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Ethnic Studies Department Newsletters

Department of Ethnic Studies

Spring 1-27-2021

USD Department of Ethnic Studies Newsletter 2:3

Department of Ethnic Studies

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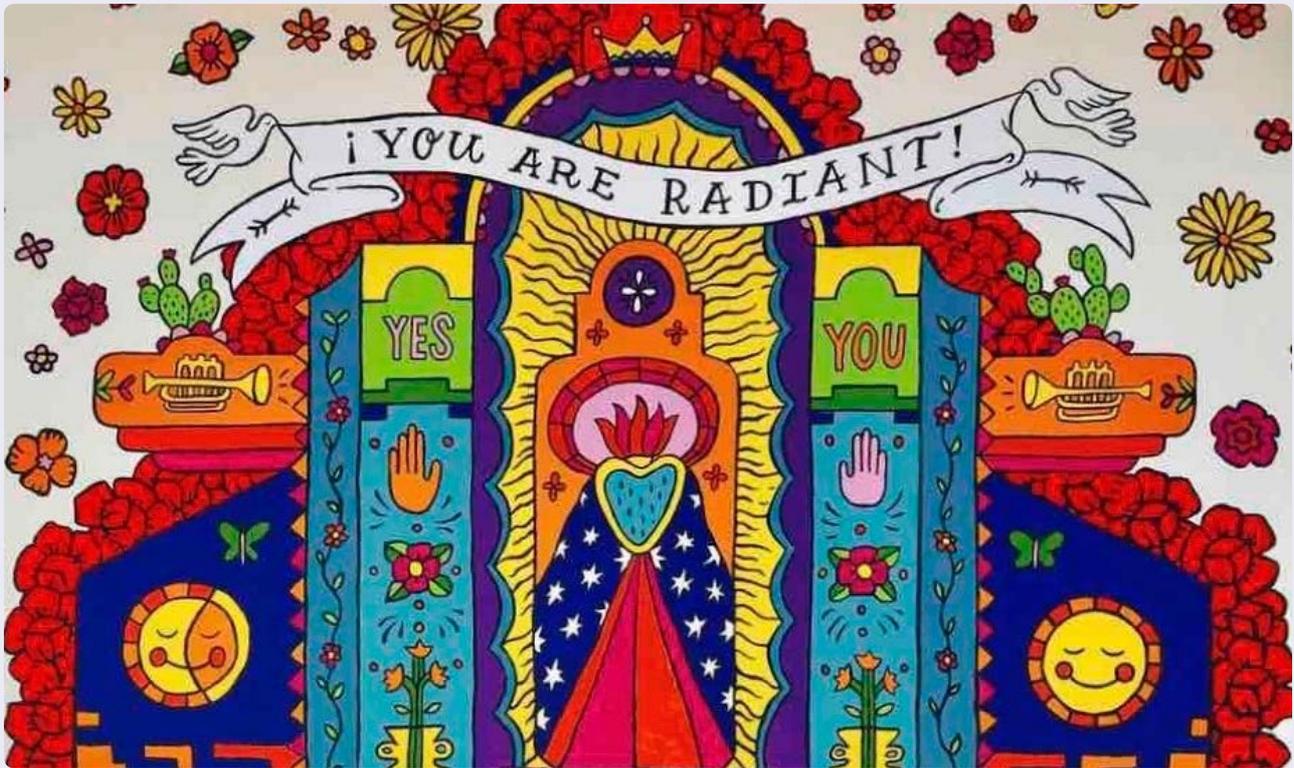
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USD Department of Ethnic Studies Newsletter 2:3



Message from the Chair

Dear Friends,

Happy fresh new year! As we step into 2021, I am present with the complexity of what it means to have survived this long. It is difficult to speak of love and solidarity without loss and sacrifice. Each day still feels more demanding than it should, but I take refuge in and am enlivened by so much:

I stand with the indomitable grassroots organizers who continue to steer this nation away from neofascism and neoliberalism and toward justice. They expand the [decolonial and radical democratic possibilities](#) of this (and any) moment and offer us clear roadmaps to freedom. Their [liberatory epistemologies](#) and calls to action can be found in this department's classes, syllabi, student and faculty research, activism, and relationships with one another.

I bow to health care workers, essential workers, and parents who are on the frontlines of the pandemic, especially those caring for our babies and elders. I recently watched [76 Days](#), a documentary about medical workers in Wuhan at the beginning of outbreak. Their sheer relentlessness and unconditional compassion taught (and wrecked) me.

I am also grateful for my magical sources of joy and reprieve: long backpacking trips, the Xhosa-inspired fantasy novel [Rage of Dragons by Evan Winter](#), late-night phone calls with the homies, comfort food from [Minh Ky Restaurant](#), and the sound of my 3-year-old nephew singing "[Purple Rain](#)" (his 5-year-old sister prefers [Sade](#)).

Creating peace in the struggle feels more urgent than ever. Neoliberal state violence, climate racism, and the worst economic and public health crises in generations demand our action. Let's shine our power and light in the new year.

May Fu

Associate Professor and Chair

[Banner image: Mural located at Artelexia, 3803 Ray St, San Diego, CA]

Honoring Dr. Gene Labovitz: A Special Message from Dr. Gail Perez, Professor Emerita

It is with great sadness that I report that our beloved Dr. Gene Labovitz crossed over Saturday, January 16. Our thoughts must especially be with his wife Nancy and with their children and grandchildren. Gene was a Sociology



professor for 26 years at USD and was the founder of the Ethnic Studies minor in 1998. In the early 90's, he recruited several of us in our first months at USD to get into Good Trouble with him and work towards institutional change around educational equity, access, and curriculum reform. Thanks to his pioneering work, Ethnic Studies has achieved departmental status with a dedicated and brilliant faculty.

When we were organizing to establish an Ethnic Studies minor, he spent his sabbatical taking Ethnic Studies courses at UCSD. His intellectual growth was continuous as he created many new courses in Sociology that were "firsts" for USD, including the Sociology of Diversity, Urban Sociology, and Political Sociology. Coupled with his innovative curriculum was his commitment to educational equity, reflected in his research on Minority Isolated Schools in San Diego. Not surprisingly, he was chair of the now defunct Social Issues Committee at USD and was faculty advisor for the United Front, BSU, and Pride. Professionally, he was Chair of the Social Conscience Committee for the Pacific Sociological Association.

Gene provided the energy and the discipline to create a coalition of faculty and staff to create an Ethnic Studies minor and staff its first courses. In addition, he supported student efforts to found the United Front Multicultural Center and create a diversity requirement. He was a wonderful organizer, bringing many of us together, and working on the administration at the same time. Low-key, sarcastic, full of really bad jokes, he was able to draw in many affiliated faculty and staff to the work of reforming the lack of diversity at USD on so many levels. I can't imagine my first years at USD without him. All of us who organized with him are obligated to pay it forward and mentor others to continue the good work.

Without the Ethnic Studies and Sociology courses Gene initially created and which are now much more numerous, our students would now be in a much weaker position to understand the current crisis of democracy. As recent events demonstrate, four hundred years of racial capitalism and other systems of exclusion have brought us to

this crisis. The questions of "Who is an American?" and "What is America?" have been contested from the founding up to this moment. Any answers to these questions will depend on knowing history, taking the lessons, and resisting.

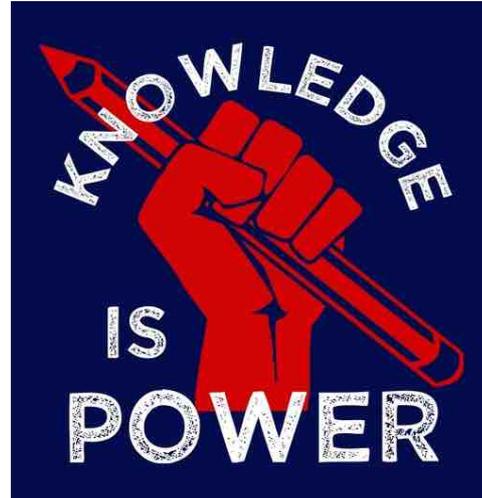
[Photo: Gene Labovitz and Gail Perez at the Labovitz home, circa 2000.]



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

Heeding the call of the #BlackLivesMatter movement and global network, this [special 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 2/9. Open enrollment is available now via Banner.



APPLY NOW! USD Summer Undergraduate Research Experience (SURE) Program

The [Summer Undergraduate Research Experience \(SURE\)](#) is a 10-week, paid summer research program that supports USD undergraduates to engage in research, scholarly activities, and creative works during the summer. SURE Scholars benefits include:

- \$5,000 stipend
- Up to \$500 for research supplies
- 50% reduced USD summer housing rate (USD students; \$18/Day)
- Academic + professional development workshops
- Joining USD's [Research Scholars](#) program

Application deadline: Tuesday 2/23

Dr. Josen Diaz Speaks on the Current Job Market

Dr. Josen Diaz was recently interviewed by Zippia, a career resource site, about the job market:



"Graduates need... a keen awareness of the social and political landscape of this country, the ways that race, class, gender, and sexuality shape life experiences and outcomes. No matter their profession, these skills will help them solve problems and offer solutions that are based on the principles of equity and social justice."

Read the [full interview](#) which also features [Dr. Evelyn Kirkley](#) (THRS and Director of [Women's and Gender Studies](#)).

Professor Perse Lewis Nominated for Woman of Impact Award

Congratulations to ETHN Professor of Practice and University Tribal Liaison Perse Lewis for receiving a Woman of Impact nomination for her powerful mentorship, example, and impact at USD!

Sponsored by the Women's Commons, a Woman of Impact is someone "who lives principles of social justice. Through her work, activities, and relationships she supports others in finding voice, developing skills for transformation and understanding who they are called to be. Her community is not merely a place in which she exists; it is a place she actively improves."

In the words of her nominators, Professor Lewis "embodies the principle of diversity both in her work at the University of San Diego, and as the liaison between the Kumeyaay Bands of the San Diego area, and the University. Her interest in furthering the experiences of the USD students to know about the Kumeyaay has resulted in a close friendship between the University and the Kumeyaay."

Professor Lewis' important contributions include supporting the American Indian Student Organization to rename Saints Tekakwitha and Serra Hall, advocating for the repatriation of American Indian remains and cultural objects to tribal nations, stewarding the Kumeyaay Garden, collaborating with the David W. May Gallery, and organizing public gatherings that strengthen the relationships between USD and American Indians in San Diego.



Senior Spotlight

My Ly Anna Nguyen: Still Learning



Hello! My name is My Ly Anna Nguyen. I am a first-generation Asian American graduating with double majors in Ethnic Studies and Finance. My studies are focused on financial disparities and ways to combat generational poverty. I am the VP of Philanthropy in Phi Chi Theta Business Fraternity and have held a fellowship and a few internships relating to both of my majors throughout my collegiate career.

During the ongoing pandemic, time has been pivotal to my self-reflection. I am not fond of keeping journals and prefer to store memories in photographs and the occasional voice memo. I am grateful to Ethnic Studies, because it gives me words

and knowledge to prevail where I would otherwise be lost.

In January of last year, I was sailing across the world at 15 mph with Semester at Sea. I was in Japan when COVID-19 started to spread. During this time, I started an Asian, Asian American, and Allies collective on the ship. I recognized the importance of having a group to engage and discuss xenophobia and our fears of traveling amidst a pandemic. Together, we presented stories and slide decks in front of hundreds of people and started conversations around the importance of education.

In the new year, I hope to continue educating myself and questioning everything around me. I wish health and happiness to all of you.

Senior Spotlight

Emily Beck: Pushing Comfort Zones

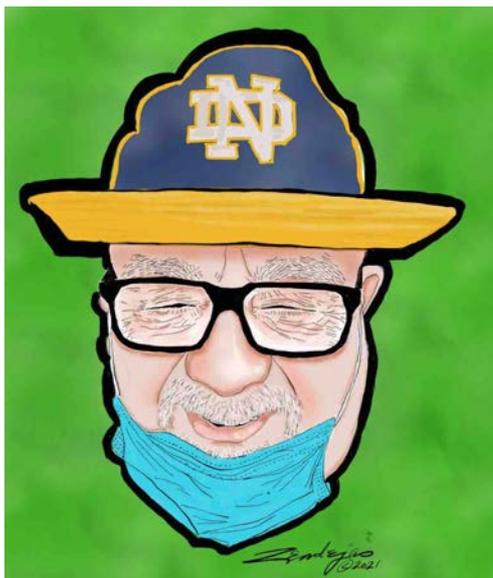
Hey everyone! My name is Emily, and I'm an Ethnic Studies major with a minor in Sociology and a concentration in Pre-Law. In addition to my studies at USD, I have interned at various criminal defense law firms where I worked with attorneys and clients and aided different aspects of case work. Outside of my education and social justice work, I have a strong passion for health and fitness and am a competitive bodybuilder. I have been competing for slightly under two years now and recently started my own personal training business here in San Diego. My future plans are to take at least one gap year to explore both my passions further and decide where I would like to take them.



I chose to be an Ethnic Studies major, because after growing up in predominantly white communities, I felt that Ethnic Studies classes shattered my bubble of privilege and exposed me to social realities that are not taught in grade school. Coming into

the new year after one of the most eventful years in history, I believe one major takeaway is that inaction breeds compliance. Whether it is broader issues of social justice, mental and physical health, or a personal journey, we cannot sit stagnant while external forces influence us. Surround yourself with like-minded people that challenge you every day, speak up if something is wrong, follow your passion even if it's not what you're "supposed" to be doing, and, most important of all, always push yourself outside of your comfort zone.

Faculty & Staff Updates



Dr. Alberto Pulido: Mending the Disruptions

I have been doing a vast amount of reading, reflecting, and writing during this quarantined break to affirm once again that, as people of color, we seek to live and breathe as our authentic selves, living safe and healthy within loving and supportive communities in our quest for a wholistic education and career.

Yet, tragically, history and personal experiences teach us that racism, be it interpersonal, structural or codified, plays a critical role in disrupting our lives. Racism is at the root of dashing, detouring, and even destroying our path towards embracing and living out our authentic selves. As Toni Morrison described it, the function of racism is to distract and keep you "from



Ethnic Studies & Digital Initiatives Librarian Amanda Makula: La Belleza de los Idiomas (The Beauty of Languages)

At the beginning of the pandemic, I decided to pursue a long-held dream of mine: to become fluent in Spanish. Not only is it an extremely practical skill -- especially in my role as Copley Library's faculty liaison to Ethnic Studies -- but I've always loved studying languages and linguistics. To me, it's fascinating to see how words are added and meanings change over time to reflect new lived realities. Even grammar gets me excited!

I first took Spanish in high school and college, but I never felt confident actually *speaking* it. So,

doing your work" where you have to justify your "reason for being... over, and over again."

Beginning in 2021, I commit myself to studying and acknowledging the disruptions and distractions in my life as I search for my authentic self. I acknowledge the disrupted lives of my ancestors in order to untap the power of family and community despite the challenging contradictions. I protect myself with the community wisdom of "amor propio" or self-love to mend the disruptions as I seek to be a whole person and better educator, and I invite all to join me.

[Art by Arturo Zendejas]

about seven months ago, I started coursework through the [Culture & Language Center](#) (CLC) based here in San Diego. The classes are held virtually and conducted entirely in español. My teacher, Brenda, lives in Tijuana, and we have a lot of fun talking together. While I still have a long way to go, I've made progress and was even able to help translate a conversation recently.

With the onset of the new year, I'm renewing my intention to become bilingual. Learning a second language opens up many new opportunities and ways of viewing the world. Fortunately, the CLC offers language immersion trips. I can't wait to pack my bags once it's safe to do so!



Alumni News

Ali Mclagan, Class of 2019

Hey there! It has been a year since I graduated USD with a double major in Ethnic Studies and Behavioral Neuroscience. Since graduation, I have started pursuing a Master's degree in Psychology at University of Chicago and am currently doing research in the Recovery & Empowerment After Community Trauma (REACT) Clinic on UChicago's medical campus. The REACT

clinic provides trauma-informed mental health services to the surrounding community affected by community violence. The goal of the clinic is to provide a more structurally competent mental health care model that attends to racial and economic discrimination in trauma histories. My research focuses on the structural racism involved in the diagnosis of trauma and evaluates whether the REACT clinic is providing the best diagnosis methods it can for the communities it serves.

Looking back at my time at USD, I am so thankful for the Ethnic Studies Department. It has forever changed how I view myself in the world both as a person and as a scientist. One of the most dynamic parts of Ethnic Studies as a discipline is that it provides tools to talk about social justice across different disciplines and fields. No matter where you end up in life, your Ethnic Studies training will be applicable.

I hope everyone stays safe and healthy in this pandemic. You all are doing great things. Stay focused!

Artwork by Dylan AT Miner

[Dylan AT Miner, Ph.D.](#) is an artist, activist, scholar, and registered citizen of the Métis Nation of Ontario, Canada. He is Director of American Indian and Indigenous Studies, as well as Professor in the Residential College in the Arts and Humanities, at Michigan State University. To see more of his art, visit www.dylanminer.com and [Justseeds](#).



REVOLUTION
IS NOT A
ONE
TIME
EVENT
-AUDRE LORDE

**THIS IS NOT
REAL ESTATE.**

**THIS IS
REAL SACRED.**

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