

Montana State University
Core Curriculum
Inquiry – Social Sciences Report
May 5, 2023

Overview

Purpose: The subcommittee members were assigned to review 10 randomly assigned course syllabi and materials provided and provide feedback on whether they meet the criteria for standards of the social sciences inquiry core quality.

Subcommittee Members: David Parker, Kenneth Silvestri, Mark Schure

Core Perspective Definition: Courses in the Social Sciences will emphasize methods and principles used by social scientists to systematically study human behavior.

Methods

The committee used the Qualtrics survey platform to assess each course with the following questions:

1. Do the syllabi for the following courses reflect the intention of the Core perspective designation? *Response options: Yes; Yes, with changes; and No*
2. Do you have additional feedback on the syllabi and how they match (or not) the Core perspective based upon your answers to the previous question? *Open-ended response*
3. Do the assignment examples attached to the syllabi of the following courses permit students to attain the Core Perspective learning outcomes as defined? *Response options: Yes; Yes, with changes; and No*
4. Do you have additional feedback on the assignments based upon your answers to the previous question? *Open-ended response*

Each committee member independently reviewed and submitted their responses. The following courses were reviewed: AGBE 210IS, ANTY 215IS, BMGT 240IS, ECNS 101IS, EDU 222IS, HDFS 101IS, PSCI 210IS, PSYX 100IS, SOCI 101IS, and SOCI 221IS. Dr. Parker compiled the responses for further comment and discussion.

Results

1. *Do the syllabi reflect the intention of the Core Perspective definition?*
Overall, each course syllabi reflected the intention of the social science inquiry definition. One exception was BMGT 240IS because of the question raised as to whether business problems are social problems. Recommendations to address listed below.
2. *Do the assignment examples attached to the syllabus permit students to attain the Core Perspective learning outcomes as defined?*
The committee unanimously agreed that PSCI 221IS, BMGT 240IS, and SOCI 221IS assignment examples aligned with the Core Perspective learning outcomes.

For the following courses, there were mixed responses to this question: AGBE 210IS, ANTY 215IS, ECNS 101IS, EDU 222IS, HDFS 101IS, PSYX 100IS, and SOCI 101IS. The reasons for this stems from the fact that many did not provide specific assignments but summarized or listed exercises and lectures that speak to the core perspective. For example, it is difficult to determine whether quizzes or exams are assessing the Social Science Inquiry perspective outcomes without seeing examples of those questions.

EDU 221IS presented the biggest problem: It would be helpful to see more explicit and clear examples of assignments and lectures etc to make an assessment.

Recommendations

As stated above, the committee felt it would be more useful to see specific examples of assignments, course materials, and lecture content to better assess whether a course meets the standards for this core curriculum perspective.

The committee expressed the need to be more specific with how the social science inquiry perspective is defined. As currently stated, the definition is vague and does not detail the diverse social science methods used in the field.