

**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](mailto:ethnicstudies@cde.ca.gov). You may contact Kenneth McDonald, Education Programs Consultant, at [kmcdonal@cde.ca.gov](mailto: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)
Exclusion of Jews	Yael Zur	<p><b>(Missing from curriculum)</b></p> <p>As stated by the California DOE, “the curriculum is written for educators or community members seeking guidance in developing a local high school ethnic studies program that <b>reflects the pupil demographics in their communities</b>”. Per the most recent U.S. Census estimates, there are roughly 8,000,000 to 10,000,000 million Americans that identify as Jewish which is 1.7% -2.6% of the total U.S. Population. For a curriculum that is supposed to touch on the many demographics of the students, this curriculum outline has no representation of the Jewish people and their narrative.</p>
Glossary	Yael Zur	<p><b>(Page 2, Lines 30-40)</b></p> <p>In the glossary of the curriculum, Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) is defined uncritically as a positive social movement seeking "freedom". Teachers adopting this perspective would not only be misinforming Californian students regarding the organization's objectives, they would also be ignoring the movement's antisemitism and advocating for a radical political position.</p> <p>The objectives of BDS are unfortunately much more malicious than the glossary would claim. The founders and thought leaders of BDS have repeatedly declared that the main aim of BDS is the dissolution of the state of Israel. Omar Barghouti, co-founder of BDS, has asserted that Israel should become Palestine, unequivocally rejecting Jewish self-determination. Ironically, self-determination is also featured in the glossary as an important subject. The curriculum betrays its advocacy for that right by supporting</p>

		<p>an organization that actively seeks to deny it to another. Advancing BDS in the classroom is to further that reprehensible goal.</p> <p>The denial of a basic right to Jewish people is not the only problematic characteristic of BDS. The organization has proven time and time again to be comfortable with antisemitism. BDS activists routinely use classic anti-Semitic tropes, materials, and expressions of hatred. While BDS claims to be against antisemitism, it has done nothing to address to virulent racism, bigotry, and Jew-hatred within its ranks. On the contrary, it has embraced all allies, regardless of their violations of the very principles the California Curriculum professes to impart. It is for all these reasons, and more, that Democratic Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi condemned BDS as an antisemitic organization. For all the good that the department of education wishes to instill in its students, teaching BDS in schools will also be implanting the seeds of antisemitism.</p> <p>Lastly, instructing on BDS as detailed in the glossary of the Ethnic Studies Curriculum forces upon students a radical political position. BDS seeks to strong-arm a foreign liberal democratic state into adopting policies. Such a controversial political position should not be taught lightly to children without showing the other side of the policy debate. Regardless of the political leanings of a teacher, their lessons should be objective in dealing with political issues. Presenting BDS in a completely uncritical fashion is akin to political indoctrination.</p> <p>Including BDS as an instrumental feature of the curriculum will not teach appreciation of ethnicity, but the denial of rights, antisemitism, and political radicalism.</p>
<b>Glossary</b>	Yael Zur	<p><b>(Page 2, Lines 31)</b></p> <p>In its lionization of the BDS organization, the glossary engages in the canard that Israel is an apartheid state. This assertion, even in the context of BDS' objective, is presented uncritically. Any teacher basing lessons and definitions based on this line will likely do the same. Such a thing would be factual. Israel is not an apartheid state. Apartheid was an institutionalized system of racial segregation in service of oppression. In Apartheid South Africa, non-whites could not hold political office and were physically separated from whites in all public spaces. In Israel, all citizens regardless of ethnicity or religion can hold office. All Israeli citizens, of which 20% are Arabs, can be found in public malls, buses, restaurants, and more. In the Disputed Territories, it is likewise not factual to call the situation "apartheid conditions". The condition is very complex, but Israeli citizens are under Israel's jurisdiction, and Palestinians are subject to the Palestinian Authority. The complexity and security concerns of the dispute make the situation less than optimal, but to present life there as anything like the inhumane conditions of Apartheid South Africa</p>

		does a disservice not only to the history of that sad chapter, but also harms the pursuit of balanced education.
<b>Glossary</b>	Yael Zur	<p><b>(Page 10, Lines 248-250)</b></p> <p>When explaining the concept of "liberation", one of the examples of a movement for liberation is BDS. It is disturbing that there seems to be such an effort in the curriculum to play up such a controversial organization. According to BDS co-founder Omar Barghouti, the objective is one state in which Jews are forced to become a minority. A true liberation movement would not seek to dispossess a nation of their expression of self-determination. Further, Arabs in Israel enjoy all the rights of any other citizen, and are hardly require "liberation". Conflating BDS with liberation whitewashes the problematic nature of the concept.</p>
<b>Chapter 2:</b> <b>Sample Course Models</b> Introduction to Ethnic Studies Course Outline	Yael Zur	<p><b>(Page 35, Lines 676-684)</b></p> <p>Included in a list of potential social movements for teachers to review in class, BDS is listed shoulder to shoulder with LGBTQ rights and Climate Change. This appears to canonize BDS as an indisputably legitimate organization. This is far from the truth, as BDS is widely seen as a problematic political organization, fraught with antisemitism, justification of terror, and the appropriation of other social justice causes. To put BDS alongside these other groups is to trick students in how BDS should be perceived.</p>
<b>Chapter 2:</b> <b>Sample Course Models</b> African American Studies Course Outline	Yael Zur	<p><b>(Page 48, Lines 669-670)</b></p> <p>Listed amongst sample topics to discuss, the curriculum mentions African American Spiritual and Religious Traditions, one of those worth discussing being "National of Islam". It is of great concern that this may be a spelling error, and the movement that is suggested is actually "Nation of Islam". Nation of Islam is led by Louis Farrakhan, a notorious antisemite who once referred to Jews as "termites", called Judaism a "gutter religion", and claimed that Jews and Zionists took part in the 9/11 terrorist attacks. It is unacceptable for an organization led by such an unabashed bigot to be celebrated in the classroom.</p>
<b>Chapter 2:</b> <b>Sample Course</b> Arab American Studies Course Outline	Yael Zur	<p><b>Page 234, Lines 4956-4958</b></p> <p>In a section on suggested topics of discussion, there is a worrying attempt to conflate complex Levantine issues with American issues. The Americanization of the issues between Palestinians and Israel as being the same as the relations of America to its black citizens or the problem of borders is intellectually dishonest. The BLM movement's grievance about police brutality is incomparable to a region wracked with terrorism. Likewise, illegal immigration is not comparable with infiltration from Gaza, in which terrorism is often the goal. Conflating these issues, along with the continued advertisement of BDS as an important topic, is a gross misrepresentation of the complexities of the subject. This can only result in</p>

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Page 4 of 5

		dehumanization of Israelis in the classroom, and could result in the targeting of Jewish and Zionist students in the classroom by those with strong feelings on BLM and immigration.
<b>Chapter 2:</b> <b>Sample Course</b> Arab American Studies Course Outline	Yael Zur	<b>(Page 236, Lines 4991-4993; 241 Lines 5138-5139)</b>  Israel is repeatedly connected with Palestine throughout the document. This seems to imply that the terms and territory can interchangeably called by either terms. This is not the case. Israel is a sovereign state, and implying that its internationally recognized territory could in anyway be considered still by the name of the British Mandate is offensive to Jews, Israelis, and Zionists the world over. The state of Israel is not called as it is by subjective opinion, it is a fact, and it is unacceptable to teach students otherwise.
<b>Chapter 2:</b> <b>Sample Course</b> Arab American Studies Course Outline	Yael Zur	<b>(Page 237, Lines 5030-5031; Page 242 Lines 5158-5159)</b>  The curriculum appears to push educators to adopt a simple Nakba narrative, which presents Palestinians only as victims of expulsion rather than willing participants in warfare. Framing the results of Israel's war of independence as resulting in "dispossession" is highly contentious, as it implies Israel as the dispossessor. In reality, according to historian Benny Morris, the vast majority of flight from the Levant was due to "the flail of war". That is, that people fled of their own accord, to avoid getting caught in the fighting. The choices of rhetoric suggest that this curriculum may prompt ahistoricity, and California students deserve historical accurate education.
<b>Palestinian anti-zionist rap song</b>	Yael Zur	<b>(Somos Sur, Pages 264-270)</b>  In Sample Lesson 2, Israel is brought up in song "Somos Sur" as part of the Hip-hop as Resistance chapter in the curriculum, once again adopting the Nakba narrative. This song incites resistance against Israel, which can result in dehumanization of Israelis in the classroom, and could result in the targeting of Jewish and Zionist students in the classroom.
<b>Chapter 2:</b> <b>Arab American Studies Course Outline</b>	Yael Zur	<b>(Page 234 of 300 - Line 4970)</b>  Potential Significant Figures to Cover: Linda Sarsour  Linda Sarsour has consistently used her hatred for Jews and the State of Israel to divide Americans. In October of 2012, Sarsour tweeted out "Nothing is creepier than Zionism". In March of 2011, Sarsour is on the record inciting violence against other females who don't share her viewpoints. Linda Sarsour advocates for the BDS movement – which is a movement that targets only one country, Israel – a majority Jewish country. Linda Sarsour's role model is Dr. Louis Farrakhan who preaches hatred for Israel and Jewish people. Recently, he said "I'm not an Anti-Semite, I'm Anti-Termite". In recent speeches, he's

		referred to Jews as “Satanic” and that “Jews control everything and everybody”. Finally, Dr. Farrkahan thinks Adolph Hilter “was a very great man”. These examples are some of the many that display how Linda Sarsour is an unfit person to present to students as a role model and leader of social change.
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