

From: Jonah Tauber
Sent: Friday, November 13, 2020 5:16 PM
To: Ethnic Studies <EthnicStudies@cde.ca.gov>; [emails redacted]
Cc: [emails redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public comment on Ethnic Studies curriculum

Hello Instructional Quality Commission,

My name is Jonah Tauber and I am a Jewish student and educator at UC Berkeley and I am writing in support of the demands of the Arab American Resource Center about making sure the principles of Ethnic Studies are applied to Arab American Studies within California curriculum, specifically when it comes to material on Palestine. Arab American Studies must be included within Asian American Studies, it must be given significant space in the curriculum, and Palestine must be taught about. To ensure this, there must be a return to the lesson plan originally submitted to the California Department of Education.

I have studied as well as taught and developed curriculum for courses on both Palestine and antisemitism at my university and at my synagogue, and with this background I find the proposed revisions to the original Arab American Studies appalling. Palestine is an area that has a very important place in global politics and is a place from which many Californian students hail from. Their history must be taught without minced words. Adhering to the anti-racist and decolonial principles of Ethnic Studies is necessary to accomplish this. The proposed changes will do the exact opposite by erasing Palestinian history and reality and promoting a definition of antisemitism (the one put forward by the IHRA) that is not only inaccurate, but goes so far as to conflate opposition to the colonial ideology and project of Zionism with antisemitism. By that horrific definition, I, a descendant of Holocaust victims and survivors and educator about antisemitism, am myself an antisemite! I hope you understand how deeply offensive and hurtful that is. These subjects are hugely important, and must be taught correctly and in a justice-oriented way.

Additionally, I fully support ensuring that Pacific Islander Studies content includes coverage of the complexity and diversity of the Pacific alongside critiques of power and systems of oppression as seen in the work of Epeli Hau'ofa, Lisa Kahaleole Hall, and Kerri Ann Borja's UN Testimony on the Question of Guam. I hope you will all approve line edits 384, 385, 386, 387, and 388, which serve to outline the inclusion of vital PI studies resources, discussion questions, and distinctions between the regions of Oceania into the ESMC.

Sincerely,
Jonah Tauber