

**2018-2019 Yearly Assessment Report
Swig Program in Jewish Studies and Social Justice
Minor in Jewish Studies and Social Justice**

SECTION I: LOGISTICS

Name of Program:	Swig Program in Jewish Studies and Social Justice
Type of Program:	Minor
Division:	College of Arts and Sciences, Humanities
Submitter:	Aaron Hahn Tapper, Director, Swig Program in Jewish Studies and Social Justice (ajhahntapper@usfca.edu)
Committee:	Aaron Hahn Tapper, Director, Swig Program in Jewish Studies and Social Justice (ajhahntapper@usfca.edu); Oren Kroll-Zeldin, Assistant Director, Swig Program in Jewish Studies and Social Justice (omkrollzeldin@usfca.edu)

SECTION II: MISSION STATEMENT AND PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

MISSION STATEMENT

The Swig Program in Jewish Studies and Social Justice minor engages students in both theoretical and practical applications of social justice and activism rooted in the Jewish traditions. Our interdisciplinary curriculum examines Jewish culture, history, politics, philosophy, and language to better understand and strengthen marginalized communities around the globe.

No changes were made to the program mission statement since the last assessment cycle.

PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR MINORS

Our three Program Learning Outcomes include the following:

1. *Social Justice*: Students will articulate theoretical and practical applications of social justice and activism rooted in the Jewish traditions.
2. *Social Identities, Intersectionality, and Marginalized Communities*: Students will articulate the intersectionality of social identities, specifically those of marginalized social groups, vis-a-vis social in/justice, using Jewish communities as a window into the processes of dominance and subordination.
3. *Jews and Judaisms*: Students will articulate various dimensions of Jewish cultures, histories, politics, philosophies, and/or languages.

No changes were made to the program learning outcomes since the last assessment cycle.

LEARNING OUTCOME ASSESSED THIS CYCLE

We are assessing Program Learning Outcome #3:

Jews and Judaisms: Students will articulate various dimensions of Jewish cultures, histories, politics, philosophies, and/or languages.

SECTION III: METHODOLOGY

The Swig JSSJ Assessment team decided to evaluate Program Learning Outcome #3 because understanding the various dimensions of Jewish cultures, histories, politics, philosophies, and languages is critical to the “Jewish Studies” element of our academic program. Since this is our first substantive submission assessing our program, we thought it would be important to begin with an examination of the particular “Jewish” element of the program before moving to the much more universal “Social Justice” component.

We used direct methods of assessment and collected work products from the two required courses for the JSSJ minor:

- “Jews, Judaisms, Jewish Identities” (THRS 130) taught by both Professor Oren Kroll-Zeldin as well as Professor Hahn Tapper. (To be more precise, Hahn Tapper teaches the First Year Seminar version of “Jews, Judaisms, Jewish Identities”.)
- “Social Justice, Activism, and Jews” (THRS 125) taught by Professor Aaron Hahn Tapper.

The specific work product from each class is a question from the Final Exam in each respective course. Question 1 is an essay question from the Final Exam for “Jews, Judaisms, Jewish Identities” and Question 2 is an essay question from the Final Exam for “Social Justice, Activism, and Jews.”

Question 1:

Throughout this class we have struggled to answer the seemingly simple question: “Who is a Jew?” Based on what you have learned this semester, write an essay that answers this question, doing your best to encapsulate the

complexity and diversity of Jewish identity. For example: Who is a Jew? Who decides who is a Jew, and who gives them the authority to decide? Is someone a Jew based on their religion, ethnicity, race, nationality, or another category of identification? Support your answer with substantial evidence from class readings, discussions, and field trip analyses.

Question 2:

What role does Jewish identity play in the lives of the Jewish social justice activists we met with this semester? Be sure to address fundamental elements of Jewish tradition that support the notion of social justice that we went over in class (i.e., texts produced prior to the 20th and 21st centuries, such as passages from the Torah, Mishnah, and Talmud). In addition, be sure to integrate core ideas found in the two specific chapters we read from *Judaisms: A Twenty-First-Century Introduction to Jews and Jewish Identities* (i.e., the Introduction and Chapter 1 – “Narratives”). Finally, make sure to integrate terms such as “truth,” fact, *tikkun olam*, *tzedakah*, and *tzedek*.

Since JSSJ is a relatively small program, in order to increase the sample size for this assessment we collected work products from Fall 2016 through Spring 2019, a total of six semesters. (NOTE: “Social Justice, Activism, and Jews” is only offered in the Fall, whereas “Jews, Judaisms, and Jewish Identities” is offered every semester, in addition to offering a second First Year Seminar version each Fall.)

In total, we assessed 18 work products (10 collected from THRS 130 and THRS 190, and 8 collected from THRS 125). After collecting the work products, we devised a rubric for assessment (see addendum) specifically designed to help us understand if JSSJ minors acquire knowledge from Program Learning Outcome #3 through the required courses for the minor. After reading each individual work product we scored them on a 5-point scale (1 as Insufficient through 5 as Exemplary), as evidenced by the results below.

SECTION IV: RESULTS AND MAJOR FINDINGS

Based on our assessment the JSSJ program is successfully teaching students about the complexity and diversity of Jews and Judaisms as a rich religious, ethnic, and cultural group. Our students are able to identify and label Ashkenazi, Sephardi, and Mizrahi Jewish identities, noting differences within and between them in terms of culture, ethnicity, history, and language. Students accurately identify the main textual and institutional authorities defining who is a Jew today, including the Torah, Halakhah, the State of Israel’s Law of Return, different Jewish movements/denominations, and individual autonomy. The students in the “Social Justice, Activism, and Jews” class in particular are able to accurately point to specific texts, passages, and phrases in Jewish traditions most widely used within Jewish communities to embody Jewish frameworks for social justice, including *tikkun olam*, *tzedek*, and *tzedakah*.

From a statistical standpoint, we discovered through the overall assessment that 38% of students scored a 5, an exemplary score, and 78% of students scored a 4 or 5, indicating a high level of competency.

- Question 1 (10 work products)
 - 40% of students scored level 5
 - 40% of students scored level 4
 - 20% of students scored level 3
 - No student scored below level 3
- Question 2 (8 work products)
 - 37.5% of students scored level 5
 - 37.5% of students scored level 4
 - 25% of students scored level 3
 - No student scored below level 3

One important finding is that scores tended to be based on two key factors: (1) how many years a student has been on campus; and (2) how many JSSJ courses they took before taking a particular required course. The clearest indicators that a student would have a better understanding of the topics assessed were (a) if they had spent more than one year as a student on campus prior to answering these questions and (b) if they had taken more JSSJ courses prior to answering these questions. Students who fell into a or b (let alone a and b) were more capable of clearly articulating their knowledge regarding the various dimensions of Jewish history, culture, politics, philosophy, and language that we assessed.

We therefore believe that our courses are successfully teaching most students about Program Learning Outcome #3 and the various dimensions of Jewish cultures, histories, politics, philosophies, and/or languages.

JSSJ Assessment Data

• **Question 1**

	Exemplary		Acceptable		Insufficient
Score	5	4	3	2	1
Number of students	4	4	2		

• **Question 2**

	Exemplary		Acceptable		Insufficient
Score	5	4	3	2	1
Number of students	3	3	2		

SECTION V: CLOSING THE LOOP

PROPOSED CHANGES/MODIFICATIONS TO ACHIEVE THE DESIRED LEVEL OF MASTERY

This is the first time that the Swig JSSJ Program is submitting a substantive PLO Assessment. We are excited that it coincides with our first Academic Program Review, which is also happening this academic year and should be complete by the end of calendar year 2020. After we receive feedback from both the FDCD and the APR committee, the Swig JSSJ program plans to gather its full-time faculty to discuss the results of our findings of this assessment alongside those that emanate from the Academic Program Review. By examining the PLO Assessment alongside a larger program review we will be able to gain a more comprehensive and holistic view of the state of our program so that we can think about the most strategic ways to change, improve, and grow as a program.

In the coming year, JSSJ faculty will work to devise a sustainable strategy for assessing our two other Program Learning Outcomes. Due to the relatively small size of the program and the relatively low numbers of minors we have in the two required courses in a given semester, we may need to expand our assessment beyond these two courses so as to have a more robust statistical model for assessment. An assessment with more work products could make it easier to understand where we need to improve our courses.

SUGGESTIONS/FEEDBACK FROM THE FDCD ON PREVIOUS ASSESSMENT REPORT

We did not submit a full assessment report last year so we do not have any information to provide on how we incorporated any suggestions or feedback from the previous assessment cycle. However, we look forward to incorporating feedback in next year's assessment based on the suggestion and feedback we receive from the FDCD on this report.

SECTION VI: BIG PICTURE

Since this is our first full assessment report, we do not have a comprehensive enough view of our Program Learning Outcomes through assessment in order to offer a substantive reflection on the big picture of the Swig JSSJ program.

SECTION VII: FEEDBACK FOR ASSESSMENT TEAM

Since this is our first full assessment report, we do not have any substantive feedback for the assessment team. We do appreciate the support the assessment team has given us as our program grows and begins to seriously evaluate the Program Learning Outcomes.

ADDENDUM:

Rubric Development Worksheet

Step 1: List the Program Learning Outcome (PLO) to be assessed (write out the full PLO statement).

PLO No. 3 *Jews and Judaisms:* Students will articulate various dimensions of Jewish cultures, histories, politics, philosophies, and/or languages.¹

Step 2: Describe the Student Work Product (i.e., Assignment) that will be used to measure the degree to which students are achieving the PLO (name and brief description of the assignment).

Question 1:

Throughout this class we have struggled to answer the seemingly simple question: “Who is a Jew?” Based on what you have learned this semester, write an essay that answers this question, doing your best to encapsulate the complexity and diversity of Jewish identity. For example: Who is a Jew? Who decides who is a Jew, and who gives them the authority to decide? Is someone a Jew based on their religion, ethnicity, race, nationality, or another category of identification? Support your answer with substantial evidence from class readings, discussions, and field trip analyses.

Question 2:

What role does Jewish identity play in the lives of the Jewish social justice activists we met with this semester? Be sure to address fundamental elements of Jewish tradition that support the notion of social justice that we went over in class (i.e., texts produced prior to the 20th and 21st centuries, such as passages from the Torah, Mishnah, and Talmud). In addition, be sure to integrate core ideas found in the two specific chapters we read from *Judaisms: A Twenty-First-Century Introduction to Jews and Jewish Identities* (i.e., the Introduction and Chapter 1 – “Narratives”). Finally, make sure to integrate terms such as “truth,” fact, *tikkun olam*, *tzedakah*, and *tzedek*.

Step 3: List the attributes of a well-done Assignment.

1. Clearly identifies and summarizes the complexity of “Jewish identity”.
2. Clearly and accurately articulates “Jewish identity” as a religion, culture, ethnicity, and/or nationality.

¹ PLO No. 1 *Social Justice:* Students will explain and apply theoretical and practical applications of social justice and activism rooted in the Jewish traditions.

PLO No. 2 *Social Identities, Intersectionality, and Marginalized Communities:* Students will articulate the intersectionality of social identities and in/justice, specifically those of marginalized social groups, using Jewish communities as a window.

3. Clearly articulates numerous elements of Jewish traditions that reflect a communal commitment to the notion of social justice.
4. Provides ample evidence and clear examples from class readings, discussions, and/or field trips that are accurate and relevant to the question asked.

Step 4: Considering the attributes of a well-done assignment together with the PLO being assessed, list up to 5 evaluation criteria.

1. Clearly identifies and summarizes the complexity of “Jewish identity” by successfully articulating the impacts of Ashkenazi hegemony, including the way that the dominant Ashkenazi communal narrative has become the dominant Jewish communal narrative.
2. Clearly and accurately labels Ashkenazi, Sephardi, and Mizrahi Jewish identities, noting differences within and between them in terms of culture, ethnicity, history, and language.
3. Clearly and accurately identifies the main textual and institutional authorities defining who is a Jew today, including the Torah, Halakhah, state of Israel’s Law of Return, different Jewish movements, and the individual.
4. Clearly and accurately points to specific texts, passages, and phrases in Jewish traditions most widely used within Jewish communities to embody Jewish frameworks for social justice, including *tikkun olam*, *tzedek*, and *tzedakah*.

	Performance Criteria Level 1 (highest)	Performance Criteria Level 2	Performance Criteria Level 3	Performance Criteria Level 4 (lowest)
Evaluation Criterion 1	Clearly identifies and summarizes the complexity of “Jewish identity.” Articulates the impacts of Ashkenazi hegemony, including the way that the dominant Ashkenazi communal narrative has become the dominant Jewish communal narrative.	Clearly identifies the complexity of “Jewish identity” and notes the existence of Ashkenazi hegemony but only articulates some of the impacts it has and the way that the dominant Ashkenazi communal narrative has become the dominant Jewish communal narrative.	Provides inconsistent and incomplete summary of the complexity of Jewish identity and fails to mention and articulate the impacts of Ashkenazi hegemony.	Does not articulate the complexity of “Jewish identity” and does not mention Ashkenazi hegemony.

<p>Evaluation Criterion 2</p>	<p>Clearly and accurately labels Ashkenazi, Sephardi, and Mizrahi Jewish identities, noting differences within and between them in terms of culture, ethnicity, history, and language.</p>	<p>Labels all three identities and notes only some of the differences within and between them in terms of culture, ethnicity, history, and language.</p>	<p>Only labels some of the three identities and notes only a few differences within and between them in terms of culture, ethnicity, history, and language.</p>	<p>Does not label the identities nor note any of the differences within and between them in terms of culture, ethnicity, history, and language.</p>
<p>Evaluation Criterion 3</p>	<p>Clearly and accurately identifies the main textual and institutional authorities defining who is a Jew today, including the Torah, Halakhah, state of Israel's Law of Return, different Jewish movements, and the individual.</p>	<p>Clearly identifies the main textual and institutional authorities defining who is a Jew today, including the Torah, Halakhah, state of Israel's Law of Return, different Jewish movements, and the individual but does not articulate the significant of each.</p>	<p>Only articulates and identifies some but not all of the main textual and institutional authorities defining who is a Jew today.</p>	<p>Does not articulate or identify any of the main textual and institutional authorities defining who is a Jew today.</p>
<p>Evaluation Criterion 4</p>	<p>Clearly and accurately points to specific texts, passages, and phrases in Jewish traditions most widely used within Jewish communities to embody Jewish frameworks for social justice, including <i>tikkun olam</i>, <i>tzedek</i>, and <i>tzedakah</i>.</p>	<p>Clearly and accurately points to only some of the specific texts passages, and phrases in Jewish traditions most widely used within Jewish communities to embody Jewish frameworks for social justice, including <i>tikkun olam</i>, <i>tzedek</i>, and <i>tzedakah</i>.</p>	<p>Points to some of the specific texts passages, and phrases in Jewish traditions most widely used within Jewish communities to embody Jewish frameworks for social justice, including <i>tikkun olam</i>, <i>tzedek</i>, and <i>tzedakah</i> and cannot accurately depict their meaning and significance.</p>	<p>Does not point to the specific texts passages, and phrases in Jewish traditions most widely used within Jewish communities to embody Jewish frameworks for social justice, including <i>tikkun olam</i>, <i>tzedek</i>, and <i>tzedakah</i> and does not mention <i>tikkun olam</i>, <i>tzedek</i>, and <i>tzedakah</i>.</p>