Texas A&M University

Core Curriculum

Initial Request for a Course Addition to the Fall 2014 Core Curriculum

Foundational Component Area: Social and Behavioral Sciences

In the box below, describe how this course meets the Foundational Component Area description for Social and Behavioral Sciences. Courses in this category focus on the application of empirical and scientific methods that contribute to the understanding of what makes us human. Courses involve the exploration of behavior and interactions among individuals, groups, institutions, and events, examining their impact on the individual, society, and culture.

The proposed course must contain all elements of the Foundational Component Area. How does the proposed course specifically address the Foundational Component Area definition above?

This course focuses on the sociological understanding of popular culture (including the arguable distinction between “popular” and “mass” culture). The course will begin with an examination of the classic and contemporary social scientific definitions and theories of culture, and popular versus “high” or elite culture(s). In the remainder of the course, we will deal with 1) various forms and arenas of popular culture, such as television, film, and music; 2) institutions and popular culture, such as the law; and 3) Identity (race, class, gender, and sexuality) and popular culture.

Core Objectives

Describe how the proposed course develops the required core objectives below by indicating how each learning objective will be addressed, what specific strategies will be used for each objective and how student learning of each objective will be evaluated.

The proposed course is required to contain each element of the Core Objective.

Critical Thinking (to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information):

This element will be evaluated through instructor’s assessment of 1) several short pieces of analytical written work (concept papers and written discussion responses), 2) several short analytical media presentations (PowerPoint slides); these assignments assess students’ demonstration of critical engagement with various formats of popular culture in a media-literate fashion.

Communication (to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication):

This element will be evaluated through instructor’s assessment of several short analytical papers, several short PowerPoint presentations and several interactive discussion sessions addressing their own interpretations of course materials, and linking those interpretations with the empirical world. The goal is to develop their media literacy as well as their ability to present their own ideas in a nuanced and clear fashion.

Empirical and Quantitative Skills (to include the manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions):

This element will be evaluated through instructor’s assessment through in-class exercises of students’ ability to reflect upon past participation in local cultures, observe current cultural interactions, products, and values, and create sociologically analytical materials demonstrating understanding of & ability to apply theoretical frameworks. Quantitative and qualitative skills will be assessed by student’s performance on reading and creating tables that convey and analyze important aspects of different research projects.
Social Responsibility (to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities):

Understanding how cultural expression is related to civic participation is a key component of understanding social responsibility. This element will be evaluated through instructor's assessment of students' written and oral work that analyses of the multicultural and intersectional landscape of popular culture, which includes an understanding that all subgroups, identities, and communities participate in making this complex, interconnected, and often volatile landscape.

Please be aware that instructors should be prepared to submit samples/examples of student work as part of the future course recertification process.