LONG BEACH, CA, October 2015 – Analyzing how discrimination plays a role in students’ lives and in the Long Beach community, the ensemble of EPIC: #ethnocentricCRAP, takes the stage in a brand new work. Playing November 20 – December 6, director Anna Steers expects the show to engage, excite, and provoke audiences.

Devised in response to the nation’s most recent string of hate crimes and racial attacks, EPIC: #ethnocentricCRAP was conceived and created by undergraduate students. “It is more than a play, it is a movement centered on creating awareness of ethnocentrism,” said Steers. “This movement is an exploration of the human psyche, and an investigation into social psychology, showing how prejudice, fear, distrust, and conflict take hold when stress is introduced.” Beginning as an upper-division class last fall, students conducted social experiments on campus and moderated “story-sharing” circles to generate content for the final production.

Creating a devised work is a unique experience. Steers explained that “our goal is to unearth mankind’s fundamental tendency to other that which is foreign, by first looking into how our own prejudices are formed on both the conscious and unconscious level. EPIC: #ethnocentricCRAP speaks up against the silent observer and apathy, asking the difficult, necessary questions that are intrinsic tenets of this ancient dialogue.” The script is a living document that is constantly being revised and updated. Steers and the cast will continually work to incorporate new personal stories that will create the final script.

Anna Steers is in her sixth year in the Theatre Arts Department at CSULB. Her interest in community-inspired theatre for social change led to her teaching service projects in Cambodia, as well as developing original performance art with at-risk youth at Brava Theatre in San Francisco. Anna’s EPIC class has worked in collaboration with local Long Beach communities such as the VA Hospital, Boys and Girls Club, Women to Women Shelter, Flossie Lewis, and Arts and Services for the Disabled. She holds a Shakespeare intensive certificate from Oxford University, a BA in Performing Arts and Social Justice from University of San Francisco, and an MFA in Acting from California State University Long Beach.

EPIC: #ethnocentricCRAP opens Friday, November 20, and closes on Sunday, December 9. There will be no performances during CSULB Fall Break, November 22-30. Performances are Tuesday through Saturday at 8 pm with Saturday matinees at 2 pm on November 21 and December 5. There will be a preview performance on Thursday, November 19 at 8pm. This production is in the Studio Theatre on the CSULB Campus, accessible via West Campus Drive. Tickets are $17 for general admission and $14 for seniors and students (with valid ID). Parking is available next to the theater for $5. For tickets and information, please call (562) 985-5526 or visit calrep.org.

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