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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2021 Volume II: Race, Class, and Gender in Today's America

Exploring Belonging and Exclusion through Ethnography

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Do I fit in? Where do I belong? Why are some people excluded or dismissed? These are questions that teenagers ask themselves, as they explore their identities and try to understand how they fit into their communities and society. This unit provides an anthropological approach for helping students grapple with these questions. Students read *Renegade Dreams*, an ethnography of a gang in Chicago and the surrounding neighborhood, by anthropologist Laurence Ralph, as an entry point to issues of belonging and exclusion. They learn about sociological and anthropological theories of social categorization and the history of race-based exclusion in the United States, particularly in America's cities. Students also explore the resilience and dreams of people who have been marginalized based on race, socioeconomic status, or other markers, like incarceration or disability. The content instruction is supported through student inquiry, social and emotional learning, structured discussion, and mastery-based assessment. The goals of this unit are to help students investigate the ethics and nuances of ethnography, build empathy and self-awareness, and gain the academic language to discuss social issues today.

(Developed for IB Anthropology, grades 11-12; recommended for U. S. History, Sociology, and English Language Arts, grades 11-12)

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