

A PROPOSED IMPACT OF THE ETHNIC STUDIES REQUIREMENT  
ON TRADITIONALLY AGED UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN - LA CROSSE

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Master of Education--Professional Development

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by  
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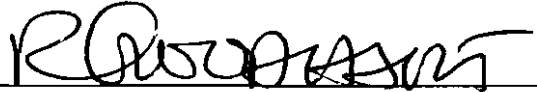
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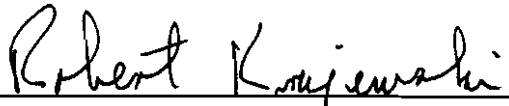
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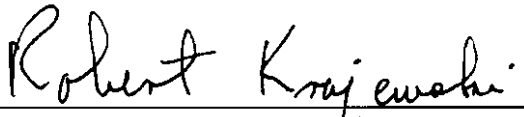
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## ABSTRACT

Rogers, Elice E. A Proposed Impact of the Ethnic Studies Requirement on Traditionally Aged Undergraduate students at the University of Wisconsin - La Crosse

The purpose of this study was to compare the effects of courses which contain ethnic studies content with the effects of a course without ethnic studies content upon student attitudes toward race, class, and gender issues. A three page questionnaire was distributed to students enrolled in randomly selected sections of Introduction to Mass Communications (MCM 201), a course identified to serve as the control course, not currently responsible for meeting University of Wisconsin - La Crosse ethnic study requirements, Introduction to Minority Cultures in the United States (MNS 100), and Racial and Cultural Minorities (SOC 224), courses designated to meet University of Wisconsin - La Crosse ethnic study requirements. Three hypotheses were significant at the .05 level regarding race issues. Findings suggest that completion of courses containing ethnic studies content may significantly change or alter student attitudes.

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CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

Background

It is estimated that by the year 2000, at least one third of the population in the United States will consist of individuals of minority background (Carpenter, 1990). In order to meet the demands of an increased minority population in the U.S., colleges and universities are developing more courses with ethnic studies content. Such an incorporation of ethnic studies within curricula represents effort to expose students to contributions minorities have made in our society. In addition, with the implementation of ethnic studies courses within curricula, universities challenge students to live in a world of competing ideas, to work with people of various backgrounds, and to question their own beliefs (Ravitch, 1990).

The University of Wisconsin System is an example of a system committed to challenge student values, ideas, and to promote cultural pluralism. Serious efforts at diversifying curricula is evident within the University of Wisconsin System. Each institution has submitted a comprehensive plan for institutional improvement of educational opportunities for minority education (Shaw, 1988). The University of

Wisconsin - La Crosse response to the University of Wisconsin System Design For Diversity included requiring students to enroll in at least one ethnic studies course. Effective Fall 1991, students attending the University of Wisconsin - La Crosse will be required to enroll and complete one of thirteen optional courses which contains content concerning Minority Cultures or Multiracial Women's Studies (Awtrey, et al, 1990).

Implementation of an ethnic studies requirement at the University of Wisconsin - La Crosse raises the question of what effect such a requirement will have on student attitudes. Will students develop different attitudes on issues concerning race, class, and gender?

#### Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this comparative study is to investigate courses which contain ethnic studies with the effects of a course which does not contain ethnic studies content on student attitudes toward issues related to race, class, and gender.

#### Need for the Study

As far as can be determined, no studies of the ethnic studies requirement have been located within the University of Wisconsin System. This proposal suggests that such a

study would provide basic information about the effect of an ethnic studies course on student attitudes.

#### Null Hypotheses

For the purpose of this research, hypotheses are as follows:

- 1) For all students taking courses to satisfy the ethnic studies requirement:
  - (a) There will be no significant difference in attitudes between Fall 1990 and Spring 1991 Experimental groups on race issues.
  - (b) There will be no significant difference in attitudes between Fall 1990 and Spring 1991 Experimental groups on class issues.
  - (c) There will be no significant difference in attitudes between Fall 1990 and Spring 1991 Experimental groups on gender issues.
- 2) For all students taking courses in this study, Fall 1990).
  - (a) There will be no significant difference in attitudes between Experimental and Control groups based on race issues.
  - (b) There will be n significant difference in attitudes between the Experimental and Control groups based on class issues.

(c) There will be no significant difference in attitudes between the Experimental and Control groups based on gender issues.

3) For students taking a course which does not contain ethnic studies content:

(a) There will be no significant difference in attitudes between Fall 1990 and Spring 1991 Control groups on race issues.

(b) There will be no significant difference in attitudes between Fall 1990 and Spring 1991 Control groups on class issues.

(c) There will be no significant difference in attitudes between Fall 1990 and Spring 1991 Control groups on gender issues.

4) For all students taking courses in this study, Spring 1991:

(a) There will be no significant difference in attitudes between the Experimental and Control groups based on race issues.

(b) There will be no significant difference in attitudes between Experimental and Control groups based on class issues.

(c) There will be no significant difference in attitudes between the Experimental and Control groups based on gender issues.

### Assumptions

The assumptions for the purpose of this study are as follows:

- 1) Respondents are honest in their responses to the instrument.
- 2) The questionnaire to be used is a valid measure of student attitudes.
- 3) A course containing ethnic studies content will change student attitudes.
- 4) Sampled respondents are an accurate representation of the student population at the University of Wisconsin - La Crosse.

### Limitations

For the purpose of this study the following limitations were made:

- 1) The study will represent students attending the University of Wisconsin - La Crosse and therefore, may not be indicative of results which may be found at any other campus within the University of Wisconsin System.
- 2) The study involves those students enrolling in ethnic studies courses prior to the beginning of a campus wide requirement.

### Explanation of Terms

For the purpose of this research, the following terms are defined:

Ethnic studies refers to the scientific and humanistic study of the histories, cultures, and experiences of ethnic groups within a society (Banks, 1988).

Ethnic studies requirement refers to a requirement in which students at the University of Wisconsin - La Crosse, effective fall 1991-1992, must enroll and complete a course from the Minority Cultures and Multi-Racial Womens' Category (Awtrey, et al, 1990).

The University of Wisconsin System/Design For Diversity refers to a plan founded on the need to improve educational quality and access for all students so they are equipped with the necessary personal and professional skills to be successful in their lives and to help the state remain economically competitive (Shaw, 1988).

Race is used to refer to groups of people defined by their physical attributes, including color of skin, texture of hair, shape of nose and other physical traits (Gollnick and Chinn, 1990).

Gender refers to the biological identification of human beings as males and females and to social expectations associated with these groups (Koppelman, 1991).

Class refers to socioeconomic status which serves as a composite of a family or unrelated individuals based on

occupation, educational attainment and income (Golnick and Chinn, 1990).

Cultural Pluralism refers to an idea state of societal conditions characterized by equity and mutual respect among existing cultural groups (Bennett, 1990).

### Research Design

#### Collection of Data

Data was collected from subjects in relevant courses from Fall 1990 and Spring 1991 terms. Questionnaires were administered to students enrolled in randomly selected sections of Introduction to Mass Communications (MCM 201), Introduction to Minority Cultures in the United States (MNS 100), and Racial and Cultural Minorities courses (SOC 224).

#### Comparative Design

For each of two semesters, the Vega Attitude Inventory was administered to students in the selected sections of courses representing one Control group, the Mass Communications sections and an Experimental group, classes of Minority Studies and Sociology. Data will be collected and compared between Experimental and Control group only. No pre or post test design was necessary to obtain student attitude responses.

### Data Comparison

Two hundred and forty six students completed questionnaires representing the Experimental and Control groups. In the Experimental group questionnaires were received from students enrolled in courses (introduction to Minority Cultures in the United States and Racial and Cultural Minorities) containing ethnic studies content. Questionnaires were also received from students in the Control group enrolled in a course (Introduction to Mass Communications) which does not at this time contain ethnic studies content.

### Subjects

Data collected from students were freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors at the University of Wisconsin - La Crosse, at the time of this study.

### Instrument

Attitudes were measured utilizing the Vega Attitude Inventory. The procedure for implementing the Vega Attitude Inventory was to instruct subjects to complete the inventory quickly. They were also told not to remain on any particular item or they would be unable to complete the inventory within the 20 minute time frame. Subjects were further informed that answer sheets did not identify them, thus assuring anonymity of their responses.

Statistical Treatment of Data

A Two tailed t-test between two means with small sample sizes was utilized to identify any significant differences at the .05 level between control and experimental groups.

CHAPTER II  
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Background

A review of literature concerning ethnic studies examined and addressed attitudes of students following completion of course which incorporated ethnic studies content.

Student Attitude Change

At the University of South Florida, research was initiated to determine if there existed a connection between student attitudes and course content. Ninety seven juniors and seniors participated in this study. Analysis of data collected yielded significant differences between experimental and control groups. As a result of posttest findings it was determined that the treatment, Ethnic Studies Instructional Unit, had an impact on the knowledge levels of experimental subject (Puglisi, 1973).

Research with similar conclusions has been reported at the University of Massachusetts and the University of Alabama. Within the University of Massachusetts Systems, questionnaires were mailed to seven hundred and ten students in attendance at two state universities. Three hundred of the questionnaires were sent to students who had completed a

course in raced relations and four hundred and ten questionnaires were sent to students who had not taken a race relations course. Results appeared to indicate that students without training in racial and ethnic relations know considerably less than students who take such courses. Further, students who have taken such courses know considerably more about American racial issues, Negro history, and intergroup relations (Rose, 1968).

The study at Auburn University in Montgomery addressed implementation of a course which addressed multicultural education, assimilation versus pluralism, and the effect of ethnicity on curriculum development. Student reactions following completion of the course tended to suggest an increased awareness of the extent of prejudice in our society. Overall, the underlying goal was to expose students to a pluralistic perspective of our diverse society in an effort to be more prepared to handle problems of the real classroom and not to be overwhelmed by the fear of communicating with ethnic groups (Wiseman, 1982).

Students attending the University of Toronto participated in a cross cultural course which emphasized ethnicity as a theme. Student reactions were gathered in essays and revealed a heightened awareness of student attitudes following course completion. One student cited that this country can be equated to a salad bowl in comparison to the American melting pot and there exists pride

in having distinct aspects of diverse culture, sprinkled throughout the country. Another student mentioned that understanding, patience, tolerance can ameliorate complications which arise from cultural differences. A third student stated it is important for an individual to learn about the country one lives in, to live fully within a country one must understand customs and cultures of the country (Bancroft, 1982).

Research at the University of Wisconsin - La Crosse revealed some interesting findings about student attitudes. Research was conducted to assess change in attitudes of prospective teacher's attitudes (Koppelman and Martin, 1988). Eight hundred and seventy six students over six semester beginning Spring, 1984, through Fall, 1986, were represented in the study. Subjects included undergraduate and graduate students pursuing initial certification.

The Vega Attitude Inventory was administered randomly to half of the students in a human relations course at the beginning of each semester and to a remaining half at the end of each semester. Findings from the Koppelman and Martin study include, a) increased sensitivity toward race, class, and gender, b) no significant difference between changes in male and female attitudes for sexism and classism category.

Overall, Koppelman and Martin found a significant difference in student attitudes between the pretest and posttest for all three categories of race, class, and

gender, which suggest that course content had a substantial impact upon increasing student sensitivity toward race, class, and gender issues.

At Chicago Postal Street Academy, fifty five students were studied to determine if use of multiethnic literature would be instrumental or effective in student attitudinal change. Data collected as a result of pretests and posttests indicated there existed a positive impact on student attitudinal change (Lightfoot, 1973).

Dr. Ella Williams investigated effects of ethnic studies on attitudes and concepts of community college students and found there was no significant difference in racial attitudes of students participating in a course with ethnic studies content versus attitudes of students who did not participate in a course with ethnic studies content (Williams, 1977). Furthermore, results from the research indicated there existed no change in overall attitudes of community college students participating in the course.

#### Summary

Although research at one community college revealed no change in overall student attitudes following participation in a course with ethnic studies content, the other studies would tend to support the idea that enrolling in a course with ethnic studies content has an impact on student attitudes. Review of literature revealed research at five

universities and a postal academy which indicated a positive change in overall student attitudes following participation in a course with ethnic studies content.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODS

#### Introduction

The purpose of this research was primarily concerned with assessing student attitudes with regard to race, class, and gender as a function of enrollment in courses which meet the ethnic studies requirement. Having identified the problem, the procedures utilized to investigate the study were as follows:

- (1) Developing the statistical hypotheses
- (2) Identifying the representative random sample
- (3) Application of the questionnaire
- (4) Collecting the data
- (5) Statistically analyzing the data

#### Procedure

The Vega Attitude Inventory was randomly administered to students at the end of the Fall 1990, semester and at the beginning of the Spring 1991, semester in the Introduction to Mass Communications (MCM 201), Introduction to Minority Cultures in the United States (MNS 100), and Racial and Cultural Minorities (SOC 224) courses. Each time the inventories were administered, subjects were requested to complete the inventories quickly. They were advised not to

ponder each item or they would not be able to complete the entire inventory in the 20 minutes allowed to do so. Students were also informed that the answer sheets did not identify them individually, thus assuring anonymity of student responses.

### Statistical Hypotheses

The following statistical hypotheses were developed for the purpose of this study:

1) For students taking courses which satisfy the ethnic studies requirement:

(a) There will be no significant difference in attitudes between Fall 1990 and Spring 1990 Experimental groups on race issues.

(b) There will be no significant difference in attitudes between Fall 1990 and Spring 1991 Experimental groups on class issues.

(c) There will be no significant difference in attitudes between Fall 1990 and Spring 1991 Experimental groups on gender issues.

2) For all students taking courses in this study, Fall 1990:

(a) There will be no significant difference in attitudes between the Experimental and Control groups based on race issues.

(b) There will be no significant difference in attitudes between the Experimental and Control groups based on class issues.

(c) There will be no significant difference in attitudes between the Experimental and Control groups based on gender issues.

(3) For students taking a course which does not contain ethnic studies content:

(a) There will be no significant difference in attitudes between Fall 1990 and Spring 1991 Control groups on race issues.

(b) There will be no significant difference in attitudes between Fall 1990 and Spring 1991 Control groups on class issues.

(c) There will be no significant difference in attitudes between Fall 1990 and Spring 1991 Control groups on gender issues.

(4) For all students taking courses in this study, Spring 1991:

(a) There will be no significant difference in attitudes between the Experimental and Control groups based on race issues.

(b) There will be no significant difference in attitudes between Experimental and Control groups based on class issues.

(c) There will be no significant difference in attitudes between the Experimental and Control groups based on gender issues.

#### Representative Random Sample

Courses selected for this study include sections of Introduction to Mass Communications (MCM 201), Introduction to Minority Cultures in the United States (MNS 100), and Racial and Cultural Minority (SOC 224) courses. Two hundred forty-six freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors attending the University of Wisconsin - La Crosse participated in this study.

#### Questionnaires

The Vega Attitude Inventory was utilized to assess student attitudes on race, class, and gender by providing 16 statements for each of these categories. With the utilization of a Likert scale, students were asked to select a response ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." The inventory also has an additional category called "Social Desirability." This category is included in the inventory to identify students who may be responding to questions by giving what they perceive to be as desirable responses. Statements in the "Social Desirability" category use words such as "sometimes" and "never" which forces

students who are being honest to provide responses other than "strongly agree" or "strongly disagree."

#### Method of Collecting Data

Three page questionnaires were administered to students enrolled in randomly selected sections of Introduction to Mass Communications (MCM 201), Introduction to Minority Cultures in the United States (MNS 100), and Racial and Cultural Minorities (SOC 224) courses. Data was collected from 246 students.

#### Statistical Analyzing of Data

A Two tailed t-test between two means with small sample sizes was utilized to identify any significant differences which exists at the .05 level.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

#### Introduction

The purpose of this research was to (1) compare courses which contain ethnic studies content with the effects of a course which does not contain ethnic studies content on student attitudes toward issues related to race, class, and gender and (2) determine whether there exists a significant difference for students taking courses which satisfy the ethnic studies requirement versus students enrolled in a course which does not contain ethnic studies content.

The procedures utilized to investigate the research were to (1) develop statistical hypotheses; (2) identify a representative random sample; (3) administer a questionnaire; (4) collect the data; and (5) analyze data statistically from results of the instrument.

Four hypotheses were tested regarding the effects between before and after comparisons of Experimental and/or Control groups regarding attitudes toward race, class, and gender issues. The Fall 1990 classes were assessed after their study at the end of the term. The Spring 1991 classes were assessed before their study at the beginning of the term. Each race, class and gender category contained 16

questions, scores from which were assembled in aggregate tests of significance.

### Results of Hypothesis One

Hypothesis One stated that for students taking courses which satisfy the ethnic studies requirement there will be no significant difference in attitudes between Experimental groups on race, gender, and class issues. Table 1 below illustrates a configuration of groups as called for by the design.

Table 1

<u>Configuration of Hypothesis One</u>	
<u>Spring, 1991</u>	<u>Fall, 1990</u>
(Before)	(After)
*Experimental	*Experimental
Control	Control

\*Indicates groups compared for H01

### Design

The Experimental groups for Fall 1990 and Spring 1991, included sections of Introduction to Minority Cultures in the United States (MNS 100), and Racial and Cultural Minorities (SOC 224). One hundred and eighteen students represent the Fall 1990 and Spring 1991 Experimental groups. Sixty students participated in the Spring 1991 Experimental group

and fifty eight participated in the Fall 1990 Experimental group.

Results: Race

Sixty students from the Spring 1991 Experimental group reported a group mean of 49.38 on the 16 questions regarding the race category. Fifty eight students from the Fall 1990 Experimental group reported a mean of 52.14 on the 16 questions regarding the race category. The race mean increased 2.76 between the group examined before the course and the group examined after the course.

Results: Class

Sixty students from the Spring 1991 Experimental group reported a group mean of 52.85 on the 16 questions regarding the class category. Fifty eight students from the Fall 1990 experimental group reported a group mean of 53.69. The class mean increased .84 between the group examined before the course and the group examined after the course.

Results: Gender

Sixty students from the Spring 1991 Experimental group reported a group mean of 51.98 on the 16 questions regarding the gender category. Fifty eight students from the Fall Experimental group reported a group mean of 51.79. The gender mean increased .81 between the group examined before the course and the group examined after the course.

Extent of Significance

Spring 1991 and Fall 1990 Experimental group means were tested utilizing a two-tailed t-test to identify significant differences at the .05 level.

Extent of Significance: Race

A Two tailed t-test for significance revealed a T value of 2.036, less than the 2.042 t-value required for significance at the .05 level; therefore the researcher accepts H01 (a) which stated that there will be no significant difference in attitudes between Experimental groups on race issues.

Extent of Significance: Class

A Two tailed t-test for significance revealed a T value of 0.638, less than the 2.042 t-value required for significance at the .05 level, therefore this researcher accepts H01 (b) which states that there will be no significant differences in attitudes between Experimental groups on class issues.

Extent of Significance: Gender

A Two tailed t-test for significance revealed a T value of .0564, which is less than the 2.042 t-value required for significance at the .05 level, therefore the researcher accepts H01(c) which states there will be significant

difference in attitudes between Experimental groups on gender issues.

### Results of Hypothesis Two

Hypothesis Two stated that after taking courses in this study there will be no significant difference in attitudes between the Experimental and Control groups based on race, gender, and class issues. Table 2 below illustrates a configuration of groups as called for by the design.

Table 2

#### Configuration of Hypothesis Two

<u>Spring 1991</u> (Before)	<u>Fall 1990</u> (After)
Experimental	*Experimental
Control	*Control

Indicates groups compared for Ho2

### Design

The Experimental and Control group for Fall 1990 included sections of Introduction to Minority Cultures in the United States (MNS 100), Racial and Cultural Minorities (SOC 224), and Introduction to Mass Communications (MCM 201). Fifty eight students represent the Fall 1990 Experimental group and sixty two students represent the Fall 1990 Control group.

Result: Race

Fifty eight students from the end of assessment (after) group reported a group mean of 52.14 on the 16 questions regarding the race category. Sixty two students from the Control group reported a group mean of 48.47. The race mean increased 3.67 between the groups.

Results: Class

Fifty eight students from the after Experimental group reported a group mean of 53.69 on the 16 questions regarding the class category. Sixty two students from the after Control group reported a group mean of 51.21 on the 16 questions regarding the class category. The class mean increased 3.48 between groups.

Results: Gender

Fifty eight students from the after Experimental group reported a mean group of 52.79 on the 16 questions regarding the gender category. Sixty two students from the after Control group reported a group mean of 51.61 on the 16 questions regarding the gender category. The gender man increased 4.32 between the groups.

Extent of Significance

Fall 1990 Experimental and Control group means were

tested utilizing a two-tailed t-test to identify significant differences at the .05 level.

Extent of Significance: Race

A Two tailed t-test for significance revealed a T value of 2.804, greater than the 2.042 t-value required for significance at the .05 level, therefore this researcher rejects H02 (a) which stated that for all students taking courses in this study, there will be no significant difference in attitudes between the after Experimental and Control groups based on race issues.

Extent of Significance: Class

A Two tailed t-test for significance revealed a T value of 1.951, less than the 2.042 t-value required for significance at the .05 level, therefore this researcher accepts H02(b) which stated that for all students taking courses in this study, there will be no significant difference in attitudes between the after Experimental and Control groups based on class issues.

Extent of Significance: Gender

A Two tailed t-test for significance revealed a T-value of 0.730, less than the 2.042 t-value required for significance at the .05 level, therefore this researcher accepts H02(c) which stated that for all students taking

courses in this study, there would be no significant difference in attitudes between the after Experimental and Control groups based on gender issues.

### Results of Hypothesis Three

Hypothesis three stated that for students taking courses which does not contain ethnic studies content there would be no significant difference in attitudes between Control groups on race, class, and gender issues. Table 3 below illustrates a configuration of groups as called for by the design.

Table 3

<u>Configuration of Hypothesis Three</u>	
<u>Spring 1991</u>	<u>Fall 1990</u>
(Before)	(After)
Experimental	Experimental
*Control	* Control

\*Indicates groups compared for H03

### Design

The Control groups for Fall, 1990 and Spring, 1991 include sections of Introduction to Mass Communications (MCM). Sixty two students participated in the Fall, 1990 Control group and sixty five participated in the Spring, 1991 Control group.

Results: Race

Sixty five students from the before Control group reported a group mean of 46.09 on the 16 questions regarding the race category. Sixty two students from the after Control group reported a group mean of 48.47 on the 16 questions regarding the race category. The race mean increased 2.38 between groups.

Results: Class

Sixty five students from the before Control group reported a group mean of 50.97 on the 16 questions regarding the class category. Sixty two students from the after Control group reported a group mean of 51.21 on the 16 questions regarding the class category. The class mean increased .24 between groups.

Results: Gender

Sixty five students from the before Control group reported a group mean of 50.86 on the 16 questions regarding gender category. Sixty two students from the after Control group reported a group mean of 51.61 on the 16 questions regarding gender category. The gender mean increased .75 between groups.

### Extent of Significance

Spring 1991 and Fall 1990 Control group means were tested utilizing a two-tailed t-test to identify significant differences at the .05 level.

#### Extent of Significance: Race

A Two tailed t-test for significance revealed a T-value of 2.340, greater than the 2.042 t-value required for significance at the .05 level, therefore the researcher rejects H03(a) which stated that for students taking a course which does not contain ethnic studies content there would be no significant difference in attitudes between Control groups on race issues.

#### Extent of Significance: Class

A Two tailed t-test for significance revealed a T value of 0.215, less than the 2.042 t-value required for significance at the .05 level, therefore this researcher accepts H03(b) which states that for students taking a course which does not contain ethnic studies content there will be no significant difference in attitudes between Control groups on class issues.

#### Extent of Significance: Gender

A two-tailed t-test for significance revealed a T value of 0.516, which is less than the 2.042 t-value required for

significance at the .05 level, therefore the researcher accepts H03(c) which states that for students taking a course which does not contain ethnic studies content there would be no significant difference in attitudes between Control groups on gender issues.

#### Extent of Significance; Gender

A two tailed t-test for significance revealed a T value of 0.516, which is less than the 2.042 t-value required for significance at the .05 level, therefore the researcher accepts H03(c) which states that for students taking a course which does not contain ethnic studies content there would be no significant difference in attitudes between Control groups on gender issues.

#### Results of Hypothesis Four

Hypothesis Four stated that for all students taking courses in this study there would be no significant difference in attitudes between the Experimental and Control groups prior to study (before) based on race, gender, and class issues. Table 4 illustrates a configuration of groups as called for by the design.

Table 4

<u>Configuration of Hypothesis Four</u>	
<u>Spring 1991</u>	<u>Fall 1990</u>
<u>(Before)</u>	<u>(After)</u>
Experimental	*Experimental
Control	*Control

\*Indicates groups compared for H04

#### Design

The Experimental and Control groups included sections of Introduction to Minority Cultures in the United States (MNS 100), Racial and Cultural Minorities (SOC 224), and Introduction to Mass Communications (MCM 201). One hundred and twenty five students represent the Experimental and Control groups. Sixty five students participated in the Control group and sixty students participated in the Experimental group.

#### Results: Race

Sixty students from the Experimental group reported a group mean of 49.38 on the 16 questions regarding the race category. Sixty five students from the Control group reported a group mean of 46.09 on the 16 questions regarding the race category. The race mean for the before Experimental group reported was greater by 3.29.

### Results: Class

Sixty students from the Experimental group reported a group mean of 52.85 on the 16 questions regarding the class category. Sixty five students from the Control group reported a group mean of 50.97 on the 16 questions regarding the race category. The class mean for the before Experimental group reported was greater by 1.88.

### Results: Gender

Sixty students from the Experimental group reported a group of 51.98 on the 16 questions regarding the gender category. The gender the Control group reported a group mean of 50.86 on the 16 questions regarding the gender category. The gender mean for the before Experimental group reported was greater by 1.12.

### Extent of Significance

Spring 1991 Experimental and Control group means were tested utilizing a two-tailed t-test to identify significant differences at the .05 level.

### Extent of Significance: Race

A Two tailed t-test for significance revealed a T value of 3.103, greater than the 2.042 t-value required for significance at the .05 level; therefore this researcher rejects H04(a) which stated that stated for all students

taking courses in this study there would be no significant difference in attitudes between the Experimental and Control groups based on race issues.

#### Extent of Significance: Class

A Two tailed t-test for significance revealed T value of 1.622, less than the 2.042 t-value required for significance at the .05 level therefore, this researcher accepts HO4 (b) which stated that for all students taking courses in this study there would be no significant difference in attitudes between the Experimental and Control groups based on class issues.

#### Extent of Significance: Gender

A Two tailed t-test for significance revealed a T value of 0.882, less than the 2.042 t-value required for significance at the .05 level therefore this researcher accepts HO4(c) which stated that for all students taking courses in this study there would be no significant difference in attitudes between the Experimental and Control groups based on gender issues.

#### Summary of Results

This chapter analyzed four hypotheses regarding effects between before and after tests of Experimental and/or Control

groups regarding attitudes toward race, class, and gender issues. Table 5 below depicts hypotheses findings.

Table 5

Hypothesis Findings

<u>H01</u>	<u>H02</u>	<u>H03</u>	<u>H04</u>
(a) = accept	(a) = reject	(a) = reject	(a) = reject
(b) = accept	(b) = accept	(b) = accept	(b) = accept
(c) = accept	(c) = accept	(c) = accept	(c) = accept

Table 5 reports that for students taking courses which satisfy the ethnic studies requirement there were no significant differences in attitude between Experimental groups on race, class, or gender issues. Also, Table 5 reveals that for students after taking courses in this study, there were no significant differences in attitudes based on gender and class issues, while there was a significant difference in attitudes based on race issues. Furthermore, Table 5 illustrates that for students taking courses in this study there was no significant difference in attitudes between the Control group and Experimental groups before the courses based on class and gender, while there was a significant difference reported in attitudes based on race issues.

CHAPTER V  
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to compare the effects of courses which contain ethnic studies content with the effects of a course without ethnic studies content upon student attitudes toward race, class, and gender issues. Four statistical hypothesis were developed (1) for students taking courses which satisfy ethnic studies requirements there would be no significant difference in before and after attitudes of Experimental groups on race, class, and gender issues; (2) after taking courses, there would be no significant difference in attitudes between Experimental and Control group students based on race, class, and gender issues; (3) for students taking courses which did not contain ethnic studies content there would be no significant difference in before and after attitudes of Control groups on race, class, and gender issues; and (4) before taking courses there would be no significant difference in attitudes between Experimental and Control group students on race, class and gender issues.

A three page questionnaire was utilized and administered to students enrolled in randomly selected sections of Introduction to Mass Communications (MCM 201), a course

identified to serve as the Control course, not currently responsible for meeting UW-La Crosse ethnic study requirements, Introduction to Minority Cultures in the United States (MNS 100), and Racial and Cultural Minorities (SOC 224), courses designated to meet UW-La Crosse ethnic study requirements.

The Vega Attitude Inventory was administered to the classes to assess student attitudes on race, class, and gender by providing 16 statements for each category; on a Likert scale, students were asked to select responses ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree".

A two-tailed t-test between means with small sample sizes was utilized to identify significant differences between Control and Experimental groups at the .05 level.

#### Results of Significance Summary

Results regarding significance reveal that after taking courses there was found a significant difference in attitudes between Experimental and Control groups based on race issues. This finding indicates to the researcher that completion of courses containing ethnic studies content may significantly change or alter student attitude pertaining to race issues. The above finding may exist because purpose and emphasis of courses in the Experimental group are primarily focused on racial and ethnic relations and rather on class and gender issues.

Second, before their study there was a significant difference between Experimental and Control group students regarding attitudes on race issues. A comparison of Experimental and Control groups before study, however, revealed no significant differences in attitudes on gender or class issues.

Third, for students taking a course which did not contain ethnic studies content, significant differences occurred in attitudes between before and after Control groups on race issues, but no significant difference regarding class and gender issues.

Fourth, for all students taking courses to satisfy the ethnic studies requirement, there was found no significant difference in attitudes between before and after Experimental groups regarding race, class, and gender issues.

#### Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on data analysis and review of literature.

1. Instruments should be developed to more appropriately measure student attitudes regarding race, class, and gender issues for courses which meet ethnic studies requirements to serve as a tool for measuring how effective courses are which contain ethnic studies content. The Vega Attitude Inventory is an instrument adapted from human relations to ethnic study courses.

2. All students should be required to enroll in courses which deal with gender and class issues as well as race issues (ie, Human Relations).

3. Investigation should be conducted to study the impact of instructor gender (male or female) on student attitudes relating to race, class, and gender issues in courses which contain ethnic studies content. Although, not by design, all instructors of courses in this study were male.

4. Further research should be conducted with a longitudinal focus whereby the same groups can be studied over multiple semesters. This researcher suggests that it will be easier to measure attitudinal growth in longer periods of time.

5. Further research should be conducted to investigate student attitudinal response regarding race, class, and gender issues by demographic classification. Examples include exploring male and female responses, freshmen versus sophomore responses, and responses by age group.

6. Exploration of instructor teaching style versus learning style should be examined to determine what might be most effective for presenting concepts in the effective domain.

7. Further research should be conducted to ascertain whether or not incoming freshmen are developmentally ready to receive courses which contain ethnic studies content.

8. Appropriate departments should investigate (and monitor) future research related to student attitude regarding race, class, and gender issues to insure that courses which contain ethnic studies content are successful in stimulating student awareness regarding race, class, and gender issues.

#### Conclusion

This research was conducted to compare the effects of courses which contain ethnic studies content with the effects of a course which does not contain ethnic studies content on student attitudes towards race, class, and gender issues. Final analysis of data indicates that completion of courses containing ethnic studies content may significantly change or alter student attitudes. The researcher believes that more indepth research should be conducted to reveal additional information regarding the effectiveness of ethnic studies, courses upon student attitudes regarding race, class, and gender issues.

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