GENERAL EDUCATION COURSE PROPOSAL

WEBER STATE UNIVERSITY

**SOCIAL SCIENCE**

Area: **SOCIAL SCIENCE**

Date: October 23, 2014

College: College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

Department: Political Science / Women and Gender Studies

Catalog Abbreviation: POLS / WGS

Catalog Title: Human Rights in the World

Course Number: 2500

Credit Hours: 3

Substantive: X

New: X

Revised: \_\_\_\_\_\_

Renewal \_\_\_\_\_

Effective Date: Fall 2015

Course description as you want it to appear in the catalog:

Human rights (HR) are a powerful idea in the modern world, but also the focus of controversy. This course will provide students with a broad foundation in human rights including the ability to analyze HR in domestic and int’l law, examine prevention and prosecution techniques, and debate current issues at home and abroad. Emphasis will be placed on women and gender studies (including LGBT issues), vulnerable populations such as refugees, and atrocity crimes.

**SOCIAL SCIENCE GENERAL EDUCATION MISSION STATEMENT**

*The mission of the Social Science general education area is twofold: 1. to provide students with a basic understanding of humans and their behavior within their environments; and 2. to assist students in their efforts to contribute to society in their particular professions and as responsible citizens of their various communities.*

*General Education - Social Science Emphasis Page 2*

**SOCIAL SCIENCE LEARNING OUTCOMES**

All courses proposed for inclusion in the social science breadth category must address at least **two** of the skill criteria listed below. (Mark all that apply.)

\_X\_ Written, oral, or graphic communication

\_\_\_ Abstract logic or reasoning

\_\_\_\_ Use of information technology

\_\_\_\_ Use of library or other research sources

\_X\_ Critical thinking, cognitive learning, and individual or group problem solving

\_\_\_\_ Collaborative group problem solving

Justification:

Within the Human Rights course, the student has to write 10 “current events analyses” that connects the reading materials and in-class discussions to current events happening throughout the world. They then have to present these events to the class on Friday’s where the entire class then has to discuss human rights in the world. This allows for continual improvement on written assignments and allows multiple opportunities for debate and discussion. The written assignments require logic and reasoning to link the theoretical, philosophical and legal frameworks established in the beginning of the course to the events contained within the New York Times.

A student completing a social science general education course should be able to accomplish **three** of the following five outcomes. (Mark all that apply.)

\_X\_ Describe a social science approach to studying and understanding human behavior.

\_\_\_\_ Describe basic assumptions about humans and their behaviors from a social science perspective.

\_\_\_\_\_ Explain the basic elements and operation of a sociocultural system.

\_\_X\_ Explain the interactions between individuals and their sociocultural and/or natural environments.

\_\_X\_ Apply a social science perspective to a particular issue and identify factors impacting change (past or present).

Justification:

Within the human rights course we will be examining human rights from various frameworks including the political science framework with discussions on philosophical and legal approaches to the same topic. We will discuss the differences in legal understandings of human rights, the political and international policies that actually get created (reality vs. legality), and the basic assumptions of various societies (Western vs. Eastern, developed north versus undeveloped south, etc.). We will discuss how society interacts with different minorities, race, sexual orientation, gender, etc. We will also discuss practice of human rights law and prevention of human rights abuses.

**COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING**

1. Has this proposal been discussed with and approved by the department?

yes

2. List those general education courses in other departments with similar subject matter and explain how this course differs.

WGS

Within women and gender studies there is only one other gen ed course (1500 SS/DV) Introduction to Women’s Studies. This will add a second gen ed course to the program and this one will also be a required course for the major. The 1500 course is an introduction to the topic of women and gender, and introduces basic theories and modes of thinking regarding these topics.

The human rights course adds a 2000 general education course to WGS. Previously there has not been a 2000 level course in this program. Students who take a 1000 level and learn the basic backgrounds of feminist and gender theories are not always equipped to then enter a 3000 or 4000 level course which requires more intense research, critical thinking, and analytical skills.

By creating a 2000 level course we will be bridging this gap. WGS 2500 will stress the development of critical thinking skills through the use of multiple, short written projects which includes analysis of human rights policies throughout the world. The repetition of written assignments and the subsequent discussion of these will expose students to critical thinking skills, and allow them to practice and improve on these skills on a weekly basis.

In addition, the new course program description of Women and Gender Studies is that “Faculty and students address questions within the context of a transnational world. This course will provide the context for that new program description.

POLS

Due to the changes in the diversity policy that requires all diversity courses to be general education, the political science department lost 4 courses which counted as diversity: POLS 3630 Identity Politics, POLS 4160 Third World Women, POLS Sex Roles and the Law, and WS 3050 Feminist Theories. Due to changes in faculty, two of those four are no longer being taught (Third World Women and Sex Roles and the Law) and will be deleted with the forthcoming Political Science program changes. The two classes which remain will be taught; however, they remain specialized courses, not general education.

This leaves the political science department with no diversity classes, something which does not reflect political reality nor serve the students’ needs. This course has been designed to teach diversity and thus is also being submitted to the general education and diversity committees.

Political Science has three other general education courses: Intro to International Politics, Intro to Comparative Politics, and Intro to Political Theory. None of these courses have a similar topic to Human Rights and thus the very subject matter is different. None of these are capable of addressing the topic in-depth either.

General Catalog

There are no other related courses on campus anymore. A class on nationalism and human rights use to be taught (upper level only); however, the faculty member has retired from political science and no new courses on the topic have been created to date.

3. If the proposed new general education course affects course requirements or enrollments in other departments, list the departments and programs involved and attach comments from each.

N/A

4. Attach a course syllabus. Include the number of contact hours per week and the format of these hours (e.g., lecture, lab, field trip, etc.).

Attached

**New Courses Only:**

5. Discuss how you will assess student learning outcomes associated with this course

Written and oral communication, abstract logic or reasoning, and critical thinking will be assessed via several methods. One of the primary methods is the current event analyses which require the student to be able to understand the philosophical, legal, and political underpinnings of human rights and be able to provide written analysis of current events that are happening throughout the world. One day a week is devoted to arguing, debating, and discussing these current events in the frameworks previously mentioned.

“An **"A/ A- (10-9 points)"** will be a minimum of 1 page, maximum of 2 pages. I have noticed a trend that most papers with these grades tend to be 2 pages because it requires that much space to make your arguments and/or analysis.

These papers will link the current events assignments to the subjects we have been talking about in class and/or the readings that have been assigned.  They will explain why events are happening and using reasoning and critical thinking to link the event to the theoretical frameworks we delve into during class. Students will also be able to discuss the event, argue their position and debate on these topics.

A **"B to B- (8.5-8 points)"** will be a minimum of 1 page, maximum of 2 pages. A “B assignment” will still attempt to link the subject matter to the materials covered and will do a **good** job on all components.  In addition, papers which focus more on statements of value what should have happened, what ought to have happened, or are value laden instead of driven by logic and fact will be in the 8 point range. Papers which seek to answer why and set out seeking questions or more discussion based essays will be in this range depending on quality of writing.

A **"C to C- (7.5 - 7 points)"** has met the general requirements of the assignment and has done an adequate job at describing the events which occurred. These often include statements of fact, where you describe what happened but do not go into enough detail on why it happened, did not give any opinions or did not engage with further analysis.

One part of that assignment will be to utilize the internet to research human rights organizations. Students will need to explore various websites (listed in the syllabus) including, but not limited to, the United Nations, Amnesty International, and Human Rights Watch. They will become familiar with the various agencies and the type of research conducted/ available in governmental versus non-governmental sources.

The reading quiz will be multiple choice, 10 questions and cover questions that cover both the texts assigned, but also websites, internet sources, and other fact-finding information.

**Current General Education Courses and Existing Courses Seeking General Education Status:**

6. Discuss how you have assessed the applicable or identified student learning outcomes associated with this course.

N/A

7. How has this assessment information been used to improve student learning?

N/AGENERAL EDUCATION COURSE APPROVAL PAGE

**Approval Sequence:**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Department Chair/Date

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Dean of College/Date

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University Curriculum Committee/Date

Passed by Faculty Senate\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date

Effective Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_