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?

URPN 201 – Urban Form & City Planning meets the Foundational Component Area description for Social and Behavioral Sciences by covering the following topics: what a city is, how cities work, and why and how cities evolve over time. Specifically, it discusses urban spatial structure and function, urban design and city evolution, and other key social, economic, political, and technological forces that shape city form and function. This course also introduces students to theories of urban expansion, history of urbanization and suburbanization in the United States, and local and global forces that shape urban structure.

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):

Training students on the ability to engage in reflective and independent thinking is a key component of URPN 201. Learning objectives for the course that help achieve this goal are:

L.O.1. Identify, describe, and analyze the elements of city image, pattern, and function.

Strategies used to promote critical thinking are:
1. In class questioning and answering within lectures
2. Procedural learning questioning (“how” something happened instead of “what” happened) embedded in quizzes

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

Being able to communicate clearly and effectively orally, visually, and in writing is critical to URPN 201. Learning objectives within the syllabus that seek to enhance student communication skills are:

L.O.2. Demonstrate the relationship between contemporary urban form and forces that influence urban structural change.
L.O.6. Visually present the basic elements of an urban form and discuss them orally and in writing
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Strategies used to create an atmosphere of communication are:

1. Students are questioned on the assigned reading materials and asked to discuss their answers to the entire class.
2. One assignment requires students to draw a map to show examples of five basic elements of a city image; students are also asked to discuss their city images in class with other students.
3. Students are asked to write a report on the evolution of a selected city, identify the forces that drive the changes, and present their findings to the entire class.

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

This course helps students develop empirical and quantitative skills. Learning objectives that help achieve this goal include:

L.O.1. Identify and describe the elements of city image, pattern, and function.
L.O.3. Analyze and describe city evolution over time and identify forces that drive the change.
L.O.5. Demonstrate foundational knowledge of the key socioeconomic, political, and technological forces that influence the sustainable urban future.

Strategies used to enhance students’ empirical and quantitative skills are:

1. Class lecture on major federal data sources, history and background of data collection, and demonstration of how to obtain data.
2. Assignment to familiarize students with major empirical data sources and train students in data analysis. Students are asked to obtain and analyze data on travel time, racial composition, economic status, and population of cities.

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

This course exposes students to issues of urban development and redevelopment, disparities in development outcomes, and discussions of ethical decision-making for equality. Learning objectives within the syllabus that aid in promoting personal responsibility are:

L.O.7. Understand the disparities in social impact of urban development and redevelopment
L.O.8. Understand the consequences of globalization

Strategies used to enhance personal responsibility are:

1. Students will discuss the social disparities in development and redevelopment outcomes, such as those from urban revitalization and suburbanization.
2. Students will learn about the consequences of globalization to the developed and developing countries. They will be asked to explore and reflect on the pros and cons of globalization.

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