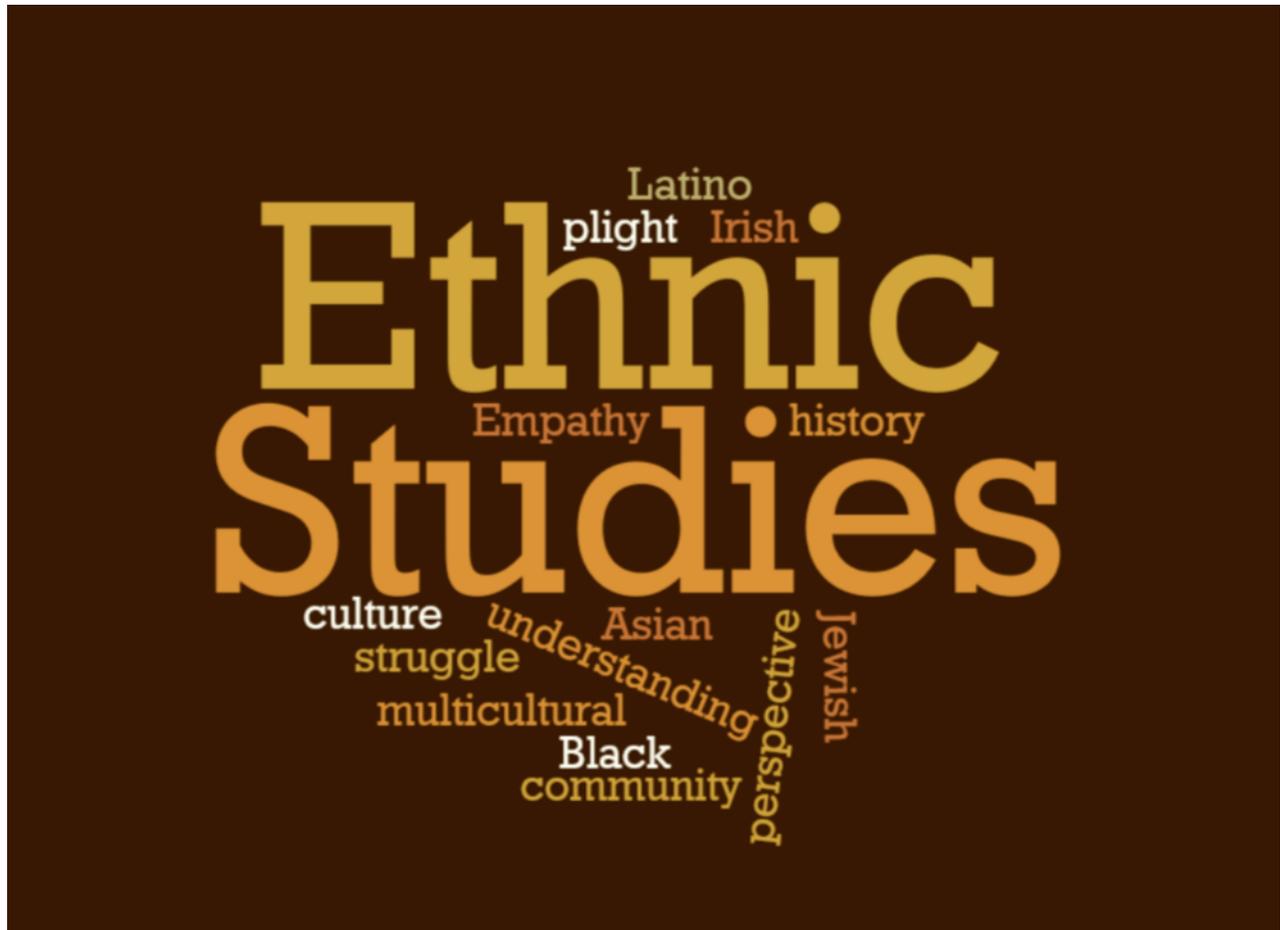


## Ethnic Studies Course Feedback is Needed

By Shawnta S. Barnes - June 3, 2018



While I was studying to become a teacher at Purdue University, some of my courses emphasized the importance of incorporating students' culture, history, and background into lesson plans. More schools are being intentional about ensuring the curriculum represents the students in the school. Some states such as California, Oregon, and Indiana are taking it a step further by passing legislation requiring schools to offer ethnic studies courses; I believe this is long overdue.

IDOE is seeking public feedback on the Indiana ethnic studies course draft. The draft focuses on four standards:

- Standard 1 – Cultural Self-Awareness
- Standard 2 – Cultural Histories within the U.S. Context and Abroad
- Standard 3 – Contemporary Lived Experiences and Cultural Practices
- Standard 4 – Historical and Contemporary Contributions

All Indiana high schools must offer the course, but it will not be a graduation requirement.

Ethnic studies courses are not only beneficial for minorities, but for all students. The history of many ethnic groups in school curriculum is whitewashed and leaves out the minority perspective. People part of one ethnic group may have incorrect views about another ethnic group because whitewashed history is the only history they have learned. What would be worse is for an ethnic studies course to be offered and it does not contain the lessons needed to help students, our future leaders, to become self-aware about their culture, to learn how to think critically about history, and to be open to the perspectives, beliefs, and traditions of people different than themselves.

Although I wish this was a mandatory course, requiring all high schools to offer the course is a good first step. The public has through Friday, June 8 to provide feedback. After completing the form, additional questions and comments can be sent to Davis Moore MPA, IDOE Trade & Industry Specialist, at [dmoore@doe.in.gov](mailto:dmoore@doe.in.gov) or 317-232-0512.