

Social Science Criteria

Social Science courses should meet the following criteria:

1. Disciplines

- For the university requirements, the social science menu includes the following disciplines: anthropology, economics, family studies, geography, history, international studies, philosophy, political science, psychology, and sociology.¹

2. Definition

A course in the social sciences will focus on human functioning including the basic assumptions about humans, their behaviors, and the dynamics of human interaction; the relationships between humans and their physical environment; the creation and interaction with institutions of power and governance, and/or the study of how people produce, distribute and consume goods and services. A course in the social sciences should involve the study of human functioning at the level of the individual, small group, institution, organization, community, or larger population. The course will address at least of the following:

- a. At the individual level, this course may involve the study of behavioral factors such as cognition, memory, language, perception, personality, emotion, motivation, and others;
- b. At higher levels of aggregation, this course may involve the study of social variables such as the structure and dynamics of small groups (e.g., couples, families, work groups, etc.); institutions and organizations (e.g., schools, religious organizations, etc.); communities (defined by geography or common interests); and larger demographic, political, economic, and cultural systems;
- c. This course may involve the study of the interactions within and between these levels of aggregation, such as the influence of sociocultural factors on cognitive processes and emotional responses or the reciprocal influence between small groups and larger communities;
- d. The course may focus on the interpretation of past practices or the history of human functioning over time.

3. Course Content

Courses that satisfy the requirements in Social Sciences should either:

- a. Introduce students to a particular discipline within the social sciences, with an emphasis on its basic methods of inquiry, significant research findings, influential theories, key concepts and terminology, and the major topics common to the discipline; or
- b. Introduce students to a particular period of history with an emphasis on event timelines, historical biographies, and the critical debates associated with their interpretation.

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¹ The UGEC can consider requests from other disciplines.