

**2020-2021 Yearly Assessment Report  
Swig Program in Jewish Studies and Social Justice  
Minor in Jewish Studies and Social Justice**

**SECTION I: LOGISTICS**

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<b>Name of Program:</b>	<b>Swig Program in Jewish Studies and Social Justice</b>
<b>Type of Program:</b>	<b>Minor</b>
<b>Division:</b>	<b>College of Arts and Sciences, Humanities</b>
<b>Submitter:</b>	<b>Oren Kroll-Zeldin, Assistant Director, Swig Program in Jewish Studies and Social Justice (<a href="mailto:omkrollzeldin@usfca.edu">omkrollzeldin@usfca.edu</a>)</b>
<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Oren Kroll-Zeldin, Assistant Director, Swig Program in Jewish Studies and Social Justice (<a href="mailto:omkrollzeldin@usfca.edu">omkrollzeldin@usfca.edu</a>); Alexis Herr, Adjunct Faculty, Swig Program in Jewish Studies and Social Justice (<a href="mailto:aherr1@usfca.edu">aherr1@usfca.edu</a>)</b>

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**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 #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.

### **SECTION III: METHODOLOGY**

The Swig JSSJ Assessment team evaluated Program Learning Outcome #2 this year since in the previous two assessments we evaluated PLO #1 (2019-2020 report) and PLO #3 (2018-2019 report). Evaluating PLO #2 this year enables us to complete a three-year cycle of assessing all three of our Program Learning Outcomes. This PLO is of particular importance since a core element of our academic program is helping students understand the ways in which social identities can be intersectional, especially for marginalized communities, using Jewish communities as a particular way of examining this process. This assessment therefore compliments our previous evaluations and enables us to get a more holistic and complete picture of our program.

We used direct methods of assessment and collected work products from the two required courses for the JSSJ minor: “Social Justice, Activism, and Jews” (THRS 125) taught by Professor Aaron Hahn Tapper and “Jews, Judaisms, and Jewish Identities” (THRS 130) taught by Professor Oren Kroll-Zeldin (Fall 2020) and Professor Noa Bar-Gabai (Spring 2021). Since Professor Hahn Tapper was on sabbatical during the 2020-2021 academic year and the “Social Justice, Activism, and Jews” course was not offered, we assessed the work products from the previous time he taught the course (Fall 2019). “Jews, Judaisms, and Jewish Identities” is offered every semester, so we selected to assess one assignment from each semester during the 2020-2021 academic year.

For “Social Justice, Activism, and Jews,” we assessed specific work products based on one essay question from the Final Exam. This question required substantive responses and articulations of the relationship between social identities, intersectionality, and representation. This course is offered every Fall semester, and in the Fall 2019 semester, 16 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. We also collected work products from 3 students who enrolled in the course as a Directed Independent Study with Professor Hahn Tapper in Spring 2020. Therefore, we assessed a total of 19 work products from this class from the 2019-2020 academic year.

#### Question 3:

In class, we’ve explicitly and implicitly discussed the phenomenon of “representation” in pop culture. More specifically, we’ve discussed whether—within a specific social identity category— an actor of one subidentity can justly play the role of a character with another subidentity or if this is problematic from a basic social justice-rooted perspective. During class, one dominant idea that was expressed was that this is not problematic when it comes to social identity categories such as age, citizenship, nationality, physical ability, profession, religion, or socio-economic status yet it is problematic when it comes to social identity categories such as ethnicity, gender, physical appearance, race, sex, and sexual orientation. Put another way, one dominant idea expressed in class was that an actor who is, for example, in their sixties can justly play a character in their thirties, that this isn’t problematic. In contrast, an actor with one gender identity (e.g., cisgender) cannot justly play the role of someone with another gender identity (e.g., transgender); this is problematic. What do you think about whether or not this is problematic within the context of the following social identity groups—gender, profession, religion, race, or sexual orientation. Make sure to discuss the following terms/ideas in your response: appropriation, authenticity, passing, and privilege.

For “Jews, Judaisms and Jewish Identities,” we assessed specific work products based on one essay question from the Final Exam from Professor Kroll-Zeldin’s class (Fall 2020) and one reflection essay based on a Jewish Studies and Social Justice program public event that students were required to attend in Professor Bar-Gabai’s class (Spring 2021). Each of these questions required students to articulate the complexities of social identity, particularly for Jews, and how Jewish identities may be intersectional. In the Fall 2020 class, only two JSSJ minors registered for the course and the Spring 2021 offering had four JSSJ minors. Therefore, we collected and assessed six total work products from the “Jews, Judaisms, and Jewish Identities” courses in the 2020-2021 academic year.

#### Final Exam Question:

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 a response that answers this question, doing your best to encapsulate the complexity and

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

#### Event Reflection:

You are required to attend the Jewish Studies and Social Justice (JSSJ) Program webinar called “In This Place Together: A Palestinian’s Journey to Collective Liberation,” with Palestinian activist Sulaiman Khatib and Jewish American activist Penina Eilberg Schwartz. After attending or watching the webinar you are required to write a one-page reflection and analysis of the event. This is not a summary. Please focus on how the content of the webinar relates to our course content and conversations. How did the speaker help complexify Jewish identity? In what way did they challenge or reinforce what we discuss in class?

In total, we assessed 25 work products (19 collected from “Social Justice, Activism, and Jews;” six collected from “Jews, Judaisms, and Jewish Identities”). 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 #2 through the two 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 has mixed results with regards to teaching students about the connections between social identities, intersectionality, and the Jewish experience. The work products we assessed show that students generally have a strong understanding of intersectionality, the complexity of social identities, and can articulate the various ways that Jewish communities experience both dominance and subordination. From a statistical standpoint, we discovered that 16% of the total 25 student work products assessed received the highest possible score (15-16 points); 16% of students scored in the next level (13-14 points); 24% of students scored in the lower range (11-12 points); and 44% of students scored the lowest possible rating. The results of our assessment are clearly mixed. Unfortunately, the majority of students (68%) scored in the lower half of our assessment rankings, indicating a disappointing level of competency among JSSJ minors with regards to the PLO focused on social identities, intersectionality, and marginalized communities. These results show that there is work to be done to improve the competency of all JSSJ minors towards this PLO.

While it is clear after assessing the student work products that JSSJ minors have a solid understanding of the complexity of social identities, intersectionality, and the Jewish experience, one of the reasons students may have scored so poorly is due to our evaluation criteria. In fact, one of the biggest challenges in this assessment was in evaluating work products from the two required classes for the JSSJ minor using the same criteria. This proved to be difficult since the two courses have dramatically different focuses. While one focuses on Jewish identity in particular, the other takes an intersectional approach to understanding social justice activism within Jewish communities and beyond. As such, in creating evaluation criteria we noticed that if we graded students based on whether or not they mentioned specific elements of Jewish identity, that would work for the questions in the “Jews, Judaisms, and Jewish Identities” course but not necessarily for “Social Justice, Activism, and Jews.” Furthermore, we noticed that if we made different criteria to assess the student work products for each class, we would have had an easier job in this assessment and maybe would have also had significantly higher scores. However, that would have lacked uniformity and led to other assessment issues.

One important insight from our assessment is that students do not make clear and direct references to readings, texts, etc. unless directly prompted to do so. Evaluation Criterion 3 states that an exemplary assignment should “Clearly and accurately points to specific texts, ideas, and/or elements that describe categories of identity that reflect how Jews, or any other marginalized community, has *experienced both subordination and dominance.*” We noticed that students did not clearly or accurately point to texts since the question we assessed did not ask students to do so. Therefore, students did not score high on that evaluation criterion.

Another observation from our assessment is that students adeptly mentioned intersectionality traits, but didn’t necessarily define what that term meant (with rare exception). Similar to referencing texts and readings, students were not directly asked to define intersectionality, which is a reason they likely did not do so. But perhaps it is because for this generation of students, intersectionality is a given. Therefore, it assumed that if they were referencing the term, they likely had an idea of what it meant. In the JSSJ program we find it incredibly valuable to consider intersectionality with regards to multiple groups, in addition to and including Jews, as it deepens our students’ understanding and appreciation of marginalized communities and subordinate identities. While not everyone can necessarily relate to types of persecution that Jewish communities have experienced, greater empathy and connection can be fostered through students’ study of gender, sexual identity, “race”, ethnicity, and other social identities. The grading rubric may not fully reflect this fact, but it is something that is clearly observed from reading students response to questions that cover cultural appropriation, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the multidimensional reality of contemporary Jewish identities.

Furthermore, much like our previous assessments in 2019 and 2020, one important finding remains, 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 either “Jews, Judaisms, and Jewish Identities” or “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 social identities, intersectionality, and marginalized communities.

In conclusion, students exemplified a modest understanding of social identities, intersectional, and the Jewish experience. We believe that our courses are teaching most students about Program Learning Outcome #2, although it is clear that there is a lot we can do to improve upon this particular PLO.

**JSSJ Assessment Data**

- “Social Justice, Activism, and Jews” Final Exam Question (19 work products)
  - 5% of students scored 15-16 points
  - 15% of students scored 13-14 points
  - 26% of students scored 11-12 points
  - 52% of students scored less than 10 points
  
- “Jews, Judaisms, and Jewish Identities” Final Exam Question (2 work products)
  - 50% of students scored 15-16 points
  - No student scored 13-14 points
  - No student scored 11-12 points
  - 50% of students scored less than 10 points
  
- “Jews, Judaisms, and Jewish Identities” Event Reflection (4 work products)
  - 50% of students scored 15-16 points
  - 25% of students scored 13-14 points
  - 25% of students scored 11-12 points
  - No student scored less than 10 points

• **“Social Justice, Activism, and Jews” Final Exam Question**

<b>19 Student Work Products</b>	Exemplary (15-16 points)	Great (13-14 points)	Good (11-12 points)	Insufficient (<10 points)
# of Students	1	3	5	10
% of Students	5%	15%	26%	52%

• **“Jews, Judaisms, and Jewish Identities” Final Exam Question**

<b>2 Student Work Products</b>	Exemplary (15-16 points)	Great (13-14 points)	Good (11-12 points)	Insufficient (<10 points)

# of Students	1			1
% of Students	50%			50%

- **“Jews, Judaisms, and Jewish Identities” Event Reflection**

4 Student Work Products	Exemplary (15-16 points)	Great (13-14 points)	Good (11-12 points)	Insufficient (<10 points)
# of Students	2	1	1	0
% of Students	50%	25%	25%	

## **SECTION V: CLOSING THE LOOP**

### **PROPOSED CHANGES/MODIFICATIONS TO ACHIEVE THE DESIRED LEVEL OF MASTERY**

This is only the third time that the Swig JSSJ Program is submitting a substantive PLO Assessment and the first time we are assessing this particular PLO. Since we have three PLOs, over the past three years we have assessed each PLO and thus this completes our first cycle of assessing the entire program. This year’s assessment coincides with our first ever Academic Program Review (APR), which will be completed in mid-November (2021). Having spent the last three years assessing each of our PLOs, we plan to incorporate feedback both from the APR as well as from the Faculty Director of Curriculum Development (FDCD) on our assessments into faculty conversations about how to achieve the desired level of mastery throughout the program. By examining the PLO Assessments alongside a larger program review we are excited to gain a more comprehensive and holistic view of our program. This will undoubtedly help us improve our curriculum in order to better help us meet all of our Program Learning Outcomes.

### **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 assessments were well done and useful in evaluating our program learning outcomes, so we replicated most of our process from the past two year’s assessments for this report.

## **SECTION VI: BIG PICTURE**

We plan to incorporate feedback from this assessment, our previous PLO assessments, and our upcoming APR in order to give us a sense of the big picture of the Swig JSSJ program. Once we receive all of the feedback, we will have a much better idea of the holistic view of the program.

## **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 continues 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. 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.<sup>1</sup>

**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).

Since the two required classes for the Jewish Studies and Social Justice minor are rooted in social identity theory, they are both well suited to provide students with an opportunity to explore social identities, intersectionality, and marginalized communities. We therefore decided to assess work products from both required classes: “Social Justice, Activism, and Jews” (THRS 125) and “Jews, Judaisms, and Jewish Identities” (THRS 130).

From “Social Justice, Activism, and Jews” we will examine student responses to one question from the final exam:

Final Exam Question 3:

In class, we’ve explicitly and implicitly discussed the phenomenon of “representation” in pop culture. More specifically, we’ve discussed whether—within a specific social identity category— an actor of one subidentity can justly play the role of a character with another subidentity or if this is problematic from a basic social justice-rooted perspective. During class, one dominant idea that was expressed was that this is not problematic when it comes to social identity categories such as age, citizenship, nationality, physical ability, profession, religion, or socio-economic status yet it is problematic when it comes to social identity categories such as ethnicity, gender, physical appearance, race, sex, and sexual orientation. Put another way, one dominant idea expressed in class was that an actor who is, for example, in their sixties can justly play a character in their thirties, that this isn’t problematic. In contrast, an actor with one gender identity (e.g., cisgender) cannot justly play the role of someone with another gender identity (e.g., transgender); this is problematic. What do you think about whether or not this is problematic within the context of the following social identity groups—gender, profession, religion, race, or sexual orientation. Make sure to discuss the following terms/ideas in your response: appropriation, authenticity, passing, and privilege.

From “Jews, Judaisms, and Jewish Identities” we will examine student responses to one question from the final exam as well as a reflection essay in response to student attendance at a JSSJ event:

Final Exam Question 1:

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<sup>1</sup> 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. 3      *Jews and Judaisms*: Students will articulate various dimensions of Jewish cultures, histories, politics, philosophies, and/or languages.

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 a response that answers this question, doing your best to encapsulate the complexity and diversity of Jewish identity. Who is a Jew? Who decides who is a Jew, and who gives them the authority to decide? Is someone a Jew based on his or her religion, ethnicity, race, nationality, or other category of identification? Support your answer with evidence from class readings, discussions, and field trip analyses.

**Event Reflection:**

You are required to attend the Jewish Studies and Social Justice (JSSJ) Program webinars called “In This Place Together: A Palestinian’s Journey to Collective Liberation. After attending or watching the webinar you are required to write a one-page reflection and analysis of the event. This is not a summary. Please focus on how the content of the webinar relates to our course content and conversations. How did the speaker help complexify Jewish identity? In what way did they challenge or reinforce what we discuss in class?

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

1. Clearly articulates an understanding of the complexity of “social identities” and/or the notion of “intersectionality.”
2. Clearly and accurately articulates an understanding of both the theoretical and practical ways that social identities are intersectional and how that relates to the experience(s) of marginalized groups.
3. Clearly identifies how intersectional aspects of Jewish identity, such as “race,” religion, and nationality, inform how Jews experience dominance and subordination.
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 articulates the various *theoretical and practical understandings* of social identities and intersectionality.
2. Clearly and accurately identifies the diverse ways that social identities and intersectionality are part of a *lived experience*, especially for many marginalized groups.
3. Clearly and accurately points to specific texts, ideas, and/or elements that describe categories of identity that reflect how Jews, or any other marginalized community, has *experienced both subordination and dominance*.
4. Clearly and accurately identifies the significance of social identities and intersectionality *to diverse expressions* of religion and intersectional identities, such as gender, cultural, nationality, ethnicity, and sexual orientation.

	Performance Criteria Level 1 (highest)	Performance Criteria Level 2	Performance Criteria Level 3	Performance Criteria Level 4 (lowest)
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<p>Evaluation Criterion 1</p>	<p>Clearly and accurately defines social identities and intersectionality and notes both theoretical and practical understandings of each. Articulates the various ways that social identities and intersectionality are particularly important for marginalized Jewish and/or other communities.</p>	<p>Clearly and accurately defines social identities and intersectionality but only notes either theoretical or practical understandings of one but not both. Articulates only some of the ways that social identities and intersectionality are particularly important for Jewish and/or other marginalized communities.</p>	<p>Provides inconsistent and incomplete summary and definitions of social identities and intersectionality and fails to mention any of the ways that they are important for helping understand the diverse experiences of Jewish communities and/or other marginalized communities.</p>	<p>Does not define social identities or intersectionality or discuss the ways that they help us understand Jewish experiences and those of other marginalized communities.</p>
<p>Evaluation Criterion 2</p>	<p>Clearly and accurately identifies how social identities and intersectionality manifest in the diverse lived experiences of Jewish communities and/or other marginalized communities in general.</p>	<p>Clearly and accurately identifies how social identities and intersectionality manifest in the diverse lived experiences of Jewish communities and/or other marginalized communities in general but only notes either the specific Jewish elements or the general elements of marginalized communities but not both.</p>	<p>Only partially identifies how social identities and intersectionality manifest in the diverse lived experiences of Jewish communities and/or other marginalized communities in general.</p>	<p>Does not identify the diverse ways that social identities and intersectionality are part of a lived experience for marginalized communities or the ways that they may be significant to Jewish experiences and/or other marginalized communities in general.</p>
<p>Evaluation Criterion 3</p>	<p>Clearly and accurately points to specific texts, ideas, traditions, and histories that reflect how Jews and/or other marginalized communities have experienced both subordination and dominance.</p>	<p>Clearly and accurately points to specific texts, ideas, traditions, and histories that reflect how Jews and/or other marginalized communities have experienced both subordination and dominance, but only mentions one and not numerous sources.</p>	<p>Clearly and accurately points to specific texts, ideas, traditions, and histories that reflect how Jews and/or other marginalized communities have experienced both subordination and dominance, but only mentions one and not numerous sources. In pointing to these texts and ideas does not accurately or fully represent them.</p>	<p>Does not point to specific texts, ideas, traditions, and histories that reflect how Jews and/or other marginalized communities have experienced both subordination and dominance, but only mentions one and not numerous sources.</p>

Evaluation Criterion 4	Clearly and accurately identifies the significance of social identities and intersectionality <i>to diverse expressions</i> of religion and intersectional identities, such as gender, cultural, nationality, ethnicity, and sexual orientation	Clearly and accurately identifies the significance of social identities and intersectionality <i>to diverse expressions</i> of religion and intersectional identities, such as gender, cultural, nationality, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, but does not give concrete examples.	Partially points to and identifies the significance of social identities and intersectionality <i>to diverse expressions</i> of religion and intersectional identities, such as gender, cultural, nationality, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, but does not give concrete examples.	Does not point to or identify the significance of social identities and intersectionality <i>to diverse expressions</i> of religion and intersectional identities, such as gender, cultural, nationality, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, and does not give concrete examples.
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**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				

