

The Woodland High School art department is building and continually adding to the Art and Culture course framework. The pacing guide provided outlines the cultures and project-based units teachers will work from. The lesson plans based on the framework will emphasize humanist issues that drive socially important art. This course is designed to promote contemporary socially conscious Woodland artists who have a solid foundation of knowledge in the cultural American experience.

In WJUSD, Ethnic Studies courses that fulfill the graduation requirement will:

1. *Be centered on the experiences of historically marginalized communities.*

The cultures and communities we have chosen to cover are representative of our student population and historically marginalized communities. The first class, Art and Culture 1, will include Chicana, African, Japanese and Polynesian cultures. The second class, Art and Culture 2, includes Persian, American Indian, and Indian cultures. We are currently researching options for the eighth culture to round out the second year of our Art and Culture course. All cultures represented in both years of Woodland High School's Art and Culture have endured periods of oppression and/or marginalization in America. Students will not only gain skills and appreciate the aesthetics of art in various cultures, they will also analyze the "otherness" assigned to and experienced by these cultures in present day America.

2. *Critically examine concepts such as race, class, gender and sexuality in relation to power, political systems, social structures and social justice movements.*

Each culture or unit will deal with this differently. For example, in the Chicana unit we will have a project based on the protest posters from the United Farm workers strikes in the 1960s. We will plan a field trip to TANA to have students create projects responsive to the Woodland community and the social/political environment at large. Students will be able to use the same methods as the United Farm Workers protest movement and critical thinking to create meaningful, socially aware screen prints.

In the African art unit, students will learn about the works of Romare Bearden, an African American artist of cultural import. Bearden's work reflects his viewpoint that there is a lack of humanity in the Black American experience, especially in the American South. Students will be challenged to analyze his works and the meanings behind them. They will create art in similar stylings of Bearden based on their own viewpoints of the lack of humanity in the world they see around them.

The project-based course will introduce students to diverse cultures through the lens of Depth and Complexity Icons. These icons include various points of view to enrich student-driven research and cultural understanding. The icons include Language of Discipline, Multiple Perspectives, Changes Over Time, and Ethics, among other angles. These icons provide a proven structure from which students can investigate the concepts of race, class, cultural oppression, and social/political systems.

The Woodland High School art department chair, Scott Coppenger, was on the Ethnic Studies committee and took part in creating the standards for ethnic studies courses in our district. He and art department colleagues from Woodland High School and Pioneer High School have been attending the ethnic studies training this school year. The focus of the training has been “humanizing pedagogies” which provides strategies to help teachers include ethnic studies as a constant lens in education, rather than a singular unit or project. To that end, the proposed Art and Culture course offers an opportunity to continuously learn and appreciate the artistic contributions of typically marginalized cultures.

3. *Require students to engage in critical and meaningful dialogue that leads to an understanding of self and society and the connections between the two.*

It is through collaborative projects and discussions about representations of culture in education that students will voice their viewpoints and examine the unique experiences and expressions of numerous cultures. The cultures students will explore in the course are largely representative of our student body. Many students will be investigating the struggles, traditions, and aesthetics of their indigenous cultures. Students will regularly critique their own project and the projects of others. Through the use of frequent gallery walks, students will have the opportunity to engage with each of their classmate’s work and perspectives. This type of interaction with the work allows students to consider and respond thoughtfully to much wider range of student perspectives on the social and political factors within each unit. Students will also collaborate on group projects and journal in response to essential questions.

4. *Empower students to advocate and become agents of social transformation by developing a multicultural perspective and the skills and knowledge that address the needs of the individual, community and the world.*

One of the driving forces of the ethnic studies teacher training is to provide students with a safe space for them to reflect and analyze their world. Ethnic Studies leader Dr. Curtis Acosta

wrote, “Humanizing Pedagogies: Indigenous epistemologies can rehumanize the educational experience for our students. Students need to have a safe space to reflect and analyze their world, while also re-establishing their own humanity and belief in education. Students will be exposed to a form of teaching that emphasizes a humanizing educational experiences rather than isolated skills or curriculum focused upon test-preparation.”

Guided student discussions will question the currently accepted norms of art education. Our students are witnessing a change in education and their viewpoints are integral in making those changes happen. Our students are ready for an inclusive, comprehensive education that celebrates, explores, and reflects on the multicultural world they live in. The discussions, cultural investigation, and art appreciation offered in Art and Culture will provide students the space and time to better visualize and articulate unique cultural experiences, voice their views, and activate change. They will lead the progression of their education far beyond the currently accepted status quo. These classroom experiences will prepare students for activating change in THEIR education and their own lives.

It is our hope that students continue beyond year one of Art and Culture. We will continue writing classes for the Art and Culture course in the interest of our students.