

Public Input Template–2020 Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum May 2019 Draft

(Download and use to provide specific recommendations)

Include the chapter of the model curriculum, the page number, and line number(s) to ensure that the California Department of Education and Instructional Quality Commission can reference the content of the document when reviewing your comments. Please email this document as a Word document to ethnicstudies@cde.ca.gov. You may contact Kenneth McDonald, Education Programs Consultant, at kmcdonal@cde.ca.gov with any questions regarding this template or the public input process.

Chapter of Model Curriculum	Your Name and Affiliation	Comment (include page and line numbers where applicable)
Asian American Studies Course Outline	Travis Seifman PhD, History (East Asia/Pacific), UC Santa Barbara '19 Special Researcher, University of Tokyo	p149, lines 3026-3028 – the suggestion to tailor classes to the demographics of the classroom is laudable. However, the opposite also holds true, and perhaps even more so – people should learn about the histories and experiences of <i>other</i> peoples, not only about their own, in order to gain greater empathy and understanding. Teaching Hmong & Vietnamese kids about Hmong & Vietnamese history isn't going to build a harmonious multiethnic society the way that teaching Black & Latino kids about Hmong, Vietnamese, Jewish, Hawaiian, and Okinawan history will.
Asian American Studies Course Outline		p153, line 3089 – misspelling. Should be Lili'uokalani.
Asian American Studies Course Outline		p162, line 3347 – “who is Asian American?” This could be spelled out even more clearly, and taken a bit further. “How does the grouping of Pacific Islanders in with people of South, Southeast, and East Asian descent serve to crowd out or obscure the vibrant and distinct histories of each of these different separate groups?”

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Asian American Studies Course Outline		p166, lines 3425-3426 – people of Melanesian, Micronesian, and Polynesian descent are not “of the Asian diaspora” or “Asian-American.” They are not Asian at all. They are a separate group.
Asian American Studies Course Outline		p171, lines 3524-3532 – Chinese-Americans have done a hell of a lot more in this country than just railroads and laundries. Focusing on this history only serves to perpetuate the stereotype. The same goes for the disproportionate focus on farm workers in other sections of the curriculum.
Asian American Studies Course Outline		<p>p165, lines 3414-3415 – instead of only presenting counter-arguments, the class should also discuss where the ideas in the article come from. Is there any validity at all to this content? Why would someone like Petersen (and countless other people at the time) believe what they did about Asian-Americans as a model minority? Are there discernable differences between Japanese-American and African-American attitudes (on average) regarding education, etc.? Are people 100% subject to the conditions around them (poverty, racism, etc.) or is there any degree at all to which individual agency and community culture plays a role?</p> <p>Simply providing counterarguments without a more complex and nuanced discussion teaches students to see things in a simplistic black-and-white sort of way, and to wholly dismiss as “racist” ideas which may or may not be, without truly engaging in them. This is not teaching critical thinking.</p>
Asian American Studies Course Outline		p191 – lines 3942-3953 – this is excellent. It is vital for students to learn about other cultures beyond just the “big name” ones we are always hearing about. Cambodian-Americans face particular challenges, as do Hmong Americans, and students need to understand that these people, their challenges, the discrimination against them, is real too.

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Asian American Studies Course Outline		While these units on Hmong and Cambodian Americans are good, I am surprised to not see anything at all about Korean, Japanese, and Okinawan-Americans. Japanese internment is of course an extremely prominent and important aspect of US history, and 100% absolutely deserves to be taught. Okinawan-Americans are also a very oft-overlooked group with a distinctive history of loss and suffering within Japan and discrimination even within the Japanese-American community, while their homeland – Okinawa – continues to suffer under ongoing US military occupation.
Pacific Islander Studies Course Outline		p288 – I am very glad to see this included here. Pacific Islanders are all too often buried as an asterisk or footnote in the broader category of AAPI, and the Pacific is easily the largest or most significant area of the world that receives the least attention: at UC Santa Barbara, we have courses on Asian, African, Middle Eastern, and Latin American history, and a disproportionate number of courses on US and European history, but Pacific history is very rarely if ever taught, even at the college level. I am glad to see it being covered here, at the high school level.
Pacific Islander Studies Course Outline		p288, lines 6203-6204 – why is Hawai'i not included in this list?
Pacific Islander Studies Course Outline		p292, lines 6301-6302 – this is so important. I am glad to see it being discussed.

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Pacific Islander Studies Course Outline		p292, lines 6308-6310 – I understand that this is meant to disaggregate Pacific Islanders from the umbrella term of AAPI. But this is also an opportunity to talk about how not everyone from Hawaii is “Hawaiian,” and what it means to be “local Japanese” or “local Chinese” in Hawaii – i.e. an Asian-American from the Pacific Islands, but not a “Pacific Islander.”
Pacific Islander Studies Course Outline		p296, line 6416 – “his” should be changed to “her.” Kumu Hina uses she/her pronouns.
Pacific Islander Studies Course Outline		<p>p296, line 6422 – another resource which could be quite good is the Offshore Podcast “postcard” episode on Christianity in Guam, talking about how people in Guam today see Christianity as a fundamental part of their identity and not as something foreign to be excised as part of decolonization efforts: https://www.offshorepodcast.org/episodes/confronting-faith/</p> <p>Other episodes of Offshore Podcast are also excellent.</p>

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<p>Pacific Islander Studies Course Outline</p>		<p>Overall, this is a good start. But there is so much more that could be covered. Some key themes include:</p> <p>1) The overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawai'i, why it was illegal and remains so today, how and why it was done, and how American ideals of democracy, absence of racial discrimination, and capitalism (i.e. what's good for business is good for the economy, regardless of whether the people themselves are better off) contributed to the overthrow. Two good books for teachers or curriculum writers to read on this are <i>To Steal a Kingdom</i> by Michael Dougherty and <i>Dismembering Lāhui</i> by Jon Osorio.</p> <p>2) History of assimilation efforts by US government and education systems, outlawing Native languages; and the struggles and successes of the revival of Native languages and cultures today.</p> <p>3) The curriculum already mentions that people in American Samoa don't get US citizenship by birth. This should be expanded upon. What are the fuller ramifications of this? And the fuller ramifications of the fact that a US citizen registered to vote in California (for example) can move almost anywhere in the world and can still vote by mail from London or Tokyo or anywhere, but that very same US citizen, if he officially moves to a Pacific territory, loses his right to vote entirely.</p> <p>4) Discussion of what it means to be an indigenous nation and to have rights as a nation, more akin to the situation of Native American nations than a racial or ethnic group – in certain important respects. Have students consider key sections from the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN DRIP). What does self-determination for indigenous peoples mean? What is the purpose behind plebiscite votes or referenda on sovereignty / independence / autonomy being limited to those of Chamorro (Guamanian) or Hawaiian descent? What is the purpose behind Kamehameha Schools granting preference to students of Hawaiian descent? Why does the Supreme Court time and time again shut down such limited elections and special preference</p>
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		<p>situations as “racial discrimination,” and why is it important to understand the difference between an indigenous people’s rights as a people, as a nation, and on the other hand consideration of them as a racial or ethnic group?</p> <p>For context, have students consider the racial makeup of the Hawaiian Kingdom, which included many people of British, (white) American, and East Asian descent, but included them as full citizens (subjects) of the kingdom so long as they swore an oath of loyalty to the kingdom. Their descendants are also included in such votes, and in Kamehameha Schools, regardless of ethnic/racial background.</p>