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LOGIN | REGISTER

CLASSIFIEDS

SECTIONS

NEWS

SPORTS

OPINIONS

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

COMICS

WEB EXTRA

STUDENT BLOGS

FEATURES

AD DIRECTORY

AD INFO

ADVANCED SEARCH

ARCHIVES

CALENDAR

CAREERS

CONTACT US

DEVIL DEALS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MESSAGE BOARDS

RIDE BOARD

SDTV

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STUDENT MEDIA ALUMNI

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**Which is your favorite watering hole?**

- Four Peaks is perfect.
- Dos Gringos. Because I like trailer parks.
- Daisy Dukes cuz it's always dead.
- I'm Irish, if not by blood then by habit...so I drink at Casey Moore's.
- The Library. I prefer to objectify women as I get wasted.

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- ASU Directory
- ASU Cultural Events
- ASU Calendar
- ASU Alumni Assoc.
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**Race requirement for class dropped**  
**Course previously advertised for Native Americans only**  
 by [Amanda Gonser](#) published on Friday, October 7, 2005

Although offering segregated classes is against federal law, until recently ASU enrolled students in an English class based on race.

ASU has offered a first-year composition course designed specifically for Native American students for about eight years, said Robert Schibley, program manager for the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education.

The course took the normal English 101 and 102 curriculums and focused them on Native American topics. About 40 students are enrolled in two sections of the course this semester.

FIRE, a national first amendment watchdog group that focuses on the educational arena, contacted ASU after learning this semester that non-Native American students were not allowed to enroll in the classes.

"There is no problem making a class different," FIRE program manager Robert Schibley said. "The problem is restricting a class to Native American students alone."

The class was advertised as being for Native Americans only in instructor G. Lynn Nelson's bio on the English department's Web site, Schibley said.

FIRE contacted ASU about the class Sept. 23. The University quietly took the racial qualifier off the Web site, and as of Sept. 29, any student can enroll in the class.

But Nelson said any student could take the class, even though it was geared toward Native Americans and advertised only to Native American students at orientations.

About two exceptions have been made to allow students of other races take the course, but the situation rarely came up, he said.

Nelson said he came up with the class when Native American students asked him for help in their English 101 and 102 courses. He said students were confused with assignments and did not know about the topics they were supposed to write about.

Nelson said he figured that if Native American students could learn and write about subjects that are familiar to them, they would have a better educational experience.

"The best way to learn to write is to write about things you care about," Nelson said.

The class is set up with "writing assignments geared toward their own background, history and culture," he said.

The class has helped with Native American retention rates, Nelson said.

In 2000, ASU enrolled 726 Native American undergraduate students. Four years later, 126 Native Americans graduated with bachelor's degrees.

While that is only a 17 percent retention rate, it was higher than previous years. ASU awarded 112 degrees to Native American students in 2000 and 92 degrees in 1998.

"[Native Americans] haven't grown up in a white middle class, and coming here is like another planet," Nelson said explaining the high dropout rate.

ASU has previously had problems with FIRE. In 2002, the University dropped a racial restriction on a segregated Navajo history class.

Reach the reporter at [amanda.m.gonser@asu.edu](mailto:amanda.m.gonser@asu.edu).

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