

**2019-2020 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:	Oren Kroll-Zeldin, Interim Director, Swig Program in Jewish Studies and Social Justice (omkrollzeldin@usfca.edu)
Committee:	Oren Kroll-Zeldin, Interim Director, Swig Program in Jewish Studies and Social Justice (omkrollzeldin@usfca.edu); Alexis Herr, Adjunct Faculty, Swig Program in Jewish Studies and Social Justice (aherr1@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 #1:

Social Justice: Students will articulate theoretical and practical applications of social justice and activism rooted in the Jewish traditions.

SECTION III: METHODOLOGY

The Swig JSSJ Assessment team evaluated Program Learning Outcome #1 because understanding the ways that social justice interacts with Jewish identities is a core element of our academic program. Furthermore, this assessment compliments our 2018-2019 evaluation, wherein we examined the particular “Jewish” element of the program. The 2019-2020 report analyzes the intersections between the “Jewish” element of our program and the much more universal “Social Justice” component.

We used direct methods of assessment and collected work products from one of the required courses for the JSSJ minor, and more specifically, from a required class that focuses on social justice and Jewish identities: “Social Justice, Activism, and Jews” (THRS 125) taught by Professor Aaron Hahn Tapper. We assessed specific work products based on two essay questions from the Final Exam. Both questions required substantive responses and articulations of the relationship between social justice and Jewish identities.

Question 1:

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., specific passages from Jewish texts produced prior to the 20th and 21st centuries, such as 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 the following: “truth,” fact, *tikkun olam*, *tzedakah*, and *tzedek*.

Question 2:

Based on the handout we looked at together a number of times, “Strategies, Challenges, and Intentions related to SJA” (found on Course Modules), pick three guest speakers from the semester and map out their respective reasons for engaging in social justice, the strategy/ies they use to reach their goals, and the challenges they have faced. Make sure to compare and contrast their differences and similarities. See the last page of this Final Exam for a list of speakers alongside their images. Note: Structure this essay based on intentions, strategies, and challenges rather than going speaker by speaker.

This course is offered every Fall semester, and in the Fall 2019 semester 14 JSSJ minors enrolled in “Social Justice, Activism, and Jews,” making it the largest cohort of minors to enroll in this class since it was first offered as a required course for the minor. In total, we assessed 28 work products (14 collected from each question on the final exam). 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 #1 through one of the required courses for the minor. After reading each individual work product we scored them on a 4-point scale (1 as Insufficient through 4 as Exemplary), as evidenced by the results below. We devised a 4-point system for each assessment criteria (of which there were four), thereby giving each student a possible total of 16 points for the most exemplary work product that perfectly responded to each assessment criteria.

SECTION IV: RESULTS AND MAJOR FINDINGS

Based on our assessment the JSSJ program is successfully teaching students about the significance of social justice and activism rooted in the Jewish traditions. Our students are able to connect social justice to diverse Jewish traditions and can define key terms such as *tikkun olam*, *tzedek*, and *tzedakah*. Most students can identify the Jewish texts where these terms come from and in so doing demonstrate understanding of how social justice is rooted in Jewish traditions. From a statistical standpoint, we discovered through the overall assessment that 14% of the 28 total student work products assessed (14 per question) received the highest possible score (15-16 points); 43% of students scored in the next level (13-14 points); 32% of students scored in the lower range (11-12 points); and 10% scored the lowest possible rating. The results of our assessment are clearly mixed and indicate two key things. First, the majority of students (57%) scored in the upper half of our assessment rankings, indicating a high level of competency among JSSJ minors with the regards to the social justice PLO. Second, these results show that there is work to be done to improve the competency of all JSSJ minors towards the social justice PLO. In other words, while we feel as though we are doing a good job, we most certainly have room for improvement.

Deeper observation and analysis of the data shows that for all but Criterion 3, the majority of students demonstrated a strong understanding of social justice, Jewish identity, and activism.¹ For Criterion 1, 93% of students received 3-4 points and no students earned a 1 (insufficient) grade. This demonstrates that on the whole, the majority of students demonstrated a clear theoretical and practical understanding of social justice and how they inspire action on a range of issues, including gender equality, LGBTQ rights, and disability rights. For Criterion 2, 93% of students received 3-4 points and no students earned a 1 (insufficient) grade. This demonstrates that overall, the majority of students clearly identified the diverse ways that Jewish notions of social justice exist beyond the text and are part of a lived experience in the lives of Jewish social justice activists. For Criterion 4, 96% of students received 3-4 points and no students earned a 1 (insufficient) grade. This demonstrates that the vast majority of students identified the significance of social justice activism to diverse expressions of Jewish identities.

For Criterion 3, 60% of students received subpar performance reviews. This demonstrates that overall, students failed to clearly and accurately point to specific texts and ideas in Jewish traditions most widely used within Jewish communities to embody Jewish frameworks for social justice, including *tikkun olam*, *tzedek*, and *tzedakah*. We believe the reason is that the two questions we assessed from the final exam do not necessarily require students to identify these texts. Question 1 explicitly asks students to “address fundamental elements of Jewish tradition that support the notion of social justice that we went over in class (i.e., specific passages from Jewish texts produced prior to the 20th and 21st centuries, such as from the Torah, Mishnah, and Talmud)” and as such students scored higher on Criterion 3 for Question 1 than students did for Question 2. Question 2 of the final exam did not explicitly instruct students to identify these terms and instead students were asked to map out the activists’ “reasons for engaging in social justice.” It is completely possible that the speakers did not explicitly identify traditional Jewish frameworks for social justice in their talks. The notion of “Jewish” social activism is complex; just because a speaker does not identify traditional dimensions of Jewish activism (as articulated in the Torah or Talmud) as motivating their work does not mean that the activist isn’t a “Jewish” activist. Perhaps this is a flaw in our assessment criteria and evaluation since we selected work products that do not necessarily require students to respond to everything in our criteria.

Furthermore, much like our 2019 assessment, one important finding is that scores tended to be influenced by two key factors: (1) how many years a student has been on campus; and (2) how many JSSJ courses they took before taking “Social Justice, Activism, and Jews.” 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 (or were taking) another JSSJ class. Students who fell into a or b (let alone a and b) were more capable of clearly articulating their knowledge regarding theoretical and practical applications of social justice and activism rooted in the Jewish traditions.

¹ See Addendum and Rubric Development Worksheet below for detailed information on the four criteria assessments.

In conclusion, students exemplified a strong understanding of social justice as rooted in Jewish traditions and a clear appreciation of the diverse Jewish activists who perform this work. We therefore believe that our courses are successfully teaching most students about Program Learning Outcome #1 and the significance of social justice in Jewish traditions.

JSSJ Assessment Data

- Question 1 (14 work products)
 - 21.5% of students scored 15-16 points
 - 57% of students scored 13-14 points
 - 21.5% of students scored 11-12 points
 - No student scored less than 10 points

- Question 2 (14 work products)
 - 7% of students scored 15-16 points
 - 28% of students scored 13-14 points
 - 42% of students scored 11-12 points
 - 21% scored less than 10 points

• **Question 1**

Score given	15 - 16 points (exemplary)	13-14	11-12	<10
Number of students	3	8	3	0

• **Question 2**

Score given	15 - 16 points (exemplary)	13-14	11-12	<10
Number of students	1	4	6	3

SECTION V: CLOSING THE LOOP

PROPOSED CHANGES/MODIFICATIONS TO ACHIEVE THE DESIRED LEVEL OF MASTERY

This is only the second time that the Swig JSSJ Program is submitting a substantive PLO Assessment and the first time we are assessing this particular PLO. Last year we were supposed to have our first Academic Program Review (APR) in the past year, but due to COVID-19 the APR was postponed. Our hope was to incorporate feedback from both the APR and last year’s PLO Assessment, but we will only be able to do that once the APR is completed. After we receive

feedback from both the Faculty Director of Curriculum Development (FDCD) and the APR committee, the Swig JSSJ program plans to gather its full-time faculty to discuss the results of our PLO assessments alongside those that emanate from the Academic Program Review. We hope to compile feedback from the APR alongside three PLO Assessments, which would incorporate all of our PLOs. By examining the PLO Assessments alongside a larger program review we will be able to gain a more comprehensive and holistic view of our program.

In the coming year, JSSJ faculty will work to devise a sustainable strategy for assessing our final Program Learning Outcome (PLO #2). Due to the relatively small size of the program and the low numbers of minors enrolled 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 identify room for improvement.

SUGGESTIONS/FEEDBACK FROM THE FDCD ON PREVIOUS ASSESSMENT REPORT

We received thorough and thoughtful feedback on our previous PLO Assessment Report. The feedback made it clear that our previous assessment was well done and useful in evaluating our program learning outcomes, so we replicated most of our process from last year's assessment for this report. The one thing we did not do this year is include classes beyond those required for the minor. While we suggested in our 2018 PLO report that we may do so for the 2019 assessment, because there were 14 JSSJ minors enrolled in "Social Justice, Activism, and Jews" we concluded that it was not necessary. If in future years we need to expand beyond the required courses for the minor, we will do so.

SECTION VI: BIG PICTURE

Since this is only our second full assessment report, and since we have yet to complete an Academic Program Review, we do not have a comprehensive enough view of our Program Learning Outcomes in order to offer a substantive reflection on the big picture of the Swig JSSJ program. We look forward to doing so in the near future.

SECTION VII: FEEDBACK FOR ASSESSMENT TEAM

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. 1 Social Justice: Students will explain and apply theoretical and practical applications of social justice and activism rooted in the Jewish traditions.²

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).

In “Social Justice, Activism, and Jews” (THRS 125), which is one of the two required courses for the JSSJ Minor, students scrutinize social justice issues related to socio-economic class, ethnicity, race, gender, sex, and sexuality as they manifest in the United States today while studying texts central to the Jewish tradition. To evaluate PLO #1 for the Swig Program in Jewish Studies and Social Justice we will examine students’ responses to two questions on the final exam from “Social Justice, Activism, and Jews.”

Question 1:

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., specific passages from Jewish texts produced prior to the 20th and 21st centuries, such as from the Torah, Mishnah, and Talmud). In addition, be sure to integrate core ideas found in the two specific chapters we read from *Judaism: 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 the following: “truth,” fact, *tikkun olam*, *tzedakah*, and *tzedek*.

Question 2:

Based on the handout we looked at together a number of times, “Strategies, Challenges, and Intentions related to SJA” (found on Course Modules), pick three guest speakers from the semester and map out their respective reasons for engaging in social justice, the strategy/ies they use to reach their goals, and the challenges they have faced. Make sure to compare and contrast their differences and similarities. See the last page of this Final Exam for a list of speakers

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

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

alongside their images. Note: Structure this essay based on intentions, strategies, and challenges rather than going speaker by speaker.

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

1. Clearly identifies and defines the term “social justice.”
2. Clearly and accurately articulates both the theoretical and practical ways that social justice activism exists in Jewish communities.
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, guest speakers, 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 and accurately defines the various theoretical and practical understandings of social justice and how they inspire action on a range of issues.
2. Clearly and accurately identifies the diverse ways that Jewish notions of social justice exist beyond the text and are part of a lived experience as well as how they manifest in the lives of Jewish social justice activists.
3. Clearly and accurately points to specific texts and ideas in Jewish traditions most widely used within Jewish communities to embody Jewish frameworks for social justice, including *tikkun olam*, *tzedek*, and *tzedakah*.
4. Clearly and accurately identifies the significance of social justice activism to diverse expressions of Jewish identities.

Assessment Grading chart:

Criterion 1

Score given	4 (highest)	3	2	1
Number of students				

Criterion 2

Score given	4 (highest)	3	2	1
Number of students				

Criterion 3

Score given	4 (highest)	3	2	1
Number of students				

Criterion 4

Score given	4 (highest)	3	2	1
Number of students				

Total:

Score given	15 - 16 points (exemplary)	13-14	11-12	<10
Number of students				

	Performance Criteria Level 1 (highest)	Performance Criteria Level 2	Performance Criteria Level 3	Performance Criteria Level 4 (lowest)
Evaluation Criterion 1	Clearly and accurately defines social justice and notes both theoretical and practical understandings of social justice. Articulates the various ways that social justice inspires action on a diversity of issues such as race, class, gender, sexuality, ability, etc.	Clearly and accurately defines social justice and notes either theoretical or practical understandings of social justice, but not both. Articulates only some of the ways that social justice inspires action on a diversity of issues such as race, class, gender, sexuality, ability, etc.	Provides inconsistent and incomplete summary and definition of social justice and fails to mention any of the ways that social justice inspires action on a diversity of issues.	Does not define social justice or discuss the ways that social justice inspires action on a diversity of issues.
Evaluation Criterion 2	Clearly and accurately identifies the diverse ways that Jewish notions of social justice exist beyond the text and are part of a lived experience as well as how they manifest in the lives	Clearly and accurately identifies the diverse ways that Jewish notions of social justice exist beyond the text and are part of a lived experience as well as how they manifest in the lives	Only partially identifies how Jewish notions of social justice exist beyond the text and are part of a lived experience as well as how they manifest in the lives of Jewish social	Does not identify how Jewish notions of social justice exist beyond the text and are part of a lived experience as well as how they manifest in the lives of Jewish social justice activists.

	of Jewish social justice activists. Points to the work of Jewish social activists and the way that Jewishness inspires their activism and how that is integral to the way they live Jewishly.	of Jewish social justice activists. Points to the work of Jewish social activists and the way that Jewishness inspires their activism but doesn't note how the activism is integral to the way they live Jewishly.	justice activists. Does not point to the work of Jewish social activists and the way that Jewishness inspires their activism and how that is integral to the way they live Jewishly.	
Evaluation Criterion 3	Clearly and accurately points to specific texts and ideas in Jewish traditions most widely used within Jewish communities to embody Jewish frameworks for social justice, and defines terms such as <i>tikkun olam</i> , <i>tzedek</i> , and <i>tzedakah</i> . Points to specific passages from the Torah, Mishnah, and Talmud.	Clearly and accurately points to specific texts and ideas in Jewish traditions most widely used within Jewish communities to embody Jewish frameworks for social justice, and defines terms such as <i>tikkun olam</i> , <i>tzedek</i> , and <i>tzedakah</i> . Points to specific passages from only one of the following sources: the Torah, Mishnah, and Talmud.	Points to some but not all of the specific texts and ideas in Jewish traditions textual most widely used within Jewish communities to embody Jewish frameworks for social justice, and only partially defines terms such as <i>tikkun olam</i> , <i>tzedek</i> , and <i>tzedakah</i> .	Does not point to any of the specific texts and ideas in Jewish traditions textual most widely used within Jewish communities to embody Jewish frameworks for social justice, and does not define terms such as <i>tikkun olam</i> , <i>tzedek</i> , and <i>tzedakah</i> .
Evaluation Criterion 4	Clearly and accurately identifies the significance of social justice activism to diverse expressions of Jewish identities. Mentions how social justice activism impacts Jews from diverse backgrounds (Ashkenazi, Sephardi, Mizrahi) and with different social identities (race, class, gender, sexuality, ability, etc.).	Clearly and accurately identifies the significance of social justice activism to diverse expressions of Jewish identities. Partially mentions how social justice activism impacts Jews from diverse backgrounds (Ashkenazi, Sephardi, Mizrahi) and with different social identities (race, class, gender, sexuality, ability, etc.).	Partially points to and identifies the significance of social justice activism to diverse expressions of Jewish identities. Does not mention how social justice activism impacts Jews from diverse backgrounds (Ashkenazi, Sephardi, Mizrahi) and with different social identities (race, class, gender, sexuality, ability, etc.).	Does not point to or identify the significance of social justice activism to diverse expressions of Jewish identities. Does not mention how social justice activism impacts Jews from diverse backgrounds (Ashkenazi, Sephardi, Mizrahi) and with different social identities (race, class, gender, sexuality, ability, etc.).

