

GENERAL EDUCATION CORE CURRICULUM  
Social and Behavioral Science Panel

Decision Rules and Precedents

Course Review Procedures

A recent instructor representative syllabus in electronic form is required by the panel for its review. If the course has yet to be taught at an institution, a sample syllabus intended for future students is still required. Institutions should submit an actual and recent syllabus.

Institutions sending a course to this panel for approval should document that the course has gone through that institution's process and verify that the course is an appropriate submission. The process should have begun at the individual instructor level, but it should have received approval of the department, curriculum committee, or other group prior to proceeding to the next step of the college's established submission process.

The submitted representative course syllabus (the one given to students) should clearly indicate the following elements:

- Course prefix, number and title
- IAI Code
- Semester credit hours
- Prerequisite information (if any): prefix course number and course title
- Delivery Modes
- Textbook or online resource used – see more detailed information below.
- Course Description
- Course Objectives
- Detailed daily or weekly schedule of material to be covered – **should go beyond chapter numbers and titles (for example: country names, religions, regions, etc.)**
- Grading information
- Methods of evaluation and assignments, including details writing assignments

General Coding Practice

A course can only be assigned to one GE Social and Behavioral Science code/description. Institutions should be clear and careful in determining which IAI code is identified for any syllabus submitted for approval. The institution should also assure that the course meets the minimum semester credit hour requirement.

Courses from the same identifier may be counted for completion of the GECC package. Students at schools *on a quarter hour calendar* may need to complete two courses to equate to a one-semester course - a common equivalency is three quarter-credits equal two semester-credits and five quarter credits equal three semester credit hours.

## Prerequisites

As a rule, general education courses should not have prerequisites. The prerequisites (including prefix, number and title) for any course to be approved as a course that will satisfy general education social and behavioral science should be listed on the submission form and in the syllabus. In addition, if a prerequisite is listed/required, a specific rationale must be provided in submission documents.

## Course Descriptions

The course description should compare favorably to the description given on the iTransfer website. Courses that do not follow the suggested description will not be approved.

## Course Content and Objectives (Student Learning Objectives)

The course content should verify the course description. An outline of the course content is expected (this could be included in the daily or weekly schedule). The objectives should state clearly the learning outcomes for students and should be stated in such a manner that it is clear how one would assess them.

## Textbooks

The syllabus should include the text that will be used for the course, the author, and date of the publication. If there are supplemental texts that will be used, these should also be listed. A recent text is required. Texts reflect and support writing, speaking, or appropriate course outcomes and requirements. As institutions pursue the opportunity to expand into online/open resource electronic text material, the panel has sought to provide some necessary guidance on citing these learning resources in submitted syllabi and documents. If any online reading or resource materials are used, provide accessible evidence which may be a complete working url or bibliographic citation. This site/resource must be active, working, and viewable by the panel. Active hyperlinks are acceptable but cannot be embedded in an online learning system.

## Schedule and Methods of Evaluation

The submission should show a weekly or daily schedule indicating how the material will be covered. This schedule will be used to determine if appropriate time is being spent on specific topics that make up the course. Do not list simply, "Chapter 1, Chapter 2," etc. The topics MUST be stated.

The means for evaluation can be given in this schedule – whether it is tests, projects, papers, etc. A grading scale should also be included and any weighting of the particular assessments.

## Writing Requirements

All course submissions must provide evidence of writing within the discipline as part of the course and of course grading criteria.

All proposals must clearly explain how writing is part of the course's content, instruction, and evaluation. Writing components may include, but are not limited to, reaction papers, journals, essay questions on exams or class assignments, and formal research papers. Submission materials must include the nature and volume of written assignments.

### Discipline Specific Concerns

**Geography** - The syllabus must contain evidence of traditional analysis, such as introducing coordinate systems. It must also include digital map analysis, such as using Google Earth to examine locations and patterns over the earth. Please provide details of how maps are used to integrate spatial analysis on cultural or world regional topics.

**History** - History courses must include primary sources and formal writing. In addition, see information regarding course approval of History courses as recommended by the IAI History major panel.

**Interdisciplinary** – Interdisciplinary courses that combine 2 or more of the social and behavioral science disciplines and that meet the following criteria will be acceptable.

“Social and behavioral science interdisciplinary courses” are those that integrate two or more disciplines in the social and behavioral sciences. Courses will be survey in nature, broad in scope, and foundational in the sense that they provide students with a basis for intellectual development and further study in the various disciplines. The relationship between the disciplines will be made explicit in the course. Textbooks and readings from those disciplines will be a significant part of the course, and methods of instruction may include instructors from more than one of the disciplines teaching jointly. On satisfactory completion of an interdisciplinary social and behavioral science course, students will

- derive a balance of the 1) concepts, 2) theories, 3) methods, and, 4) conclusions of each discipline.  
Consider: What would be the perspective of a psychologist, for example? What would be the perspective of a sociologist? How would these differ?
- gain an understanding of at least one social science and one behavioral science

#### Social Sciences

History  
Human Geography  
Economics  
Political Science

#### Behavioral Sciences

Anthropology  
Psychology  
Sociology

### Common Reasons HFA Courses Are Not Approved

In order to facilitate approval of submissions, it may be helpful to be aware of some common reasons for which courses have not been approved.

- Course does not match course description.
- Course is too broad in scope – contains too many topics.
- Course is too narrow in scope – does not cover the necessary components as described in the course description.
- Course is not a lower division course.
- Course does not include writing as specified in the course description.

## History Course Assessment Criteria

The study of history exposes students to the complexities of human nature and the development of diverse cultures, values, institutions, and major events. Upon satisfactory completion of one or more history courses, students will:

- distinguish between primary and secondary sources as the foundation of modern historical scholarship:
- interpret primary sources critically by analyzing their historical contexts
- formulate historical interpretations, both orally and in writing, and defend them critically with reference to primary and secondary sources:
- incorporate into historical interpretation, both orally and in writing, an understanding of historical causation reflecting a) knowledge of important figures and events and their chronological relationship to each other and b) an awareness of the contingent relationships among social, political, religious, intellectual, cultural and economic variables;
- *acquire at one and the same time a comprehension of diverse cultures and of shared humanity, as evidenced both orally and in writing.*

*We direct both teachers and students of history to the National History Project's delineation of "History's Habits of the Mind" as a guide to the discipline's expectations for "interpretation".*

*These are **Learning Outcomes for the Core History Courses** as identified by various sources. See below for references.*

### History's Habits of the Mind

The perspectives and modes of thoughtful judgment derived from the study of history are many, and they ought to be its principal aim. Courses in history, geography, and government should be designed to take students well beyond formal skills of critical thinking, to help them through their own learning to:

1. understand the significance of the past to their own lives, both private and public, and to their society.
2. distinguish between the important and the inconsequential, to develop the "discriminating memory" needed for a discerning judgment in public and personal life.
3. perceive past events and issues as they were experienced by people at the time, to develop historical empathy as opposed to present-mindedness.
4. acquire at one and the same time a comprehension of diverse cultures and of shared humanity.
5. understand how things happen and how things change, how human intentions matter, but also how their consequences are shaped by the means of carrying them out, in a tangle of purpose and process.
6. comprehend the interplay of change and continuity, and avoid assuming that

- either is somehow more natural, or more to be expected, than the other.
7. prepare to live with uncertainties and exasperating, even perilous, unfinished business, realizing that not all problems have solutions.
  8. grasp the complexity of historical causation, respect particularity, and avoid excessively abstract generalizations.
  9. appreciate the often tentative nature of judgments about the past, and thereby avoid the temptation to seize upon particular "lessons" or history as cures for present ills.
  10. recognize the importance of individuals who have made a difference in history, and the significance of personal character for both good and ill.
  11. appreciate the force of the non-rational, the irrational, the accidental, in history and human affairs.
  12. understand the relationship between geography and history as a matrix of time and place, and as context for events.
  13. read widely and critically in order to recognize the difference between fact and conjecture, between evidence and assertion, and thereby to frame useful questions.

Habits of Mind taken from:

Bradley Commission on History in Schools. *Building a History Curriculum: Guidelines for Teaching History in Schools*. Westlake, OH: National Council for History Education, 1995. p. 9.

[National Council for History Education, Inc.](http://www.history.ilstu.edu/nhp/habits_of_mind.html)

[http://www.history.ilstu.edu/nhp/habits\\_of\\_mind.html](http://www.history.ilstu.edu/nhp/habits_of_mind.html)