

CRES Newsletter

What is CRES?

"The CRES major and the classes teaches students how to think critically about the past and the present; it teaches them to find their voice and tell their stories. It teaches them the beautiful moments in history, where people stood up for themselves and fought back against oppression and marginalization"

- Dr. Kit Myers, assistant professor in Critical Race and Ethnic Studies

UC Merced's
**Critical Race and Ethnic
Studies Club** —————
EST. 2024



INFORMATION

What is the CRES Club?

The CRES Club serves as a space for Critical Race and Ethnic Studies (CRES) majors and minors to engage in events and opportunities within the CRES field through a variety of offering resources, events, and workshops. The club empowers students to critically analyze historical and contemporary issues, discover their voices, and share their narratives, while celebrating pivotal moments of resistance and the ongoing fight for justice and equality.

What is the Purpose of the CRES Club?

The purpose of the club is to collectively uplift and create a community between all students that encompass a diverse range of identities through impactful political education workshops grounded in social justice, providing resources and opportunities for CRES majors/minors, and fun events to ignite joy and passion!

Follow the CRES Club Instagram

@UCMCRESCLUB

Find information on meetings, officers, and stay up to date with the HCRES club and department!

UC MERCED'S

CRITICAL RACE AND ETHNIC STUDIES

PROGRAM

EST. 2017



SUMMER CRES CLASSES 2026

CRES 012 - World Histories and Geographies

Focuses on the deep relationship between history and geography from antiquity to the 20th Century. Considers the impact of history and geography on cultural change, focusing in particular on trade commodities - from spices to people - along land and maritime routes. Explores Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for historical study and explores how geography has influenced historical changes and affects people directly.

CRES 052 - Film and History: Hollywood USA

Explores the power of cinema, especially movies designed for popular audiences. We ask how movies tell stories of the past and present, and how films engage questions of race, class, gender, sexuality, and/or nation, all of which are products of longer historical experiences. Course pairs film screenings with academic texts to highlight film's power to tell stories, create communities, and reinforce or resist ideas of the present and past.

CRES 123 - Comparative Race and Ethnicity in the United States

Examines the construction of race and ethnicity in the United States in an historical and comparative context. The foundational concept of this course is that race is a social construction that comes into being through both historical and continuing interactions between various groups within U.S. society.

CRES 124A - African American History to 1877

Considers the roles of free and enslaved blacks in shaping America's social, cultural, economic, and political development to 1877 while exploring connections with black communities in Africa and the Caribbean. Themes include the slave trade, race and slavery, gender and African influences on American culture.

INSTANT DOWNLOAD

Meet Jaylin Doxey,



I spoke with Jaylin Doxey, a fourth year CRES major with a minor in Sociology, the Social Justice Initiatives and Identity Program Scholar Coordinator for the Black Scholars Resource Center (BSRC) to learn more about how the BSRC and other centers on campus assist UCM students. Though few students are aware of the BSRC, I was impressed to learn all the services it provides to UCM's entire student body.

Jaylin explains the role she plays at the center: "My job is to basically create programming for students on campus. While the Black Scholars Resource Center does have an emphasis on Black student programming..."

We are inclusive to everyone, so everyone is able to get the same resources. Everyone is able to come to the same events [hosted for Black students]. We are working on trying to make sure people [UCM Students] know what our center is. A lot of people [UCM Students] do get discouraged because they say it's Black. They think only Black people [UCM Students] are allowed in the center and that's not the case. Everyone is welcome."

Although the BSRC emphasizes on creating programming for Black students, the resources and amenities provided through the BSRC are open to all UCM students, regardless of your background, "This year [2025-2026], me and my coworkers are really trying to promote that this space is inclusive. Like everyone is able to get our resources....We have cool snacks, we have a TV. We have a microwave. We have a coffee maker, hot chocolate. We also have a game room, which is in Granite 102, where we have a ping-pong table...and people do not always have to rely on ASUCM, all of our centers that I mentioned give out the same testing supplies, give out the same safe space for other students."

Jaylin highlights other centers on campus—The Asian Pacific Islanders Center, The Graduate Cultural Resource Center, the LGBTQ Pride Center, and the Multicultural Center—providing UCM students with the same resources and amenities as the Associated Students of UC Merced center (ASUCM). Students at UCM, like Jaylin and her coworkers, collectively work together to create inclusive spaces on campus with resources available to all.

Redirecting UCM students to different resources or areas on campus and providing access to printing are additional approaches the BSRC takes to assist students on campus. As stated by Jaylin, “The Black Scholars Resource Center assists students on campus by redirection to resources. So, even though we are hidden, students will come here for a lot of redirection. So they’ll [ask], oh, like, where can I get red Scantrons? Where can I go to find a job? Where can I find, like BSU for example? Or any club clubs or organizations on campus. Another thing that we can assist students on is printing. We do free printing here....

Let's say, you're a student that lives on campus, like the south part of campus where [the Sentinel Rock, Glacier, and Granite residence halls are located], and you're like, oh my gosh I have to rush and go print my stuff. And [it is] probably really backed up over there[library], you're always welcome to come to the Black Scholars Resource Center. We give free printing to students. There's no limit.” Access to free and unlimited printing, testing supplies, cool snacks, and so much more is just a CatCard swipe away!

Acknowledging the current political climate, The Trump Administration enforcing ICE raids across the nation, I asked Jaylin the following question: How has this center responded to the increase in ICE activity and dealt with students who feel threatened by today's current social-political climate?

Jaylin stated, “Our center is a private center, so people are not allowed to come in without a Cat Card[UCM ID for students, staff, and faculty on campus]....

So due to the increase of ICE activity on campus, like around the [country], our center is a private center. People that are ICE agents, are not allowed to come in our center without a warrant and like a valid warrant. We were taught how to identify a valid warrant on campus. So if they were to just barge into our center, like, they cannot do that, they're not even allowed to come into our center without our supervisor being present or a police officer with them. I think that's another thing that I needed to emphasize on because both of the rooms are usually open, but the center that we are in, which is Granite 102, is a private space and Granite 101 is a private space too. Students have to make sure they have a cat card or they have to leave so yeah, that's kind of how that works....The Multicultural Center is also a private space, and the Multicultural Center is also really inclusive. [The Asian Pacific Islanders Center, The LGBTQ Pride Center, and The Graduate Cultural Resource Center are private spaces]."

Jaylin's explanation of the BSRC's work and mission conveys an ethic of solidarity, care and protection for all UCM students. In a context of structural inequality and racialized policing and militarism which is endangering so many lives, BSRC echoes and makes real the Black Lives Matter Movement's tagline that "All lives matter when Black Lives Matter."

"We[the centers on campus] try to be inclusive as possible, making sure every student gets the right resources. Making sure that we know enough so we can help another student. Emphasizing inclusivity and that it's more than just the Black or Asian Pacific Islanders Center. It's a center for all students. It's a center for all students. All students are welcome!"



Contact Information

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Unjust Deportations and ICE Brutality

Migrants leave their countries in search of a better life, less adversity, and economic opportunity. What is often missing from mainstream narratives about migration is that U.S. foreign, military, and economic policies have directly contributed to making life increasingly difficult in many Latin American countries. Rather than migrating to “take advantage” of U.S. resources, many migrants are responding to political destabilization and economic displacement intensified by U.S. intervention.

A central example is the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and similar forms of economic imperialism in Mexico and Central America. NAFTA flooded the Mexican market with subsidized U.S. agricultural products, collapsing rural economies, bankrupting small farmers, and destroying local industries. Millions across Mexico and Central America suddenly faced unemployment and shrinking opportunities for “honest” livelihoods at home. Beyond NAFTA, U.S. military intervention, trade agreements, and political pressure in Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua deepened inequality, state violence, and economic insecurity—conditions that push people to migrate in order to survive. Migrants arriving in the United States are therefore not “criminals” or “burdens,” but people navigating a cycle of exploitation produced by global capitalism and U.S. geopolitical dominance.

Yet despite driving these conditions, the U.S. state enforces strict immigration laws and relies on racial narratives that portray migrants as threats. Media outlets frequently rely on dehumanizing language that frames Latino migrants as criminals, welfare exploiters, or violent gang members. These representations draw from long-standing Eurocentric and patriarchal ideologies that justify exclusion, deportation, and violence.



These images show active ICE detention facilities. Filled with imprisoned families who have been detained and await deportation



California's SB 54 (the "California Values Act") limits—but does not eliminate—local assistance to ICE. State law prohibits law enforcement from detaining people past their release dates for ICE, yet many policies still enable ICE to access our communities. Know-your-rights education remains essential: individuals have the right to remain silent, refuse consent to searches, and ask officers to slide warrants under the door. Although expedited removal rules have shifted in California, the policy still applies within 100 miles of the border and at ports of entry. And because schools, hospitals, and places of worship are no longer categorically protected from enforcement, ICE officers are instructed only to use "discretion," a vague directive that can easily become dangerous. In addition, 287(g) agreements allow local police to enforce federal immigration law during routine policing, such as traffic stops. While California restricts these partnerships, students traveling outside of the state—or through counties with active agreements—should exercise caution.

Source



Legal ambiguity also shapes how immigration enforcement unfolds. *Noem v. Vasquez Perdomo*, a lawsuit challenging the legality of ICE detentions and deportations under the Department of Homeland Security, has not yet reached a final decision. In the absence of a ruling, ICE agents remain free to detain and deport people based on subjective criteria such as racial appearance, language, or occupation. Reflections on the case highlight Justice Kavanaugh's use of "reasonable suspicion" and "common sense" as justifications for enforcement—terms so broad they invite discriminatory policing. These standards grant ICE officers enormous discretion to act on ingrained biases rather than evidence, increasing the likelihood of racial profiling.

This continued legal tolerance of racist discrimination means that the safety and well-being of Latino, Caribbean, and non-white communities remain at risk. These narratives frame migrants as “criminals” or people who unjustly “take American resources,” concealing the real economic and social contributions of migrants and legitimizing the exploitation of undocumented labor. These racial logics are not isolated to immigration debates. They connect to the dehumanizing language used against Palestinians, Muslim immigrants, and other communities of color, legitimizing their displacement or destruction in global politics. The “War on Terror” helped shape immigration policy by framing Middle Eastern, Arab, Muslim, and South Asian people as inherent threats. Public discourse and media portrayals encouraged Americans to view these groups as dangerous or unassimilable. This same logic shapes the ongoing genocide in Gaza. Palestinians are routinely described as “radicals,” “security threats,” or “terrorists”—flattening millions of lives into a single caricature that legitimizes mass death and displacement. These narratives appear across U.S. news broadcasts, military justification, and policy support for Israel.

Protesters take part in a demonstration a day after Alex Pretti was fatally shot by federal immigration agents trying to detain him, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, January 25, 2026
[Source](#)



The parallels in immigration are clear: when Latino migrants are labeled “illegals,” “gang members,” or “aliens,” humanity is erased, and enforcement violence becomes easier to justify. Amid ICE brutalities, the U.S. continues to supply military assistance to Israel. The Trump administration alone contributed over \$12 billion, enabling the destruction of Palestinian communities. Since October 2023, over 68,000 Palestinians have been killed and more than 170,000 injured. Media censorship and professional retaliation against those who speak out shield U.S. interests by suppressing critique. UNRWA reports detail displacement and civilian death in Gaza, while State Department documents outline U.S. military aid to Israel. These frameworks echo ICE rhetoric that presents deportation as protection, even though most detainees have no criminal convictions. Racialized narratives are rooted in colonialism, capitalism, and white supremacy and work by presenting Latine and Palestinian people as less deserving of dignity, safety, or belonging.

Politics of Gaza Abroad

HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND MOVEMENT OVERVIEW

After the tragic attacks by Hamas on October 7, 2023, which led to the death of more than 1,200 people and more than 200 hostages, Israel has launched its most widespread and deadly attack on the Gaza Strip, now a 10 month (and counting) genocide targeting the 2 million Palestinians living there. Contrary to popular belief, the colonization of Palestine began decades before the Nakba (“Catastrophe” in Arabic) of 1948 that is commonly cited as the beginning of the occupation. British imperialists had offered Palestine to Zionist settlers in 1917, 31 years before the first Nakba. Tithi Bhattacharya, a professor at Purdue University, breaks down the history of Israeli occupation and its ties to British imperialism in India in her article “British Colonialism Oppressed My Family in India. I See Palestine Through This Frame.” From India to South Africa to Palestine, the history of colonization and efforts to build an apartheid nation-state are clear. As Americans attending a university built on the stolen land of the Miwok and Yokut peoples, it is imperative that we, UC Merced students, reevaluate and decolonize our worldview to be more compassionate and understanding citizens. University students across the United States and the world stood in solidarity with Gaza and the Palestinian people, utilizing a classic method of student protest: encampment. In the 1960s and 1970s, students occupied their universities to protest the Vietnam War, and did it again in the 1980s to call for divestment from apartheid in South Africa. In April 2024, universities on the East Coast, including Columbia, Harvard, MIT, Yale, and NYU, began launching solidarity encampments after months of back-and-forth with their administrations. Schools on the West Coast joined in, with USC, UCLA, Cal Poly Humbolt, Sacramento State, and UC Merced being some of the other universities to follow suit. A full timeline of student protests can be found in the article “How Pro-Palestinian Protests Unfolded On College Campuses Across the US: A Timeline.” Since 2024, anti-genocide protests have erupted across the world in support of innocent Palestinian lives. Today, the United States continues to politically support the genocide in Palestine and supplying Israel with the weapons that are being used against Palestinians.



Know Your Rights!

ESSENTIAL CONSTITUTIONAL PROTECTIONS



Regardless of citizenship, you have these constitutional rights:

- The Right to Remain Silent
- The Right to be Free From “Unreasonable Searches and Seizures”
- The Right to Advocate for Change

1st Amendment: Right to Free Speech

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

This means that the 1st Amendment protects our rights to free speech, to assemble in peaceful protest, and to freely associate with the people and groups we choose.

4th Amendment: The Right to be Free from Search and Seizure

Police cannot search you unless:

- *They have consent*
- *They obtain a search warrant from a judge*
- *Exceptions to the warrant requirement (exigent circumstances or emergencies like “hot pursuit”, “plain view” doctrine, etc.)*

The 4th Amendment protects us and our private property from being searched without probable cause. A warrant must be issued to conduct a search, specifying the places, persons, or things to be searched or taken.

5th Amendment: The Right to Remain Silent

“[persons shall not] be suspected for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, not be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law.”

This means you have the right not to testify against yourself at trial and not to answer questions when asked by a police officer or a government agent.

6th Amendment: Right to a Lawyer

The 6th Amendment deals with criminal prosecutions and includes nine separate rights, but the most important here is that it entitles you to have a lawyer present when interacting with law enforcement to represent and protect your rights. If you cannot afford a lawyer, it entitles you to a public defender.

What To Do During Police Encounters:

If a police officer approaches you and begins to ask questions, you must invoke your rights. Ask if you are being detained or if you are free to leave. Ask the following questions:

- “Am I free to leave?” or “Am I being detained?” If you are free to leave, you may leave and you are not being detained.

HOWEVER, if you are being detained. Immediately respond with: “I am invoking my right to remain silent, and I want a lawyer/attorney present.”

IF you are arrested- ask for a lawyer. Do NOT speak anymore:

- You must provide name, address and your date of birth if detained but you are not required to say anything else.
- You may say: “I wish to remain silent and want an attorney.”
- They are allowed to search you.
- DUI tests- these are forced and you will be required to comply. If you refuse a breathalyzer- they will use a blood draw.

Protests and Demonstrations:

- Your first Amendment right allows you the right to hold an action, such as a march or rally, on public property, at shopping malls, and at government buildings.
- Sidewalks and parks do not generally require a permit, but check with your local ordinances on permitting if you want to reduce the risk of arrest.

What to know during protests:

- Ensure that you are actively advocating for participants and bystanders.
- If guns are drawn: put your hands up, and say “don’t shoot, my hands are up and I am unarmed.”
- If you witness an individual being arrested: Always demand their immediate release.
- If you are being arrested. Always remain calm. Remain Silent. DO NOT resist. However, if they tell you to “stop resisting,” say, “I am not resisting.”
- Never consent to a search. Consent can be verbal such as “you can search” or “sure...”, or it can be physical such as opening your bag or emptying your pockets. Any movement can be considered consent.
- Always be clear and loud enough to hear.
- You have the right to record. police officers and public officials.

You have constitutional rights:

- **DO NOT OPEN THE DOOR** if an immigration agent is knocking. If you are inside of your house, show the card through the window or slide it under the door.
- **DO NOT ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS** from an immigration agent if they try to talk to you. You have the right to remain silent.
- **DO NOT SIGN ANYTHING** without first speaking to a lawyer. You have the right to speak with a lawyer.
- If you are outside of your house, **SHOW THIS CARD TO THE AGENT**. Ask the agent if you are free to leave and if they say you can, leave calmly.





Personal Safety Reminders

HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT PROTESTING?

The Miranda statement is only required when you are being placed under arrest or before you are interrogated. However, YOU MUST INVOKE YOUR RIGHTS PRIOR TO HEARING THE MIRANDA STATEMENT.

Keep your hands visible. Do not put your hands in your pockets. Listen to their instructions.

Stay in public with witnesses if possible.

Assume every word you say is being recorded and may be used against you in court.

You are not required to talk to police officers. If you do agree to talk to them, you could give them the information they need to arrest you or someone else.

The stories we tell matter. They shape how we see one another, how we respond to suffering, and how we imagine futures rooted not in exclusion, but in care. Our communities in Merced and throughout the Central Valley have raised their voices against ICE violence and genocide, joining thousands of protesters between Modesto and Merced. Students, faculty, staff, city council members, and neighbors continue to stand together for human rights.

To stay updated on national and international affairs surrounding race and ethnicity, we recommend the following sources:

<https://tracreports.org/>
<https://www.propublica.org/>
<https://www.hrw.org/>
<https://apnews.com/>

CRES Pedestal

Do you know someone who is involved in CRES or exemplifies the values and goals of Critical Race and Ethnic Studies? Have a favorite professor associated with the department and want to shout them out? Fill out the form and nominate yourself, a peer, a friend, or faculty to be on the CRES Pedestal in our next edition! Highlighting the folks working to make UC Merced more inclusive and creating a future with equity, care, and justice for all is the goal.



<https://forms.gle/WeFSvTEpxKQpDegYA>

HCRES Journal

The HCRES Journal publishes undergraduate research papers pertaining to topics in history and CRES. The HCRES journal highlights and promotes undergraduate student work in CRES, showcasing the pioneering achievements of CRES students. The latest edition of the journal is available [here](#).

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We dedicate this newsletter to the
people around the globe standing
against injustice and those
being subjected to imperialist violence.
We hope that one day all people may be free.

Contributors

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The History of CRES



The UC Merced Critical Race and Ethnic Studies (CRES) program was created over the course of a few years, through the dedicated efforts of our core faculty. Dr. Ma Vang was hired in 2014 to start the program, and the first “Introduction to Critical Race and Ethnic Studies” class was taught in the Fall of 2017 by Dr. Kit Myers, 12 years after the inaugural undergraduate class of UC Merced in 2005. Since the beginning of the program, CRES has expanded its core faculty by 150%, hiring Dr. Sapana Doshi, Dr. Nicosia Shakes, and Dr. Christina Baker in 2020. By expanding the core faculty, the program added a multitude of core classes, electives, and research initiatives. Dr. Ma Vang served as the first chair of the CRES program, and Dr. Vang has since been selected as a Hellman fellow in the 2019–2020 class for her research projects in refugee care and education. As the CRES program at UC Merced grows and develops, leaders like Dr. Sapana Doshi, Dr. Christina Baker, Dr. Kit Myers, Dr. Nicosia Shakes, and more have worked to expand the reach of CRES and promote the ethics of the program across our campus and within the broader community.



Our UC Merced CRES program centralizes the histories, experiences, and resistance of marginalized communities. Critical Race and Ethnic studies empowers and uplifts marginalized communities by offering an interdisciplinary, intersectional, and comparative study of race, indigeneity, gender, sexuality, and class. UC Merced’s CRES program draws from and builds onto cutting edge curricula from CRES programs at other schools and research institutions to help foster a discipline of activism and empowerment. Our CRES program works to dismantle white supremacist, settler colonial, anti-Black, capitalist, and heteropatriarchal logics and structures in order to reimagine a society that can provide justice and care for all.