

Gill, Tracy L

Fri, 1 Feb 2019 20:36:03 +0000

To: Sacco, Vicki K

Cc: Kinoshita, Kyle D, Marquita Prinzing

RE: Ethnic Studies

Vicki,

Thank you for your email.

The Ethnic Studies program centers and focuses on race and racialized experiences. We take an intersectional approach to every aspect of identity. Many people experience bias, prejudice, and violence that is not directly related to, or as a result of, their race. People who are female, gay, trans, disabled, undocumented, non-English speaking, Jewish, Muslim, etc, all experience discrimination in some form. People of color who also identify as any one, or more, of these identities have a different experience altogether. In addressing such types of oppression, ethnic studies would critically engage with how race is a factor in that oppression.

As a result, input from people and communities of color has been prioritized. In studying Judaism, we would be interested in centering Jewish people of color and how their religious, ethnic, and racial identities intersect. We would also critically analyze how white Jewish people benefit from systems of oppression that disenfranchise all people of color. I know there is some question about the “race” of American Jews, however, data show that Jewish Americans benefit from current systems of power and, for the most part, have access to and control of systemic power. For these reasons, Judaism would not be a central topic in an ethnic studies program. Here is a link to an article in The Atlantic that supports this:
<https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/12/are-jews-white/509453/>.

Additionally, Jewish history of oppression and resistance is a major focus in the current Eurocentric narratives of history. Students, at least in our district, still have access to history of things like The Holocaust and Jewish narratives, like that of Anne Frank. The history textbooks recently adopted by Seattle Public Schools contain entire chapters of Jewish history. Students of color do not have this privilege.

Macklemore has not been a “huge contributor” to ethnic studies. He endorsed the NAACP resolution and purchased learning materials for educators. He has done nothing, personally, to contribute to the body of work being produced for the ethnic studies program. I have read about the accusations against Macklemore and am open to learning more about that perspective, as I have seen one accusation and no other instances or insinuations of anti-Semitism on his part. In fact, there is a large body of evidence of his philanthropic work and advocacy for LGBTQ rights and anti-racism.

I am always available to discuss this further.

Thanks for reaching out.

Tracy

From: Sacco, Vicki K [REDACTED] >
Sent: Friday, February 1, 2019 12:02 PM
To: Gill, Tracy L [REDACTED] >
Subject: Ethnic Studies

Hello,

Can you please advise me as to whether the Jewish community was included in the ethnic studies development? Were any Jewish organizations contacted for input? As I'm sure you know, the Jewish community faces a great deal of bias, prejudice and violence. In fact, in 2006 there was a shooting of 6 women at the Seattle Jewish Federation in downtown Seattle leading to one death.

I am also following up on the inclusion of Macklemore as a huge contributor to the ethnic studies work when he was accused of anti-Semitism.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Vicki Sacco