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 is an overview of what the subfield of criminology within sociology. The course has four components. The first section of the course is on definitions of crime and victimization and how such definitions might change. The second section examines the range of social scientific and sociological theoretical explanations of crime. Different types of crime are examined in the third section. The last section considers societal reactions to crime and pressing issues in the field such as the social causes and consequences of mass imprisonment. Fundamental social scientific ideas about rules of evidence and how ideas are tested are emphasized.

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):

Students will learn the concepts and methods involved in understanding criminology in society. They will learn how to use empirical evidence to evaluate theories about crime and punishment. They will learn how to derive policy and prevention implications for some types of criminal activity from course theories and other materials. They will learn when theoretical integration is appropriate in understanding crime. This will be assessed through in-class exercises and exams.

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

Students will learn to evaluate theories of crime and empirical research regarding crime by using statistical methods and patterns of statistical trends as illustrated through visual representation of charts, graphs and statistical tables. They will also learn from qualitative information, such as written ethnographies or filmed documentaries provided in deviance research. Their understanding of this visual and oral material will be assessed through exams and short written exercises. In-class discussions within small groups will allow students to practice oral skills. This will be assessed through group presentations of exercises.

Empirical and Quantitative Skills (to include the manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions):
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Students will be able to interpret tables, figures, and qualitative narrative information regarding crime in society. They will gain a sense of understanding the concept of causality, and reliability and validity of studies conducted. They will understand the different strengths of multiple forms of data for understanding crime. This will be assessed through in class exercises and examinations.

Social Responsibility (to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities):

Students will learn how crime is socially constructed in different times and places. They will learn to assess different strategies for understanding and addressing crime and punishment in society. They will be able to make sense of real-world examples and major issues facing society. This will be assessed though in class discussions, and in-class and out of class exercises.

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