

CALIFORNIA STATE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY, POMONA

ACADEMIC SENATE

GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

REPORT TO

THE ACADEMIC SENATE

GE-011-201

SOC 2201: Introduction to Sociology (GE Sub-area A3)

General Education Committee

Date: 03/17/2021

Executive Committee
Received and Forwarded

Date: 03/03/2021

Academic Senate

Date: 03/10/2021
First Reading

TITLE OF REFERRAL: GE-011-201: SOC 2201: Introduction to Sociology (Modification)

BACKGROUND:

This is a modification of an existing D3 course to an area A3 Critical Thinking course.

RESOURCES CONSULTED:

Office of Academic Programs, English and Philosophy Departments.

DISCUSSION:

On Wednesday, February 17, 2021, the General Education Committee approved referral GE-011-201 for consideration by the Executive Committee. This referral involves the transfer of SOC 2201: Introduction to Sociology from the now defunct GE sub-area D3, to GE sub-area A3. As the inclusion of any new course in sub-area A3 is liable to raise serious concerns by the departments that already have courses in that area (Philosophy and English and Modern Languages) the Committee has decided to issue the following statement regarding its decision.

1. As the inclusion of a new course in sub-area A3 course would affect the two departments with courses already in the area the GE committee, according to standard procedure, reached out to the chairs of both the Philosophy (Dr. Dale Turner) and English and Modern Languages (Dr. Alison Baker) Departments, to provide them with the opportunity to comment on the referral and make clear any concerns they might have. On Thursday, November 19, 2020, Shonn Haren, representing the GE subcommittee reviewing this referral contacted both Drs. Turner and Baker seeking their comments on the referral (see Appendix B). Dr. Baker made no reply. Dr. Turner replied in brief, noting that the course in question had been rejected in the past and, unless major changes had been made to the course content, it did not adequately address argument analysis. On those grounds, Dr. Turner voiced his opposition to the inclusion of the course into sub-area A3 (see Appendix B).
2. The initial decision of the committee made during our meeting on Wednesday, January 27, 2021 essentially agreed with Dr. Turner's position. The subcommittee report on SOC 2201 found the course lacking in the following areas:
 - a. The description of the course, and the description of course content failed to demonstrate explicitly how the course met the description for GE sub-area A3.
 - b. The size, purpose and criteria for evaluation of the writing assignment for this course needed to be fleshed out with greater detail.
 - c. The structure and method of evaluation for in-class debates also required greater detail.
 - d. A more detailed mapping of the methods of evaluation used in the class to the GE Student Learning Outcomes being evaluated was required.

An email was sent to the Associate Chair of the Sociology Department (Dr. Brianne DaVila) on Thursday, January 28, 2021 detailing why the course had failed the GE Committee's evaluation and explaining that the problems listed above would have to be resolved in a revised course ECO in order for the Committee to change its decision (see Appendix A). The Sociology Department was given until Wednesday, February 17 to make the requested changes. The ECO was resubmitted to the committee on Tuesday, February 16 and re-evaluated by the committee during our meeting of Wednesday February 17. The Committee determined that all of the required changes had been made and voted unanimously to send the referral on to the Executive Committee. It is the position of the GE committee that this course meets the specifications laid out for a sub-area A3 course. After the decision of the GE Committee, Chair Quinn sent the revised course to Dr. Turner, who responded still voicing his opposition to the course (see Appendix B.2). The message was forwarded to the Committee, though they did not deem the argument overrode our support for the course.

3. The inclusion of a Sociology course into sub-area A3 is neither revolutionary nor unprecedented. A review of the A3 courses being offered by 21 other CSU's (Cal Maritime and Cal Poly Pomona excluded) reveal that Sociology courses are offered as A3 courses at four of our sister institutions: Fresno State, CSU Bakersfield, CSU San Bernardino, and Sacramento State. Fresno State actually offers 2 Sociology courses in this GE sub-area. There are also numerous courses from various disciplines from our sister CSU intuitions that offer Area A3 Critical Thinking (Appendix C, Sociology courses highlighted). Therefore, in endorsing this course for inclusion into sub-area A3, the GE Committee is not establishing any new precedent, but rather following a well-trodden path walked by numerous campuses before us.

On the grounds cited above, the GE Committee approved this course to be referred to the Executive Committee and endorses its inclusion into GE sub-area A3 and is compliant with the CSU Breadth Requirements for Area A3 and the GE Committee Rubric for that GE Area (Appendix D).

For more information see the course in Curriculog.

RECOMMENDATION:

The GE Committee recommends Senate pass the modification referral, GE-011-201: SOC 2201: Introduction to Sociology (Modification).