



California State  
University

**INSTRUCTIONALLY  
RELATED  
ACTIVITIES**  
CHANNEL  
ISLANDS

Proposal # \_658\_\_\_\_\_

## ***Instructionally Related Activities Report Form***

**SPONSOR:** Mary McThomas & Sheen Rajmaira

**DEPARTMENT:** Political Science

**ACTIVITY TITLE:** The Politics of Race and Ethnicity Speaker Series

**DATE (S) OF ACTIVITY:** April 9<sup>th</sup> and April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015

Please submit via email to the IRA Coordinator along with any supporting documentation at [david.daniels@csuci.edu](mailto:david.daniels@csuci.edu) within 30 days after the activity. Thank you for your commitment to engaging our students!

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### **A. ADDRESS THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:**

- (1) PROVIDE A DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY;
  - (2) HOW DID THE ACTIVITY RELATE TO A COURSE(S) AND/OR LEARNING OBJECTIVES?
  - (3) WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE STRENGTHS OF THE ACTIVITY?
  - (4) WHAT WOULD YOU SAY ARE/WERE THE ACTIVITY'S WEAKNESSES?
  - (5) HOW WOULD YOU IMPROVE THIS ACTIVITY FOR NEXT TIME?
  - (6) WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM THE PROCESS?
  - (7) WHAT ARE STUDENT RESPONSES TO THE ACTIVITY? ATTACH STUDENT EVALUATIONS OR ASSESSMENTS (IN ACCORDANCE WITH FERPA RESTRICTIONS YOU MUST REMOVE ALL PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE STUDENT INFORMATION)
  - 8) GIVE A SUMMARY OF EXPENSES FOR THE ACTIVITY.
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### **B. ATTENDEE LIST- SUPPORTING DOCUMENT:**

In addition to the report form, *in a separate document*, attach to your email a list of attendees complete with each student major and grade level. This for IRA Committee reference only and will not be published on the IRA website. Include your name and the title of your IRA activity on the document.

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### **C. IMAGES FROM ACTIVITY:**

Finally, attach to your email up to 6 images demonstrating student participation (under 2 MB total) with captions/titles. Please attach these photos in .JPEG format directly to email. Thank you!



**(1) PROVIDE A DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY:**

The event was a speaker series in which we invited scholars in the field of race/ethnicity and politics to present their research. We were able to bring in four scholars. Jane Junn, Professor of Political Science at USC, spoke about the construction of race as highlighted by the changing racial and ethnic categories on the US Census. Michael Tesler, Assistant Professor of Political Science at UC Irvine, presented his research on the racialization of public policies during the Obama administration. Our third speaker was Alvaro Huerta, Assistant Professor in Urban & Regional Planning and Ethnic & Women's Studies at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona. He spoke about the rights of immigrants and his own personal struggles and successes as a child of immigrants. Our final speaker was Dr. Lisa Grayshield, Associate Professor of Counseling and Educational Psychology at New Mexico State University and a member of the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California. She spoke about Indigenous Ways of Knowing (IWOK) as contrasted with western ways and practices. Each event was 1½ hours. The presenters spoke for approximately 30 minutes, allowing time for the students and audience members to ask questions.

**(2) HOW DID THE ACTIVITY RELATE TO A COURSE(S) AND/OR LEARNING OBJECTIVES?**

The speaker series was directly related to three courses: POLS 306: The Politics of Race and Ethnicity (Rajmaira), POLS 402: Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (McThomas), and POLS 492: Immigration Policy and Politics (McThomas). Links between the speaker presentations and course material were the subject of writing reflections and class discussions. This allowed students to not only make connections to the course material, but also to see how the questions and issues covered in class are being explored through current research. More generally, our students benefitted from exposure to the speakers' broad range of research topics and methodologies (qualitative, quantitative, indigenous, etc.), meeting top scholars in the field who are interested in issues of diversity and social justice, and seeing examples of academically rigorous research designs that answer difficult and contentious questions about the politics of race and ethnicity. This aided the Political Science program's learning outcomes of teaching our students how to participate as civically engaged members of society, analyze political and policy problems, and critically assess key issues of public policy and politics. The speaker series was publicized through the IRA Facebook page, various departments, and class announcements. As a result, students from other disciplines – such as Chicana/o Studies, History, and Sociology – also attended the events.



**(3) WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE STRENGTHS OF THE ACTIVITY?**

Students were exposed to emerging research and the questions that guided this research. The process of going from questions to practical research was incredibly valuable for students as they pursue their own research and career paths. The research complemented and/or contributed to course material with the added benefit of the presentations reinforcing the ideas and theories examined in course readings, discussions, and lectures. There was also the unanticipated strength that the students really related to the speakers and were inspired by their life choices and successes.

**(4) WHAT WOULD YOU SAY ARE/WERE THE ACTIVITY'S WEAKNESSES?**

There were two speakers at each event. We wanted the students to see the scholars interact and engage with each other's research. We also felt that it would be more respectful of student's time in that they would get the benefit of seeing two presentations during one time slot. However, this limited the day/times that the events were offered which proved to be inconvenient for some students' schedules.

**(5) HOW WOULD YOU IMPROVE THIS ACTIVITY FOR NEXT TIME?**

In order to address the above issue, we would need to offer more events – either by inviting more speakers or by having only one speaker present at each event. Also, to increase the engagement of the speakers with each other, it would good to guide the questions so as to encourage discussion of the similarities and differences.

**(6) WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM THE PROCESS?**

We learned the value of exposing students to an array of different perspectives and the benefit of having such events in addition to normal class activities. One of the strengths of the speaker series was the human element – that is, the students wanted to know about the scholars: why they were interested in this type of research, how they got to be professors, etc. This element is lost when students are only reading the scholars' articles/books.

**(7) WHAT ARE STUDENT RESPONSES TO THE ACTIVITY? ATTACH STUDENT EVALUATIONS OR ASSESSMENTS (IN ACCORDANCE WITH FERPA RESTRICTIONS YOU MUST REMOVE ALL PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE STUDENT INFORMATION)**

We assessed student reactions to the speaker series in two ways: we conducted a qualtrics survey and had students write response papers. The survey responses were overwhelmingly positive. Responses to questions were on a five point scale: strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor



disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree. In response to the statement “The Politics of Race and Ethnicity Speaker Series complemented or contributed to the course material,” 27% of respondents agreed and 73% strongly agreed. 64% of respondents strongly agreed with the statement “I was exposed to ideas and research that went beyond course material” with 29% agreeing. The remaining 7% chose the “neither agree nor disagree” option. All respondents found the speaker series to be interesting – with 60% strongly agreeing and 40% agreeing. We provided a section for additional comments or suggestions and received the following feedback:

*Amazing speakers, amazing experience, thank you for having this event!!*

*Keep it up!*

*It was amazing. Please allow us to keep these discussions going for students to engage experts of their fields.*

*These events are great!*

Examples of student reactions from response papers (no corrections were made to spelling or grammar):

*Overall this lecture has me excited for the upcoming series at the end of the month. I loved learning about each lecturer's reasons for being in their field and why they research the issues they do.*

*The speaker panel on April 20th was very inspiring to me personally. Hearing about Dr. Huerta's upbringing reminded me of how we grew up very similarly, both of us have immigrant parents. What caught my attention most was his journey into college and then his willingness to pursue his doctorate degree, something I am thinking about doing as well once I complete my years left here at CI. When speakers such as Dr. Huerta come give a presentation and in it they mention where they came from, it inspires me even more to achieve greater. Latley I feel I have been slacking in school because of many negative things happening to me all at once, but when I hear of other's success I get inspired and strive to do more.*

*Something that I found interesting about the speakers' talks on April 20th was Dr. Huerta's life journey. He explained his upbringing from a family of immigrants and how his father was part of the Bracero program. He described himself as an average student during high school and how his life changed when he went to college and later on pursued his masters and PhD. It is always incredible to me when I meet individuals who regardless of their economic background (specially those who are from a family of immigrants) are able to succeed in life and pave the way for future generations. Dr. Huerta talked about his children and how going to college was not a question of going or not but where they wanted to go. Stories like Dr. Huerta's always inspires me to work harder and listening to his talk on immigration was both interesting and moving.*



*The concurring theme of identity, directly correlated with our seminars in class about the alterations of identities, whether it be political ID changes, religion, the intersection of race and socio economic status, and the reminder that race and identity is not a natural concept, but socially constructed.*

*When he [Dr. Huerta] mentioned that his mom only achieved schooling to the third grade, I almost cried because my mother too only succeed to the third grade and then abandoned school for labor. The identities as first generation students pave the way for the generations to come after us.*

*Dr. Greyshield of the Washoe Tribe lectured about IWOK or Indigenous Ways of Knowing. I realized that I have been socialized to be reliant on modern and western ideas of health and politics.*

*Dr. Grayshield's talk was more about changing one's individual colonial mindset rather than political society as a whole. I would have loved to hear her thoughts on how we can incorporate IWOK into U.S. policy today.*

*Dr. Huerta spoke more directly about race and ethnicity as it pertains to the Latino/a community. He was a very passionate speaker and from listening to him I could tell that he shares strong ties between his personal background and his area of academic research now.*

**8) GIVE A SUMMARY OF EXPENSES FOR THE ACTIVITY.**

\$2,000 was spent on honoraria for the speakers. Parking fees and food were provided by the Department of Political Science.

**B. ON SEPARATE DOCUMENT, PLEASE ATTACH ATTENDEE LIST (PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE INFO REMOVED)**

**C. PLEASE INCLUDE UP TO 6 IMAGES AS ATTACHMENTS TO YOUR EMAIL SUBMISSION**