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Ethnic Studies Department Newsletters

Department of Ethnic Studies

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USD Department of Ethnic Studies Newsletter 2:1

Department of Ethnic Studies

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USD Department of Ethnic Studies Newsletter 2:1

Message from the Chair

Dear ETHN Community,

I offer you a warm welcome to this new academic year and my heartfelt support as we continue to move through a tectonic shift in personal, shared, and global history. I wish I could extend a simple, celebratory message, but the reality of the present moment has demanded so much more from me and from us.



I am both heartbroken and hopeful. The devastation of COVID-19 in our communities saw the emergence of revolutionary, anti-capitalist [mutual aid networks](#). The police murders of Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, George Floyd, and others cemented the [Movement for Black Lives](#) as the most important grassroots global movement in half a century. Neoliberal, neoconservative, and alt-right attacks on QTBIPOC visionary organizing were met with radical mobilizations of [antiracist and decolonial solidarity](#). And the loss and grief for which there are no words share the same breath with an anger that [Audre Lorde](#) embraces as appropriate, clarifying, and liberating.

[Lightning bolts and forest fires](#) are raging across California as I write this message. The first week of classes taught me that students in our Ethnic Studies classes are fire, too. Emerging from the fiercest summer school - the classroom of summer 2020 - these students unapologetically brought the heat to the first day of class. Their analysis was more incisive, queries more insistent, engagement with one another

more generous, and decolonial politics more nuanced than I've seen in 15 years of university teaching. Like the lightning complexes burning the state, they are incinerating the delusions of the present system. And like the earth which carries the wisdom to birth itself anew, our students are sharpening the skills and intuition needed to create a liberatory society.

So much has been sacrificed for this precious moment. And even more will be determined by our commitments and actions in the months to come. Looking at my fiery students, I know we are ready, equipped with the tools, tenacity, and dreams we need to get free.

In love and struggle,

May Fu

Associate Professor & Chair

Department of Ethnic Studies

ENROLL NOW! HUMC 294: Black Lives Matter: Interdisciplinary Perspectives

Heeding the call of the #BlackLivesMatter movement and global network, this 6-week course joins the nationwide effort to deconstruct anti-Blackness, dismantle white supremacy, center Black resistance, and build solidarity movements that support the wellness and self-determination of Black communities. This course is offered through USD's Humanities Center and is team-taught by 25 faculty from across the university. Join us as we contextualize the complex histories of Black people in the US and center Black wisdom, joy and antiracist praxis.

The 6-week, 1-unit, pass/no credit course begins on Tuesday 9/8. Open enrollment is available now via Banner.



ETHN Senior Spotlight

Gianna Pray: Paying Rent

Hello! My name is Gianna Pray. Outside of academics, I am an outdoor enthusiast expressing myself through hiking, camping, riding dirt bikes, canyoneering, scuba diving, planting, harvesting, and much more. This summer, I was fortunate to connect my ethnic studies passions to outdoor spaces. I



researched intersectional discrimination in the outdoors and presented my findings in the [Summer Undergraduate Research Experience \(SURE\)](#). I will continue this focus in my senior capstone, and I would love to share with anyone who is interested! Related to my research this summer, I became a backcountry ranger for Hawai'i Volcano National Park. My partner and I hiked over 200 miles, checking each cabin and water station to make sure they met national public health standards given the world COVID-19 pandemic.

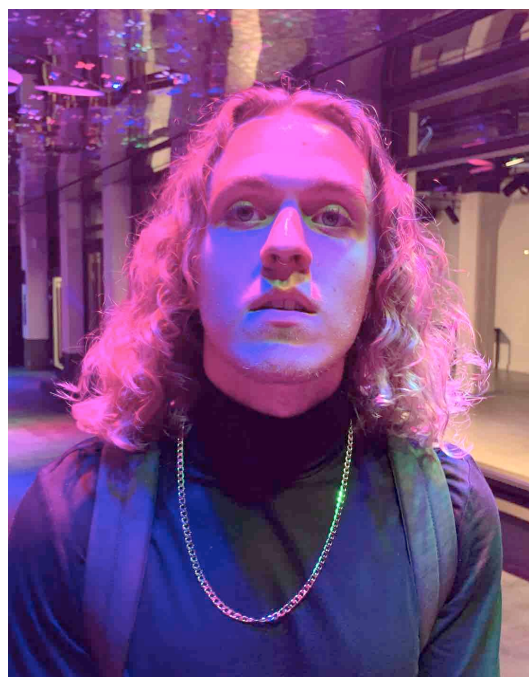
As a new residing guest here in Hawai'i, I am continuously seeking ways to give back

to the community as I know this land was illegally stolen by the United States. Finding ways to "pay my rent" is very important to me; I am quick to help friends work the 'aina (tend their garden/land), help elders in the community with errands, and drive friends who do not have a means of transportation. This is still not enough. and I hope to pursue deeper connections with my community. Ethnic Studies makes me a better community member and overall person; I am forever grateful for my education, connections, and development.

ETHN Senior Spotlight

Sam Springer: Black Futurism Meets Super Mario Brothers

Hello! My name is Sam. I'm an Ethnic Studies major with a double minor in Music and French. I'm from SW Washington state, and currently, I'm not doing much but staying inside, hoping that this pandemic will end soon, and staring into the void. With the current civil rights movement happening in this country, it is important to stay educated, involved, and actively engage in anti-racist practices and pedagogy. One way that I am contributing while in isolation is the unlearning of colonial narratives and learning new narratives told by radical authors, artists, musicians, and other Black creators. Sitting down and reading is sometimes very tiring, so I recommend listening to audiobooks written by Black women about the vision for a better future. I'm excited to start *Are Prisons Obsolete?* by Angela Davis soon.



Besides that, because of the boredom from quarantine, over the past few months my roommates and I have developed an obsession to start up the old Wii and beat Super Mario Bros. We discovered that if anything can comfort us in this time, it might be nostalgia. Hope we have the most successful year possible!



Faculty and Staff

Dr. Josen Diaz: Practicing Hope as a Discipline

Just the other day, I was listening to news coverage about Florida public school teachers suing the state over the governor's mandate to reopen schools. I was struck by the teachers' incisiveness to articulate what safety means during a pandemic, motivated by a desire to protect their students and their futures. But I was also swept by a sense of hopeless resignation about what that future will look like for all of us.

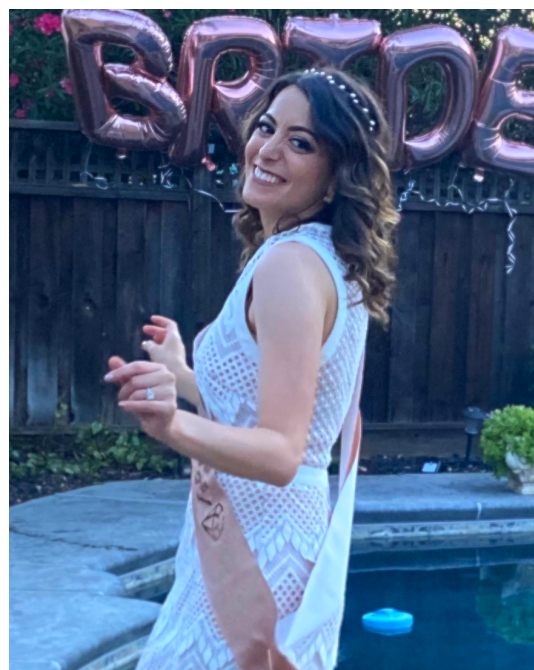
Later that day, I shared these thoughts with a mentor-friend of mine, who heard me out but also thoughtfully reminded me that as difficult as things feel right now, there is no shortage of beauty, joy, and hope everywhere. She said that for those of us who study and work against state violence, we remember that we do so to honor and safeguard that beauty, joy, and hope. I know that this semester is less than ideal (an understatement for sure), that sitting in front of a screen for several hours every day doesn't replicate the feeling of touch or the excited energy of a room filled with your people. But I hope that you (and I) follow my dear friend's heed to remember it as an opportunity for collectivity. And, as organizer Mariame Kaba reminds us, to practice hope as a discipline.

Faculty and Staff

Bayan Abusneineh: Baking Biscoff Cheesecake as a Discipline

Hello! I am an ETHN Lecturer and graduate student in Ethnic Studies at UC San Diego.

After coming to the realization that I had no creative ability in me, Covid-19 hit. I learned how to cook and bake, and fell in love. I realized that nothing gives me both the challenge and the therapeutic effects that baking does for me, especially when it comes out delicious.



Currently, my favorite thing to bake is a Biscoff cheesecake with Biscoff spread on top. Everyone that I make it for absolutely loves it, including my new husband who I had a backyard Covid wedding with about a month ago! 2020 has been a wild ride so far and so unexpected. This is something no one ever imagined happening to us, but the important thing is to do our best, take care of ourselves, and just be there for one another. I tell my students that nothing has prepared us for this - the way that we will get through it is to prioritize our health and safety and be in community with one another. Everything else is secondary. Stay safe!



Alumni News

Kyra Anderson, Class of 2018

Hello Ethnic Studies Family!

It's been two years since I graduated from USD with degrees in Ethnic Studies and Sociology. After graduation, I spent six months in LA working as a counselor at a residential treatment center for teens dealing with mental illness and addiction, and then I moved to Houston to begin a Social Work and Public Health dual masters program. The job was amazing, but grad school...not so much!

Back in June, I was out protesting, and it made me reflect on my student activist days! It also forced me to get more serious about what I wanted my contribution to be to this revolution, and I felt this urge to radicalize my approach to career and success. So, in true 2020 fashion, I've done the unprecedented and unpredictable by deciding to not return to school! I am now creating for myself a path to a career centered in Black Holistic Wellness — my first destination is Black Maternal Health. In September, I will begin the certification process of becoming a doula!

I would not be here today if it wasn't for my Ethnic Studies education! It is the accomplishment I am most proud of, and I consider it the beginning of my journey of becoming. To current ETHN students, I hope you bloom as you learn, grow, and reach your highest potential! To my beloved professors, I miss you dearly! Praying that everyone stays healthy and afloat during this crazy life. Take care, be well, and follow your heart!

Sending you love and light along the way,

Kyra



Visit Our Digital USD Webpage!

Craving some juicy reading? Thanks to our amazing Copley Librarian Amanda Makula, you can read senior capstone papers and previous newsletters on our [Digital USD webpage!](#)



We Are (Finally) on Instagram!

At long last, the ETHN Department has joined the 21st century! We haven't gone so far as to post photos as opposed to (cough!) documents, but we'll get there. Visit us at [@usdethnicstudies](#).

San Diego Car Caravan 4 Black Lives

BLM-San Diego organized a car caravan protest through San Diego County on June 6, 2020. Photos 1-2: SD Police Department, Northern Division, La Jolla; photo 3: City Heights; photos 4-5: Otay Mesa Detention Center.







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