competency requirements which can be satisfied through high scores on Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate exams or scores on Math or English placement tests, 86% of UW-Madison graduates satisfy the Ethnic Studies Requirement with a UW-Madison course. Twelve percent (12%) satisfy the requirement with a course taken at another institution (transfer course) and 3% satisfy the requirement via other means.
2. Around one in three (31%) UW-Madison graduates satisfied the Ethnic Studies requirement during their first two semesters of enrollment at UW-Madison. One quarter satisfy the requirement just before graduation (in or after their seventh semesters at UW-Madison). There are considerable school/college differences in the timing of Ethnic Studies satisfaction. Graduates from Nursing, Human Ecology and Education satisfy Ethnic Studies earlier than the overall average. Graduates from Engineering are the most likely to satisfy Ethnic Studies just before graduation.
3. Two particular Ethnic Studies courses account for 36% of the courses used to satisfy the Ethnic Studies requirement. These two courses, Anthropology 104 and Sociology 134, are the most frequently taken Ethnic Studies courses by graduates in every school/college.

How Students Satisfy the Ethnic Studies Requirement

The vast majority of students are satisfying the Ethnic Studies Requirement at UW-Madison – 86% of graduates took a UW-Madison Ethnic Studies course (Figure 1, Table 1). Twelve percent (12%) of graduates took a course at another institution and transferred the credits to UW-Madison and 3% satisfied the Ethnic Studies requirements by an alternative method (see list below).

Figure 1
Satisfaction Method of the Ethnic Studies Requirement (ESR)
For Bachelors Degree Recipients from 2008-09 and 2009-10



Unlike the other general education competency requirements in Communications and Quantitative Reasoning, the Ethnic Studies Requirement is not satisfied by high scores on placement tests, Advanced Placement exams, or International Baccalaureate exams. This makes the Ethnic Studies Requirement different than the Communication and Quantitative Reasoning requirements in the sense that almost all new students need to take a course in order to satisfy the requirement (a few graduates who entered UW-Madison prior to 1996 are not subject to the ESR requirement). For this reason, we were perplexed when we found that more than 350 graduates (3% of graduates) who had never taken an approved Ethnic Studies course. An examination of DARS reports for these students revealed several alternative methods of ESR satisfaction. These methods, codified in DARS but not in ISIS, include:

1. Completion of a specific course section of a topics course in Nursing (NUR 490/CNP 490 section 28).
2. Completion of any of 12 other specific courses and/or course sections in specific terms¹.
3. "Exceptions" to the Ethnic Studies Requirement, approved by school/college Deans' offices.

¹ Specific courses include: Anthropology 448 (Spring 2003), Anthropology 353 (Fall 2003), Asian American Studies 240 (all sections, Fall 2005; sections 1 and 2, Spring 2007), Communication Arts 613 (section 5, Fall 2003), East Asian Languages & Literature 520 (Fall 2007), Human Development and Family Studies 501 (section 1, Spring 2006), History 221 (all sections, Fall 2006; sections 1 and 2, Spring 2007), History 600 (section 9, Spring 2004), Music 201 (all sections, Fall 2002), Scandinavian Studies 443 (Spring 2001), Political Science 695 (section 1, Fall 2006; section 1, Fall 2008; section 1, Fall 2007), Urban and Regional Planning 590 (section 3, Fall 2009).

4. Completion of a teacher preparation program in the School of Education. Instead of completing a UGEC-approved Ethnic Studies course, students in certain School of Education programs were required to complete multiple courses focused on diversity and cultural issues specific to classroom environments. It is our understanding that this practice has since been discontinued.

Table 1
Satisfaction Method of the Ethnic Studies Requirement (ESR) by School College
For Bachelors Degree Recipients from 2008-09 and 2009-10

	Percent of Graduates			Total Grads
	UW-Madison Course	Transfer Course	Other Satisfaction Method	
Agricultural and Life Sciences	86	12	2	1,219
Business	91	8	1	1,298
Education	68	15	16*	846
Engineering	87	11	2	1,189
Human Ecology	88	11	1	689
Letters and Science	88	11	1	7,621
Medicine and Public Health	53	16	31**	120
Nursing	56	35	9	373
Pharmacy	58	42	0	12
Total	86	12	3	13,367

*See number 1 in list above. **The much higher-than-average proportion of graduates from the School of Medicine and Public Health who never took an Ethnic Studies course is mainly due to graduates from the Physician's Assistant program who entered UW-Madison prior to 1996 when an Ethnic Studies.

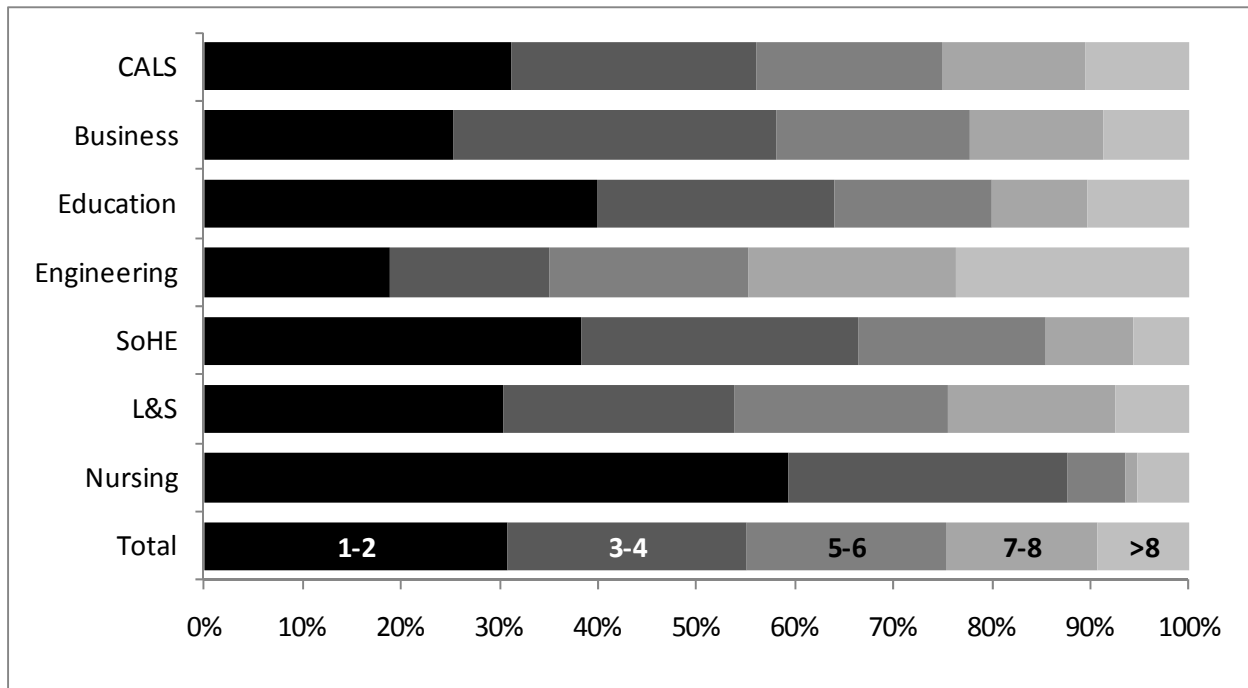
When Students Satisfy the Ethnic Studies Requirement

We examined when during the course of their semester enrollments students satisfied the Ethnic Studies Requirement (Figure 2, Table 2). Almost one third of students (31%) satisfied the Ethnic Studies Requirement during their first two semesters (including those who matriculate at UW-Madison with ESR already completed) and another quarter (24%) completed the ESR during their second year (third or fourth semesters). The remaining 44% completed the ESR after their fourth term at UW-Madison.

There are considerable school/college differences in the timing of ESR completion. Graduates from the School of Nursing are the most likely complete ESR by the end of their first term at UW-Madison - sixty percent (60%) of Nursing graduates completed ESR during the first year (50% in the first term). Graduates from the Schools of Education and Human Ecology are also more likely than the overall average to complete ESR during the first year.

Graduates from the College of Engineering complete ESR the latest. Engineering graduates are the least likely to complete ESR during their first year at UW-Madison and the most likely to complete ESR after their fourth year. Almost a quarter (24%) of graduates from the College of Engineering complete ESR after their fourth year at UW-Madison and an additional 21% complete ESR during their fourth year.

Figure 2
Enrollment Term when Ethnic Studies Requirement (ESR) was Satisfied by School/College
For Bachelors Degree Recipients from 2008-09 and 2009-10 who Took an Ethnic Studies Course



*Medicine and Pharmacy not shown due to small numbers.

Table 2
Term when Ethnic Studies Requirement (ESR) was Satisfied by School/College
For Bachelors Degree Recipients from 2008-09 and 2009-10 who Took an Ethnic Studies Course

	Percentage Completing ESR in Enrollment Term									Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	>8	
CALS	18	13	11	14	9	10	8	6	10	1,190
Business	15	10	16	17	11	9	7	7	9	1,286
Education	29	11	12	12	8	8	6	4	10	704
Engineering	12	7	7	9	10	10	10	11	24	1,162
Human Ecology	24	14	15	14	11	8	5	4	5	680
L&S	21	9	12	12	11	11	10	7	7	7,538
Medicine	34	13	12	12	6	11	6	2	3	83
Nursing	50	10	15	13	4	2	0	1	6	340
Pharmacy	50	33	8	0	8	0	0	0	0	12
Total	21	10	12	13	10	10	9	7	9	12,995

How Students Satisfy the Ethnic Studies Requirement

Table 3 shows the twenty most frequently taken Ethnic Studies courses at both the overall university level and within each school/college. Two courses, ranked first or second in every school/college, account for the vast majority of all Ethnic Studies enrollments. These courses are Cultural Anthropology and Human Diversity (Anthropology 104) and Problems of American Racial and Ethnic Minorities (Sociology 134). Still among the 20 courses most frequently taken by recent graduates is The African Storyteller, a course that was decertified as Ethnic Studies in 2005.

Table 3
Ranking of Most Commonly Taken UW-Madison Ethnic Studies Courses
For Bachelors Degree Recipients from 2008-09 and 2009-10 who Took an Ethnic Studies Course

	Ranking of Course Frequency								Grads
	CALS	BUS	EDU	ENG	SoHE	L&S	NUR	All	
Cultural Anthropology and Human Diversity	1	2	1	1	2	2	2	1	2,147
Probs. of American Racial & Ethnic Minorities	2	1	2	2	1	1	1	2	2,059
Black Music and American Cultural History	3	3	3	3	5	3		3	881
Introduction to Literature of Native America	4	4	4	5	6	4	5	4	521
Indians of North America	5	9	5	4	9	5	8	5	409
Introduction to Afro-American History	6	6	8	10		6		6	320
Ethnic Movements in the United States		5			10	8	10	7	256
Masterpieces of African American Literature	8					7		8	245
Introduction to Afro-American Art			6		7		4	9	240
The American West to 1850				6		9		10	214
The American West since 1850	8			9				11	203
Politics in Multi-Cultural Societies		10				10	6	12	195
Intro to Comparative Study of Race & Ethnicity								13	175
Immigration and Assimilation in Amer. History								14	162
Asian American Movement	7	8	9					15	157
Topics in Music and Ethnicity in the U.S.				7				16	154
The African Storyteller			7		8		7	17	153
Introduction to Folklore		7	10					18	144
Introduction to Asian American Studies				8			10	19	118
Issues in American Indian Studies							9	20	116
Native Amer. Environ. Issues & the Media	8								23
Racial and Ethnic Families in the U.S					3				76
The Afro-American Family					4				64
Environmental Chemistry and Ethnicity							3		12

*Medicine and Pharmacy not shown due to small enrollments. Students are counted once in each Ethnic Studies course taken. However, it is rare for students to take more than one Ethnic Studies course so duplication is minimal.