

**From:** Zachary King

**Sent:** Thursday, November 12, 2020 9:39 AM

**To:** Ethnic Studies

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Sociologist writing to support the inclusion of Arab-Americans in Ethnic Studies

Dear members of the Instructional Quality Commission,

I'm an instructor of sociology and PhD student at UCSB, writing to support the request of many individuals and organizations to include Arab-Americans within the Ethnic Studies curriculum - **and in particular the curriculum originally submitted by the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum advisory committee, with the four sample lessons from that model that I've attached to this email.** Given the US' ongoing interventions in the Middle East, and the subsequent nationalistic attacks against Arab-American populations in the United States, it is negligent to leave out this crucial subject. I will always remember that in the days after September 11th, 2001, I had a brilliant and brave 7th grade Social Studies teacher who took it upon himself to teach us about the diversity of Middle Eastern cultures and the distinctions between violent religious fundamentalists and the vast majority of Muslims and Arabs who were simply people like the rest of us. This experience helped me get out from under a simmering nationalist anger and fear, and propelled me into my academic studies.

I hope that this experience can be instituted by your efforts, so it is not left to chance to save students from the risks of falling into nationalist bigotry. We need specific cultural and historical knowledge, rooted in liberatory anti-racist frames, to work against these cultural poisons in a time when democracy itself and all we hold dear is threatened by forces both foreign and domestic.

Including Arab-American studies, and all ethnic studies, in the curriculum is, in my view, necessary to the fulfillment of the oath that all employees of the State take to defend the Constitution.

In this same interest, in a time of rising anti-semitism, I want to be another voice encouraging an explicit focus on the Jewish experience and the historical development and problems of anti-semitism as essential features of our state and national curricula. However, this must not privilege the state of Israel as a government above criticism, and it must not dangerously conflate anti-semitism with criticism of the Israeli government.

Thank you very much for your time.

Zachary King

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Zachary T. King

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