

Tulane's new Race and Inclusion requirement debuts

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roger@tulane.edu

504-862-8240



Race and Inclusion is a new course requirement Tulane University has added this fall for all first-year Newcomb-Tulane College undergraduate and transfer students. (Photo from Thinkstock)

For the first time in 12 years, Tulane University has added new course requirements for all [Newcomb-Tulane College](#) (NTC) undergraduate students, regardless of their major. Beginning this fall, all new full-time, first-year undergraduate students and transfer students into NTC will be required to complete a course in Race and

Inclusion.

The Race and Inclusion curricular requirement was one of several recommendations of Tulane's [Presidential Commission on Race and Tulane Values](#). The commission, which included faculty staff, students, alumni and board members, was initiated by Tulane President Mike Fitts in 2015 to make the university a more racially diverse, inclusive community.

"We expect a positive impact on students (from the courses)," said Michael Cunningham, associate provost for graduate studies and research at Tulane. "Most students have some exposure to these issues before enrolling at Tulane. In fact, according to student surveys and reports, they want to attend Tulane because of the diverse experiences offered in and out of the formal classroom setting and the diverse curriculum offerings available. Further, the requirement will assist in preparing students for life after Tulane whether it be direct workforce experiences or further studies."

In addition to requiring a Race and Inclusion course, which must focus 60-percent of its content on race and inclusion in the United States, the new curriculum also requires a course on global perspectives in order to give students a global cultural context."

"Adding a race and inclusion course requirement is an idea that has been discussed by Tulane faculty, staff and students for many years," said associate professor Lisa Molix. "This idea quickly became a priority and was approved by Newcomb-Tulane College faculty with strong support. I attribute this support to the widely shared understanding that we live in an increasingly diverse society, and it is important that our students, regardless of their major, take courses that help them learn about race and race relations, so that hopefully they can grow to see human diversity not as a threat but as a resource and opportunity."

More than 50 existing classes have been approved as options with more coming, according to Andrew Martinez, associate dean of Newcomb-Tulane College. Critical Race Theory, Introduction to Gender & Sexuality Studies and Introduction to African-American History are a few of the classes available this fall.

"The General Education requirement that every student take a class on race and inclusion is one of the most positive changes to occur at Tulane in the past 20 years," said professor and commission member Rebecca Mark, who is also the

director for Tulane's [Center for Academic Equity](#). "Now, every student will have to think about issues of privilege, equity, social justice, and inclusion. We want Tulane students to know that we value diverse and under-represented groups."

The requirement is Tulane's first addition to its general education core since the public service requirement was implemented in 2006.

"The Presidential Commission on Race and Tulane Values provided upper-level attention into how we can improve around issues of race and where these issues fit into our academic content," said Laura Rosanne Adderley, a commission member, associate professor of history and the director of the [Africana Studies](#) program. "We encourage a wide range of students to take these classes because we want them to have a sophisticated experience with this material."

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-Michael Cunningham