



News Release

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MHS first in the state to offer a dual enrollment Mexican-American Studies course

You would never know it by the unassuming, one-sentence course description in the curriculum bulletin for this school year, but the Dual-Enrollment Mexican-American Studies class started this year at Mission High School (MHS) is actually making some history of its own. It is the first of its kind in the state of Texas.

Recent changes by the state have resulted in the creation of some elective special topics courses like Mexican-American Studies, which a handful of districts in the state have done. However, the course offered for the first time at Mission High School this year has taken it a little more seriously and created a dual enrollment course through the growing partnership with South Texas College (STC). This makes it not only a high school credit class, but also a college credit course, taught by a college professor, at a college level.

"I wanted to take it to learn my history, where I came from," said senior Claire Lopez. "I also thought it would help me understand more of what being in a college class would be like."

STC professor, Dr. Trinidad Gonzales said this class covers history from pre-contact and Native American history to the U.S. civil war. "It is a shift from an Eastern centered narrative concerning the development of the United States to a southwest or south-southwest narrative concerning development of the US."

Gonzales said people tend to forget how extensive the Spanish Empire was and its significance in the development of the United States. "We are trying to develop a more complex understanding of the development of the US," he said. He also indicated that while the class is led by what the Spanish are doing their relationships to the English as colonial powers developed, they don't ignore other influences through the French and Dutch.

Kobe Marquez, an MHS student taking the class admits he figured that it would be an easy class since it is an elective course. He also admits he was wrong in that assumption, but feels this class is just as important as any other History class he has taken.

“This class has opened my eyes and made me realize that Mexican-American history is an important part of U.S. History,” Marquez said. “I find myself more interested in learning more. “

“I think this is relevant to anyone living in the United States, regardless of their race or ethnic background,” said course teacher, Victoria Rojas. “Demographics are changing very quickly. Being culturally competent is important for any individual in the business realm, or in college. In any context, this is going to be important.”

Rojas also said the Dual-Enrollment Mexican-American Studies class also brings something very culturally relevant to the students.

“It is amazing,” said MHS student Sarah Lopez. “Because not only do we get to make history but we also are enhancing our education by learning where we came from and the way our culture is tied to history.”

Pictured are the students and teachers of the Mexican-American Studies course at Mission High School during a recent group discussion and lecture.

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