

Social Science General Education Annual Assessment Report 2008-09

I. Introduction

The Social Science General Education Program serves all OIT degree students, who are each required to take twelve credits in this general education area. The program offers courses in anthropology, economics, geography, history, political science, psychology, and sociology. The program also offers a number of online courses to serve degree completion students as well as on-campus students.

II. Program Purpose, Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes

The Social Science faculty reviewed the program purpose, objectives, and learning outcomes during the fall faculty meeting in September 2008. The faculty reaffirmed the statements below:

Social Science General Education Program Purpose

The Social Science general education program assists students in acquiring empirical knowledge of those aspects of human experience that are social, political, economic, and psychological.

Program Educational Objectives

1. Foster intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, and logical reasoning.
2. Develop knowledge of quantitative and qualitative methods for understanding human behavior.
3. Provide an introductory understanding of the structures and processes of social institutions and individual behavior within cultures.

Expected Program Learning Outcomes

Graduates from this program will be able to:

1. Structure, analyze, evaluate, and support an argument both orally and in writing in the social sciences.
2. Interpret, compare, and contrast ideas in the social sciences.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of the methods, techniques, concepts, and vocabularies of the social sciences.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of historical and contemporary issues in the social sciences.

III. Two-Year Cycle for Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

The faculty also confirmed the assessment cycle planned last year, as listed in Table 1 below.

Learning Outcomes	'07-08	'08-09	'09-10	'10-11	'11-12	'12-13
1. Structure, analyze, evaluate, and support an argument both orally and in writing in the social sciences.	X		X		X	
2. Interpret, compare, and contrast ideas in the social sciences.	X		X		X	
3. Demonstrate knowledge of the methods, techniques, concepts, and vocabularies of the social sciences.		X		X		X
4. Demonstrate knowledge of historical and contemporary issues.		X		X		X

Table 1. Social Science General Education Assessment Cycle

IV. Summary of 2008-09 Assessment Activities

The Social Science faculty conducted formal assessment of two student learning outcomes during 2008-09.

Student Learning Outcome #3: Demonstrate knowledge of the methods, techniques, concepts, and vocabularies of the social sciences.

Direct Assessment #1

The faculty assessed this outcome in PSY 201 in Fall and Winter using pre-existing mid-term examination questions. Students also completed a self assessment in Winter. In the Fall a total of 133 students in two sections who ranged from Freshman to Senior were assessed. In the Winter a total of 50 students in one section who ranged from Freshman to Senior were assessed. The faculty rated the proficiency of students using the performance criteria described in Tables 2 and 3 below. The students rated their abilities using a questionnaire, as shown in Table 4 below.

Performance Criteria	Assessment Method	Measurement Scale	Minimum Acceptable Performance	Results
Uses appropriate social science vocabulary	Six Exam questions	# of correct answers	70% at 4 or more correct	54.5%
Explains social science concepts correctly	Five Exam questions	# of correct answers	70% at 3 or more correct	87.9%
Identifies appropriate social science techniques	Five Exam questions	# of correct answers	70% at 3 or more correct	78.0%
Applies social science methods to solve problem presented	One Exam question	# of correct answers	70% at 1 correct	91.7%

Table 2 Assessment Results for SLO #3 in PSY 201 for Fall 2008

Performance Criteria	Assessment Method	Measurement Scale	Minimum Acceptable Performance	Results
Uses appropriate social science vocabulary	Six Exam questions	# of correct answers	70% at 4 or more correct	56.0%
Explains social science concepts correctly	Five Exam questions	# of correct answers	70% at 3 or more correct	84.0%
Identifies appropriate social science techniques	Five Exam questions	# of correct answers	70% at 3 or more correct	82.0%
Applies social science methods to solve problem presented	One Exam question	# of correct answers	70% at 1 correct	80.0%

Table 3 Assessment Results for SLO #3 in PSY 201 for Winter 2009

Performance Criteria	Assessment Method	Measurement Scale	Minimum Acceptable Performance	Results
Uses appropriate social science vocabulary	Questionnaire	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	NA	53.1%
Explains social science concepts correctly	Questionnaire	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	NA	65.6%
Identifies appropriate social science techniques	Questionnaire	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	NA	62.5%
Applies social science methods to solve problem presented	Questionnaire	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	NA	56.2%

Table 4 Student self-assessment for SLO #3 in PSY 201 in Winter 2009

Students exceeded the standard for three of the performance criteria: Explains social science concepts correctly; Identifies appropriate social science techniques; Applies social science methods to solve problem presented. Students did not meet the standard for one performance criteria: Uses appropriate social science vocabulary. Faculty examined teaching methods for the course and provided additional instruction related to social science vocabulary in the Winter term. These changes did not have a significant effect – faculty will re-examine teaching methods and the method used to assess the SLO and implement changes in future courses.

Students rated themselves as less able in most SLO areas than their actual performance demonstrated, with the exception of the question “Uses appropriate social science vocabulary” which was in line with their actual performance. It appears that students have a realistic view of their abilities. As a result, this SLO was not self-assessed again this school year.

Direct Assessment #2

The faculty assessed this outcome in HIST 224 in Fall using a four-page term paper assignment on technology during the Medieval period and assessed it again in HIST 225 in Winter using a different essay topic on railroads in the 19th century. Thirteen students were assessed in the Fall and eight students were assessed in the Winter, most of whom were at the freshman/sophomore level. The faculty rated the proficiency of students using the performance criteria described in Tables 5 and 6 below.

Performance Criteria	Assessment Method	Measurement Scale	Minimum Acceptable Performance	Results
Uses appropriate social science vocabulary	Term paper, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	100.0%
Explains social science concepts correctly	Term paper, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	92.3%
Identifies appropriate social science techniques	Term paper, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	76.9%
Applies social science methods to solve problem presented	Term paper, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	84.6%

Table 5 Assessment Results for SLO #3 in HIST 224 for Fall 2008

Performance Criteria	Assessment Method	Measurement Scale	Minimum Acceptable Performance	Results
Uses appropriate social science vocabulary	Term paper, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	87.5%
Explains social science concepts correctly	Term paper, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	87.5%
Identifies appropriate social science techniques	Term paper, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	87.5%
Applies social science methods to solve problem presented	Term paper, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	75.0%

Table 6 Assessment Results for SLO #3 in HIST 225 for Winter 2009

Students in HIST 224 exceeded the standard for three of the performance criteria: Uses appropriate social science vocabulary; Explains social science concepts correctly; Applies social science methods to solve problem presented. Students did not meet the standard for one performance criteria: Identifies appropriate social science techniques. Faculty examined teaching methods for the course and provided additional instruction related to social science problem-solving methods in the Winter term during the similar class HIST 225. Students met this criterion in HIST 225 with this adjustment.

Students in HIST 225 exceeded the standard for three of the performance criteria: Uses appropriate social science vocabulary; Explains social science concepts correctly;

Identifies appropriate social science techniques. Students did not meet the standard for one performance criteria: Applies social science methods to solve problem presented. Faculty examined teaching methods for the course and will provide additional instruction related to social science problem-solving methods in future classes. Because students were close to meeting the criterion, and because they met the criterion in the first assessment, the faculty will not take action at this time on this item.

Indirect Assessment

The faculty indirectly assessed this outcome in HIST 225 in Winter by asking students to rate themselves on the assignment above using a questionnaire as shown in Table 7 below.

Performance Criteria	Assessment Method	Measurement Scale	Minimum Acceptable Performance	Results
Uses appropriate social science vocabulary	Questionnaire	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	NA	80.0%
Explains social science concepts correctly	Questionnaire	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	NA	80.0%
Identifies appropriate social science techniques	Questionnaire	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	NA	40.0%
Applies social science methods to solve problem presented	Questionnaire	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	NA	40.0%

Table 7 Student self-assessment for SLO #3 in HIST 225 in Winter 2009

Students rated themselves as less able in most SLO areas than their actual performance demonstrated. It appears that students have a realistic view of their abilities. As a result, this SLO was not assessed again this school year.

Detailed records of this assessment can be found in the department assessment coordinator’s notebook.

Student Learning Outcome #4. Demonstrate knowledge of historical and contemporary issues

Direct Assessment #1

The faculty assessed this outcome in HIST 201 in Fall using a four-page term paper of the employment of mill girls at the Lowell factory complex and assessed it in HIST 202 in Winter using a different essay assignment on middle class life in the United States at the end of the 19th century. Ten students were assessed in the Fall, all freshman and sophomores. Twenty students were assessed in the Winter, from freshman to seniors. The faculty rated the proficiency of students using the performance criteria described in Tables 8 and 9 below.

Performance Criteria	Assessment Method	Measurement Scale	Minimum Acceptable Performance	Results
Lists historical events accurately	Term paper, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	100%
Identifies relevant evidence related to historical events	Term paper, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	80%
Uses historical evidence to support arguments	Term paper, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	70%
Relates historical events to contemporary issues	Term paper, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	70%

Table 8 Assessment Results for SLO #4 in HIST 201 in Fall 2008

Performance Criteria	Assessment Method	Measurement Scale	Minimum Acceptable Performance	Results
Lists historical events accurately	Term paper, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	100%
Identifies relevant evidence related to historical events	Term paper, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	95%
Uses historical evidence to support arguments	Term paper, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	90%
Relates historical events to contemporary issues	Term paper, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	85%

Table 9 Assessment Results for SLO #4 in HIST 202 in Winter 2009

Students in the Fall met or exceeded the standard for two of the performance criteria: Lists historical events accurately; Identifies relevant evidence related to historical events. Students did not meet the standard for two performance criteria: Uses historical evidence to support arguments; Relates historical events to contemporary issues. Faculty examined teaching methods for the course and provided additional instruction related to using historical evidence to support arguments and relating historical events to contemporary issues in the Winter term during the similar class HIST 202. Students in the Winter met or exceeded the standard for all of the performance criteria.

Direct Assessment #2

The faculty assessed this outcome in ANTH 335 in Fall. Students were primarily junior and senior Civil Engineering students. Students were assigned a seven page paper that tasked them with discussing the history of American urban planning and relate this history to the current state of American cities and recent trends in American urban planning theory and practice. Ten papers were received. One of these was half of the assigned length and clearly is not reflective of that student's overall abilities. However, it was retained in the following analysis. The faculty rated the proficiency of students using the performance criteria described in Table 10 below.

Performance Criteria	Assessment Method	Measurement Scale	Minimum Acceptable Performance	Results
Lists historical events accurately	Term paper, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	80%
Identifies relevant evidence related to historical events	Term paper, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	80%
Uses historical evidence to support arguments	Term paper, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	80%
Relates historical events to contemporary issues	Term paper, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	80%

Table 10 Assessment Results for SLO #4 in ANTH 335 for Fall 2008

Students demonstrated a satisfactory proficiency for SLO#4 for all four performance criteria. Since performance was satisfactory, this class was not assessed again this academic year.

Indirect Assessment

The faculty indirectly assessed this outcome in HIST 202 in Winter by asking students to rate themselves on the assignments above, using a similar rubric to that used by faculty to assess their performance. These results are summarized using the same performance criteria, as shown in Table 11 below.

Performance Criteria	Assessment Method	Measurement Scale	Minimum Acceptable Performance	Results
Lists historical events accurately	Questionnaire	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	NA	94.4%
Identifies relevant evidence related to historical events	Questionnaire	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	NA	94.4%
Uses historical evidence to support arguments	Questionnaire	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	NA	83.3%
Relates historical events to contemporary issues	Questionnaire	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	NA	81.9%

Table 11 Student self-assessment for SLO #3 in HIST 202 in Winter 2009

Students demonstrated a satisfactory proficiency for SLO#4 for all four performance criteria. Since performance was satisfactory, this class was not assessed again this academic year.

Detailed records of this assessment can be found in the department assessment coordinator's notebook.

V. Summary of Student Learning (completed after spring 2009 faculty meeting)

Student learning Outcome # 3: Demonstrate knowledge of the methods, techniques, concepts, and vocabularies of the social sciences.

Strengths: Students demonstrated acceptable performance on most performance criteria for this SLO, including: uses appropriate social science vocabulary, explains social science concepts correctly, identifies appropriate social science techniques, and applies social science methods to solve problem presented.

Weaknesses: Students in PSY 201 failed to demonstrate acceptable performance in the performance criteria: uses appropriate social science vocabulary.

Actions: Faculty were unable to determine if the failure of students in PSY 201 to demonstrate acceptable performance was due to an actual failure of understanding or was an artifact of the testing method used. Faculty decided to use a different testing instrument to assess this performance criteria in the future.

Student Learning Outcome #4: Demonstrate knowledge of historical and contemporary issues in the social sciences.

Strengths: Students demonstrated acceptable performance on most performance criteria for this SLO, including: lists historical events accurately, identifies relevant evidence related to historical events, uses historical evidence to support arguments, and relates historical events to contemporary issues.

Weaknesses: None

Actions: None

VI. Changes Resulting From Assessment

Student learning Outcome # 3: Demonstrate knowledge of the methods, techniques, concepts, and vocabularies of the social sciences.

Students in HIST 224 exceeded the standard for three of the performance criteria: Uses appropriate social science vocabulary; Explains social science concepts correctly; Applies social science methods to solve problem presented. Students did not meet the standard for one performance criteria: Identifies appropriate social science techniques. Faculty examined teaching methods for the course and provided additional instruction related to social science problem-solving methods in the Winter term during the similar class HIST 225. Students met this criterion in HIST 225 with this adjustment.

Student Learning Outcome #4: Demonstrate knowledge of historical and contemporary issues in the social sciences.

Students in the Fall met or exceeded the standard for two of the performance criteria: Lists historical events accurately; Identifies relevant evidence related to historical events. Students did not meet the standard for two performance criteria: Uses historical evidence to support arguments; Relates historical events to contemporary issues. Faculty examined teaching methods for the course and provided additional instruction related to using historical evidence to support arguments and relating historical events to contemporary issues in the Winter term during the similar class HIST 202. Students in the Winter met or exceeded the standard for all of the performance criteria.

Appendix A
Student Learning Outcome-Course Matrices

Student Learning Outcome #3: Demonstrate knowledge of the methods, techniques, concepts, and vocabularies of the social sciences. Table A1 demonstrates the mapping of this outcome to Social Science courses.

Social Science Course	Fall	Winter	Spring
ANTH 102 Archeology		IE	
ANTH 103 Cultural	IE		IE
ANTH 335 Built Environment	IE		IE
ANTH 452 Globalization		IE	IE
GEOG 106	IE		
GEOG 107		IE	
GEOG 108			IE
HIST 101	IE		
HIST 102		IE	
HIST 103			IE
HIST 201	IE		
HIST 202		IE	
HIST 203			IE
HIST 215 Western	IE		
HIST 216 Military			IE
HIST 224	IE		
HIST 225		IE	
HIST 226			IE
HIST 335 Engineering		IE	
HIST 356 Energy		IE	IE
HIST 392 Asia	IE		
PSCI 201			
PSCI 250	IE	IE	IE
PSCI 326 World	R		
PSCI 355 Conflict		R	
PSCI 497 US Foreign			R
PSY 201	IE	IE	IE
PSY 202	IE	IE	IE
PSY 203	IE	IE	IE
PSY 215	IE		
PSY 216		IE	
PSY 311		R	
PSY 312			R
PSY 347			
PSY 410			
SOC 204	IE	IE	IE
SOC 304 Criminology	R		

Table A1. Student Learning Outcome #3-Course Matrix

Student Learning Outcome #4: Demonstrate knowledge of historical and contemporary issues. Table A2 demonstrates the mapping of this outcome to Social Science courses.

Social Science Course	Fall	Winter	Spring
ANTH 102 Archeology		IE	
ANTH 103 Cultural	IE		IE
ANTH 335 Built Environment	IE		IE
ANTH 452 Globalization		IE	IE
GEOG 106	IE		
GEOG 107		IE	
GEOG 108			IE
HIST 101	IE		
HIST 102		IE	
HIST 103			IE
HIST 201	IE		
HIST 202		IE	
HIST 203			IE
HIST 215 Western	IE		
HIST 216 Military			IE
HIST 224	IE		
HIST 225		IE	
HIST 226			IE
HIST 335 Engineering		IE	
HIST 356 Energy		IE	IE
HIST 392 Asia	IE		
PSCI 201			
PSCI 250	IE	IE	IE
PSCI 326 World	R		
PSCI 355 Conflict		R	
PSCI 497 US Foreign			R
PSY 201	IE	IE	IE
PSY 202	IE	IE	
PSY 203		IE	IE
PSY 215	I		
PSY 216		I	
PSY 311		I	
PSY 312			I
PSY 347			
PSY 410			
SOC 204	IE	IE	IE
SOC 304 Criminology	R		

Table A2. Student Learning Outcome #4-Course Matrix