

# **Social Science General Education Annual Assessment Report 2011-12**

## **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 2011. The faculty reaffirmed the statements below:

### **Social Science General Education Program Purpose**

The Social Science general education program assists students in the 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 in 2007, 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 2011-12 Assessment Activities

Social sciences faculty conducted a formal assessment of two student learning outcomes during Spring term 2012.

#### **Student Learning Outcome #1: Structure, analyze, evaluate, and support an argument both orally and in writing in the social sciences.**

The Social Science faculty conducted an analysis of where this outcome is reflected in the curriculum. The mapping of this outcome to social science courses can be found in Appendix A, Student Learning Outcome-Course Matrix, table A1.

The faculty assessed student work from the online version of ANTH 452 Globalization using pre-existing video-based discussions in the Spring quarter. Eleven engineering and management students who ranged from Junior to Senior in one section of ANTH 452 were assessed. The faculty rated the proficiency of students using the performance criteria described in Table 2 below for criteria 1, 2, and 4 (the assignment did not ask the students to perform in the area of criteria 3, an error that was not caught before assessment took place).

| Performance Criteria  | Assessment Method     | Measurement Scale        | Minimum Acceptable Performance | Results |
|---|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|---------|
| Uses appropriate organizational structure to present arguments            | Student video, rubric | 1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4 | 80% at 3 or 4                  | 82%     |
| Separates arguments into appropriate parts and shows their interrelations | Student video, rubric | 1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4 | 80% at 3 or 4                  | 72%     |
| Evaluates the validity of evidence  | Student video, rubric | 1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4 | 80% at 3 or 4                  | NA      |
| Selects appropriate evidence to support arguments                         | Student video, rubric | 1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4 | 80% at 3 or 4                  | 82%     |

Table 2 Assessment Results for SLO #1 in ANTH 452 for Spring 2012

Students met the assessment criteria for two of the three areas. Further assessment will be performed during 2012-13.

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

### **Student Learning Outcome #2: Interpret, compare, and contrast ideas in the social sciences.**

The Social Science faculty conducted an analysis of where this outcome is reflected in the curriculum. The mapping of this outcome to social science courses can be found in Appendix A, Student Learning Outcome-Course Matrices, table A2.

The faculty assessed student work from the online version of HIST 356 History of Energy using an existing mid-term essay examination. Sixteen engineering students who ranged from Junior to Senior in one section of HIST 356 were assessed. The faculty rated the proficiency of students using the performance criteria described in Table 3 and below.

| Performance Criteria   | Assessment Method            | Measurement Scale        | Minimum Acceptable Performance | Results |
|--|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|---------|
| Defines key concepts in the social sciences                      | Mid-Term Examination, rubric | 1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4 | 80% at 3 or 4                  | 87.5%   |
| Identifies similarities in different social science theories     | Mid-Term Examination, rubric | 1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4 | 80% at 3 or 4                  | 87.5%   |
| Identifies differences between different social science theories | Mid-Term Examination, rubric | 1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4 | 80% at 3 or 4                  | 87.5%   |

Table 3 Assessment Results for SLO #2 in HIST 356 for Fall 2012

Students in HIST 356 met the assessment criteria in all areas – no further assessment was performed.

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

## **V. Summary of Student Learning**

Student Learning Outcome #1: Structure, analyze, evaluate, and support an argument both orally and in writing in the social sciences.

Strengths: Students met the performance criteria for two of the three criteria measured.

Weaknesses: One criterion fell below standard and one criterion was not evaluated.

Actions: The criterion that fell below standard and the criterion that was not evaluated will be re-assessed in the 2012-13 assessment cycle.

Student Learning Outcome #2: Interpret, compare, and contrast ideas in the social sciences.

Strengths: Students met the goals for all criteria

Weaknesses: None

Actions: None.

## **VI. Changes Resulting From Assessment**

No issues remain unresolved from the 2010-11 assessment cycle.

Changes have been made to ANTH 452 as a result of assessment of SLO #3, performance criteria “Demonstrate knowledge of the methods, techniques, concepts, and vocabularies of the social sciences.” Failure to meet the standard set for the performance criteria “Separates arguments into appropriate parts and shows their interrelations” was largely a result of students not clearly separating the two elements of the assignment prompt: discuss the impacts of neoliberal economic policies on the food system in general, and give a particular example. Three out of eleven students did a sub-standard job of keeping these two elements separate enough to then show their interrelationships. Given the overall depth of knowledge demonstrated by the students on this topic, the faculty believe that reinforcing this element more clearly in the prompt would alleviate this problem. This finding should inform our future assessment activities of this SLO, as this is element is the easiest for students to overlook in the structure of an oral presentation.

No changes were made as a result of assessment of SLO #4, performance criteria “Demonstrate knowledge of historical and contemporary issues in the social sciences.”

## Appendix A

### Student Learning Outcome-Course Matrices

**Student Learning Outcome #1: Structure, analyze, evaluate, and support an argument both orally and in writing in the social sciences. Table A1 demonstrates the mapping of this outcome to social science courses.**

| <b>Social Science Course</b> | <b>Fall</b> | <b>Winter</b> | <b>Spring</b> |
|------------------------------|-------------|---------------|---------------|
| ANTH 335                     |             | X             |               |
| ANTH 452                     |             |               | X             |
| GEOG 106                     | X           |               |               |
| GEOG 107                     |             | X             |               |
| HIST 101                     | X           |               |               |
| HIST 102                     |             | X             |               |
| HIST 103                     |             |               | X             |
| HIST 201                     | X           |               |               |
| HIST 202                     |             | X             |               |
| HIST 203                     |             |               | X             |
| HIST 224                     | X           |               |               |
| HIST 225                     |             | X             |               |
| HIST 226                     |             |               | X             |
| HIST 335                     | X           |               |               |
| HIST 356                     | X           | X             | X             |
| PSCI 201                     |             |               |               |
| PSY 311                      | X           | X             | X             |
| PSY 312                      |             | X             | X             |
| PSY 347                      | X           | X             | X             |
| PSY 410                      | X           | X             | X             |

**Table A1. Student Learning Outcome #1-Course Matrix**

**Student Learning Outcome #2: Interpret, compare, and contrast ideas in the social sciences. Table A2 demonstrates the mapping of this outcome to social science courses.**

| <b>Social Science Course</b> | <b>Fall</b> | <b>Winter</b> | <b>Spring</b> |
|------------------------------|-------------|---------------|---------------|
| ANTH 335                     |             | X             |               |
| ANTH 452                     |             |               | X             |
| ECO 201N                     | X           | X             | X             |
| ECO 202N                     | X           | X             | X             |
| GEOG 106                     | X           |               |               |
| GEOG 107                     |             | X             |               |
| GEOG 108                     |             |               | X             |
| HIST 335                     | X           |               |               |
| HIST 356                     | X           | X             | X             |
| PSCI 201                     |             |               |               |
| PSY 311                      | X           | X             | X             |
| PSY 312                      |             | X             | X             |
| PSY 347                      | X           | X             | X             |
| PSY 410                      | X           | X             | X             |
| SOC 204                      | X           | X             | X             |

**Table A2. Student Learning Outcome #2-Course Matrix**