

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)
General, Chapter 1	Dr. Peter La Chapelle, History Professor, former Smithsonian Post-Doctoral fellow, tenured faculty Nevada State College, former Cal State instructor	<p>The lack of anything related to Jews and the history of antisemitism in the proposed curriculum is extremely alarming and suggests a political spin that seeks to erase the narrative of one of the most persecuted ethnic, cultural and religious groups in the history of world from students' understanding. The curriculum (p. 1-3) includes absolutely no content, material, nor instruction on Jews or antisemitism during a period of extremely heightened antisemitism when such a curriculum should be advancing messages of cultural understanding of the rich cultural, ethnic, and racial diversity of Jews and the Jewish experience (Mizrahi, Askenazi, Ethiopian, Bukarhi, Sephardic, Cochin, Kaifeng, etc.) and about the history of antisemitism and the longstanding persecution and genocide of Jews (classic antisemitism in the West and in the Middle East and North Africa, the Holocaust, various pogroms in Europe and MENA, the Leo Frank trial, the Tree of Life mass shooting, Dreyfus, the German-American Bund Rally in Madison Square Garden, the Farhud, Henry Ford and <i>Dearborn Independent</i>, the Nation of Islam, etc.) The curriculum furthermore lacks stories about inspirational Christian and Muslim leaders who have challenged antisemitism and promoted tolerance within their communities or where their given religious tradition is hegemonic.</p> <p>Nearly every recent indicator and study of antisemitism (ADL, FBI, Kantor Center, etc.) suggests recent, record levels of increase in antisemitism, hostility toward Jews, and acts of violence against of Jews in both the United States and worldwide. Indeed Jews are second only to the LGBTQT community in being the targets of hate crimes in the</p>

Public Input Template–2020 Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Page 2 of 3

		<p>United States. Antisemitism has also made a noted appearance in political movements ranging from the white nationalist and neofascist Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville to the rightwing populism of some supporters of figures such as Donald Trump and Victor Orban to the leftwing Momentum and Jeremy Corbyn wing of the UK Labour Party. Indeed given that leading figures such as Eric K. Ward (2017) have identified how antisemitism has acted as a central force in animating white nationalism and the resultant violence against Jews and people of color, it seems strange that this curriculum is so far behind the mark in recognizing and exploring these connections.</p> <p>It is simply unconscionable and unethical that curriculum lacks even a snapshot of the history of Jews nor antisemitism as a force in society.</p>
Chapter 2	“	<p>Though quite fragmentary and incomplete, pp. 233-245 contain many contested, misleading, and biased statements regarding the history of the Middle East and Israel. Like other religious minorities in MENA, Jews of the Middle East have, with very few exceptions, not identified as “Arabs” (p. 241) especially given the history of Arab colonialism and political, linguistic, and religious hegemony in the region which generally resulted in them living a subordinate status under Arab dominant majorities, the Ottoman Empire, and the states that arose in concordance with the rise of Arab nationalism (Nisan 2002). Furthermore, this highly dogmatic, overly-politicized, and one-sided portion of the sample course models oversimplifies the Arab-Israeli conflict by failing to even briefly explain the 3,000 history of Jewish connections to Jerusalem and by failing to examine antisemitism in a balanced historical way as a phenomenon with these societies, as well as the fact that a majority of contemporary Israelis are actually descendants of Middle Eastern and North African Jews. Beyond that, at least three of the sample topics (Direct Action Front for Palestine and Black Lives Matter, Call to Boycott, Divest, and Sanction Israel, Comparative Border Studies: Palestine and Mexico) suggest the presence of a one-sided non-academic polemicized vision as well comparisons that are rooted in superficial and ahistorical analyses of the tragic conflict between Israelis and Palestinians and notions that lead to stereotyping and prejudices among students who are not particularly informed. Indeed given the fact that the overwhelming preponderance of violence in the region over the last century has involved actors</p>

Public Input Template–2020 Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Page 3 of 3

		<p>other than Israelis or Jews, it seems like there is almost a myopic obsession on Israeli-Palestinian conflict over other conflicts and struggles for freedom. Rather than presenting students with the complexity needed to fully understand the Arab-Israeli conflict and mistakes on both sides in terms of negotiating peace, the continual presence of violence and a culture of violence, nor the extent to which antisemitism throughout the region helps fuel the conflict, the sample course models present students with slogan suitable for political button, but not suitable for creating a new generation of American leaders who can empathize and actually help bring about peace in the region.</p>
--	--	--

California Department of Education, June 2019