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?

The course is an introduction to the sociological study of populations, social demography. Demography is the scientific study of human populations—their size, composition, and distribution—and the changes in these factors as they occur through the three processes of fertility, mortality, and migration. The course covers structural and context factors including the role of geography as well as community; it also consider the more micro factors such as human decision making.

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 general concepts and methods of sociological, demographic analysis. They will learn to evaluate different arguments on both logical and empirical grounds. They will learn to apply demographic principles to new questions and issues. This will be assessed by class discussion and exercises, as well as exams.

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

Students will learn to evaluate different arguments presented through different modes of communication: statistical or mathematical representation, verbal, written, and visual. So for example, students are required to learn how to write about and explain statistical evidence and they engage in class discussions about different sources of evidence and argument. Students will learn about standard demographic tools which include for example, life tables, population pyramids, etc. Charts, graphs and statistical tables are important visual types of communication and students will be required to develop and interpret them.

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

A critical component of demography involves developing, critiquing, organizing and analyzing empirical data. Students will be able to interpret tables and graphs and assess the general reliability and validity of particular sources of data regarding human behavior. Assessment will be based primarily on exams, in-class or online discussion and exercises.
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 to appreciate different cultural views of the same events. Students will learn how different concerns of different stakeholders can lead to cooperation or competition. Students will learn of successful and unsuccessful attempts to influence change through population changes. Contemporary issues surrounding migration, for example, provide materials for discussion of social and civic responsibility. Discussion might center on how different migration policies affect the population characteristics, and the ability to engage effectively will be assessed through in-class discussion and in-class student presentations.

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