

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)
1	Hillel Smith, educator	P.1, I.7, 8: I have never seen “hxrstory” in actual academic literature, only as a punchline in jokes about the over-PC correction of the left today. Using a word like this instantly connotes a political leaning of the entire curriculum in a way that may turn off students (and their parents) who are not already on board.
1	Hillel Smith, educator	P.2, I.29: Where is antisemitism on this list? Marked by genocide internationally, and domestically by quotas, redlining, discrimination, and brutal violence, oppression as relates to Jews is impossible to deny, and its omission from this list is intolerable.
1	Hillel Smith, educator	P.3, I.54: Shouldn’t the goal be to teach all students about all peoples, in order to foster greater understanding, rather than cater to particular demographics? That seems to be the takeaway from line 168, and elsewhere in this set of documents. If one group does not learn about other groups but only about themselves, would the program yield anything beyond self-empowerment?
2	Hillel Smith, educator	P.4: The curriculum is wildly inconsistent with regard to what words are defined in footnotes and which in the glossary. Misogynoir is defined in the footnotes, while others like hxrstory are defined in the glossary.

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2	Hillel Smith, educator	P.26: It is strange that only Roger’s bio lists the names of his high school and intended college. Is the word “University” intended to convey privilege? Isn’t it a form of erasure that the other students don’t have the names of their high schools mentioned? Also note that of the three current (and one former) schools named “University High School” in California, all are public schools.
2	Hillel Smith, educator	P.35: line 684, BDS is the only movement listed that is not a movement to improve the lives of people in America, and as such is a problematic outlier here. As a movement formed to confront oppression in a foreign state, it should not be listed outside the context of similar movements like Free Tibet or the Soviet Jewry Movements.
2	Hillel Smith, educator	P.40: This list of migrations would be enriched by the addition of Jewish immigrants, large numbers of whom came to the United States in the 1890-1920 period escaping persecution and poverty in Eastern Europe, then in 1930-1950 before and after the Holocaust from both Europe and the Arab world (North Africa and the Middle East), and most recently in 1980-1990 fleeing turmoil and persecution in Iran and the former USSR. These immigrant communities faced discrimination in hiring, education, and housing, as they were not considered white, lived in ethnic enclaves marked by use of indigenous languages, traditions, and foodways, and transformed the regions they inhabited. These experiences led them to create and join social movements like workers’ rights, and create strong bonds in accompliceship with other oppressed groups, as exemplified by the Freedom Riders and Abner Mikva (previously mentioned in Chapter 1, p18, line 445), among others.
2	Hillel Smith, educator	P.233: Rather than foster a society where groups are inspired to learn about each other’s struggles, the mentions of solidarity with Palestine to the exclusion of any other narrative do not serve to advance constructive dialog on the issues. Moreover, while solidarity with Palestine may be a feature of the Arab-American community, current geopolitics in the Middle East is not relevant to a curriculum “designed to be an introduction to the socio-political construction of <i>[minority] American identity in the United States</i> ” (to paraphrase p.149, l.3029)

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2	Hillel Smith, educator	P.234, I.4956: In contrast to rich and broad general topics like “Race and the Arab-American Experience,” “Direct Action Front for Palestine and Black Lives Matter” is oddly specific and is out of place on this list. As this overlap is barely even found on Google, it appears to have been lifted solely from Amin Husain’s NYU syllabus.
2	Hillel Smith, educator	P.234, I.4957: As mentioned earlier, this is the sole issue I have seen in this entire curriculum that deals with political action taken against foreign governments, and is thus not relevant to discussion of minority-American identity.
2	Hillel Smith, educator	P.234, I.4957: “Comparative Border Studies: Palestine and Mexico” compares an issue affecting current potential students, their families, and neighbors (immigrants from Mexico dealing with issues relating to migration to the US) with a current geopolitical issue in which the United States is not a party.
2	Hillel Smith, educator	P.235, I.4974. I hope these “Potential Significant Figures to Cover” are covered with regard to their mixed legacies. In particular, I will point out Helen Thomas, who had a storied and laudable career as a journalist, before offensive comments led to the loss of her job. It is difficult to talk about the history of forced migration, genocide, and offensive language without mentioning the history of the Jews, and her assertion that Jews should “go home” to countries that slaughtered them by the millions needs to be discussed in that context.
2	Hillel Smith, educator	P.240 I.5114: The farm workers movement was also aided by Jewish leaders, including Rabbi Joseph Glaser, Jerry Cohen, Rita Semel, Marshall Ganz, Marc Grossman, and many others. They should be added to this list, as to consider them as white in the context of this sentence would be doing a disservice to the motivations behind their activism.
2	Hillel Smith, educator	P.242 I.5159. “The 1948 Palestine War” is listed as the definition for the “Nakba” when it should be the other way around, with “Nakba” listed alongside “War of Independence” as two names for this war, without the curriculum choosing a side in a foreign, complex, and controversial conflict.

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