

U.S. Race, Gender, and Equity Experience (ERGU)

Component Content/Methodology

The U.S. Race, Gender, and Equity Experience contributes towards the Illinois state-mandated requirement that general education requirements include coursework that contributes to “improving human relations to include race, ethnicity, gender, and other issues related to improving human relations to address racism and sexual harassment” (see the Board of Higher Education Act at <https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs3.asp?ActID=1080&ChapterID=18>). Approved courses, activities, or projects to receive the ERGU designation must introduce students to the ideas, history, values, and/or creative expressions of diverse groups within the United States, as well as issues of inequality, inequity, and social change among various groups, with an aim of developing racial, gender, and cultural literacy, an appreciation for differences as well as commonalities among people, a critical awareness of how structural and cultural forces have shaped inequality. These objectives can be explored in different manifestations—from the symbolic and literary, through the historical, to the social, economic, legal and political—from a variety of disciplinary angles. A substantial portion of every approved course, activity, or project needs to take a critical approach to exploring inequality, inclusion, and social justice, including but not limited to a substantive focus on race, gender, and intersectional social locations. In addition, the experience needs to include a component that focuses on the contemporary aspects of group interactions, inequalities, and conflicts. This can be demonstrated through a specific amount of time dedicated to these topics, and/or through an extended focus in terms of readings and assignments. Well-designed courses will not only include content representative of diverse perspectives, but also content produced by diverse creators. U.S. Race, Gender, and Equity Experience should use instructional methods that intentionality introduce students to the ideas, history, values, creative expressions of diverse groups within the United States, as well as issues of inequality, inequity, and social change among various groups, with an aim of developing racial, gender, and cultural literacy, an appreciation for differences as well as commonalities among people, a critical awareness of how structural and cultural forces have shaped inequality.

In some cases, a course may carry both the ERGU designation and the EREG designation. This is reserved for topics that demand an extensive discussion of issues of race and gender in both the Global and US Cultures. In these instances, departments proposing the course should provide an explanation explaining why both designations are necessary. For courses that carry both designations, students will be given credit for either EREG or ERGU, but not both.

Experience Goals

- an understanding of the racial, gender, and sociocultural diversity and pluralism within the United States;
- an understanding of the contributions of underrepresented groups within the United States, historically and/or contemporarily;
- an understanding of the structural determinants of social location and inequality within the United States;
- a critical understanding of inequalities, conflicts, and social change among groups, including racial and gender groups within the United States historically and/or contemporarily;
- capacities to appreciate, respect, and learn from diverse groups within the United States.