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Sent: Wednesday, September 30, 2020 10:29 PM

To: Ethnic Studies

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Subject: [EXTERNAL] Unit 6 is problematic for so many reasons

The language in the explanatory paragraph for Unit 6 is divisive at best but mostly it's inconsiderate. Not only does the assertion that some non-Anglo immigrants somehow gained entrance to a "white club" encourage resentment, it dismisses the very real experience of difference felt by many. It is a simplified argument that ignores a more nuanced discussion about the distinction between race and social status. A cursory Google search of "whiteness" "jewish" and "Irish" produced a myriad of articles calling into question the entire thesis of the unit. Perhaps a better lesson would be a discussion of the ways in which laws, census boxes, and simple lists on forms prioritize "formal whiteness" and marginalize those who would find themselves at the edges of the proscribed categories whether because of religion or custom.

Also, not all Arab-Americans are muslims. If the intent, for a lesson about Arab-Americans, was to shed light on anti-muslim sentiment and combat the stereotypical depiction as "terrorist" in media, then why not shed a broader light on bigotry? Include anti-semitism, anti-catholicism (especially in politics), jingoism, and the rhetoric that allows these ideas to propagate in society.

"Unit 6: Irish and Jewish Americans: Redefining White and American

We will examine the differences between the reception of Jewish and Irish immigrants to what it means to be Jewish and Irish now in the twenty first century. We will discuss parallels between language used to describe Irish and Jewish immigrants to those used in the early years of the United States to describe Native Americans. Students will investigate labor disputes and how they were ended and how that relates to the redefining of white. Posing questions on who gets to decide those that get to join the 'club' and why. Students will write a paper detailing certain events in American history that have led to Jewish and Irish Americans gaining racial privilege. They will be asked to think critically about why and who is allowing this evolution in white identity and how this shift is affecting the identity of Irish and Jewish Americans."