

**From:** Emily Rich Camras

**Sent:** Tuesday, September 29, 2020 2:15 PM

**To:** Ethnic Studies

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Dear Members of the Instructional Quality Commission:

I write to express my concern regarding the revised Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC) released on July 31, 2020.

I request the removal of overt antisemitism and extreme and gratuitous anti-Israel bias from the revised ESMC draft.

I recommend the curriculum include a definition of antisemitism. The U.S. State Department has used this definition since 2010, along with the European Union and others. The definition may be found at: [www.state.gov/defining-anti-semitism](https://www.state.gov/defining-anti-semitism).

Moreover, I suggest that the ESMC recognize that the American Jewish community includes people of color and that many Jewish Americans trace their family roots to the Middle East and North Africa. For example, I draw your attention to a suggested lesson plan entitled "Irish and Jewish Americans: Redefining White and American." The title and description give the impression that American Jews are uniformly of European descent and as such have all attained "white identity" and "racial privilege," to quote the lesson plan. It is an ironic conclusion as white supremacists explicitly reject the "whiteness" of any Jew. Indeed, their hate-filled worldview sees Jews as a critical player in the destruction of the "white race." Failing to acknowledge the ethnic diversity of the Jewish community will mislead students about the complexity of contemporary Jewish identity and the hatred targeting Jews.

At the college and university level, ethnic studies and related courses are often taught from a specific political point of view or frame of reference. In K-12 education it is imperative that students are exposed to multiple perspectives, taught to think critically and form their own opinions on these and other issues. Such guidance is a useful tool in addressing this complex subject.

I look forward to following the ESMC review process and providing additional comments.

Sincerely,

Emily Camras