

Oral Defense Announcement

University of Missouri – St. Louis Graduate School

An oral examination in defense of the co-authored dissertation for the degree
Doctor of Education with an emphasis in Educational Practice

Kara Cisco

M.Ed. in Teaching and Learning, June 2010, DePaul University
B.A. in International Studies, August 2005, Loyola University Chicago

Aimee Snelling

M.Ed. in Education, May 2004, University of Missouri-St. Louis
B.A. in Arts in the Teaching of French, May 1995, University of Illinois

Ethnic Studies and White Identity

Date: March 23, 2024

Time: 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Place: Remote

Abstract

This dissertation addresses white individuals' experiences in ethnic studies courses and addresses concerns that there is too little research in this area. Drawing on the theoretical frameworks of Critical Whiteness Studies and Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis, this qualitative research study examines the lived experiences of white individuals who have taken at least one ethnic studies course in high school and explores the extent to which these experiences influence the development of their racial identity in the present. An extensive literature review includes the most recent research on Critical Whiteness Studies, white racial identity development, ethnic studies, and Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis. For this research project, six white participants who have taken an ethnic studies course within the past five years participated in in-depth, semi-structured interviews. An in-depth analysis of the data revealed four superordinate themes - critical consciousness, historical understanding, critical whiteness pedagogy, and white supremacy culture - each illuminating the participants' reflections on racial identity and the impact of the course. The study offers insights into the experiences of white students in ethnic studies courses, and emphasizes the importance of incorporating ethnic studies into secondary education. Recommendations and implications for educators, administrators, curriculum supervisors, policymakers, and future research are discussed.

Defense of Dissertation Committee

Dr. Thomasina Hassler, Ph.D.

Dr. Robert Good, Ph.D.

Dr. Shenita Mayes, Ph.D.