

**From:** robert  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 14, 2019 12:38 PM  
**To:** Ethnic Studies  
**Subject:** Comment on Ethnic Studies Curriculum

To the committee,

Herewith are my comments on the proposed ethnic studies curriculum and items to which I object. I agree that there is a need for programs that help students to understand the different groups within California in order to promote greater understanding. But I think the current draft of the curriculum fails to give a full picture of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, fails to treat the issue of anti-Semitism and generally favors an anti-colonial/anti-capitalist interpretation of these issues that is likely to inflame rather than inform students.

I urge you to consider my comments below when redrafting the curriculum.

Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Robert Sax

Chapter of Model Curriculum	Your Name and Affiliation	Comment (include page and line numbers where applicable)
General Arab Studies	Robert Sax Private citizen, Los Angeles	"Arab Studies" is underinclusive - As written, there are references that fail to balance, or even acknowledge perspectives, outside of the Arabian-centric view of Islam. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>No reference to or exploration of Turkish or Shiite culture, influences or identities is proposed.</li><li>No references to interactions between Muslim and non-Muslim cultures in the region and contributions/struggles and diasporas that came from them (e.g. Druze, Coptic Christians, Armenian, Yazidi, Mizrahi/Sephardic Jews) is included.</li><li>No reference to or exploration of Shiite or other non-Arab Muslim culture, influences or identities (Iran/Iraq Afghanistan/Pakistan, Kurdistan) included.</li></ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>History of Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia</li> </ul>
Page 35		Remove reference to BDS
Page 234		Remove: Direct Action Front for Palestine Call to Boycott Divest and Sanction Israel Comparative Border Studies: Palestine and Mexico
Page 234		Add: Study of narratives and history of Mizrahi/Sephardic Jews and Palestinians Historic cross-cultural cooperation and conflict in the Middle East including Sunni-Shia, Druze, Yazidi, Turkish, Copt and Jewish communities Influences of Seljuk and Ottoman Empires on the Middle East History of Zionism history of Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia in the United States
Page 235		Add historical figures of Sephardic and Mizrahi descent: FASHION - David Sassoon, ENTERTAINMENT - Max Azria, Hank Azaria Natalie Portman, Haim Saban, Jerry Seinfeld (parents were Syrian Jews), PHILOSOPHY- Maimonides, Baruch Spinoza, JOURNALISM - John Berman (CNN), POETRY- Emma Lazarus, GOVERNMENT Haym Solomon (First President of Continental Congress), Justice Benjamin Cardozo, Former Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, President UN Administrative Tribunal President Meir Gabay, BUSINESS Haim Saban, Eli Harari (founder of SanDisk),
GENERAL		<p>While the Palestinian experience and narrative has validity, so does the Israeli narrative, and while they may conflict, they can both be true and valid at the same time. Endorsing or validating BDS, or the Palestinian viewpoint alone without a larger context of both narratives creates a one-sided viewpoint that fails to acknowledge the Jewish community's struggle for self-determination and re-establishment of a homeland.</p> <p>Failing to acknowledge the broad and diverse set of cultures and religions in the Middle East and their interactions with each other, as well as with powers outside of the region creates a risk of allowing Anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and discrimination against each of these cultures into the curriculum.</p>
GENERAL		Anti-Semitism is still a very real issue in this country, it should be included on the list of other discriminatory viewpoints that should be addressed in this curriculum, as should Jews generally, who make up 2% of the state population and have a history of being discriminated against through quotas, restrictive covenants and other exclusionary policies.
GENERAL		I agree that there is a need for programs that help students to understand the different groups within California in order to promote greater understanding. But I think the current draft of the curriculum fails to give a full picture of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, fails to treat the issue of anti-Semitism and generally favors an anti-colonial/anti-capitalist interpretation of these issues that is likely to inflame rather than inform students.

