THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT ASHEVILLE
FACULTY SENATE

Senate Document Number   <u>6619S</u>
Date of Senate Approval   <u>05/02/19</u>
- -
Statement of Faculty Senate Action:

APC Document 55 (SSCI)   **Add a new prefix, SSCI, for Social Science courses;**
                                            Add new course, SSCI 300, Applied Social Research Workshop

Effective Date: Fall 2019

1. **Add:** On page 65, in the list of course abbreviations under the entry for Religious Studies:

        Social Science   SSCI

2. **Add:** On page 279, following the entry for Religious Studies courses:

        Courses in Social Science (SSCI)

        300   **Applied Social Research Workshop (2-4)**
                This course facilitates engaged undergraduate research. Students will cultivate their
                social science research skills and apply them to real-world community needs through
                carefully guided projects with local organizations or other appropriate partners.
                Application of social science methodological tools toward ethical collaboration with
                community partners will be emphasized. May be repeated for credit as subject matter
                changes for a total of 8 hours credit. Fall.

        171-4, 271-4, 371-4, 471-4 **Special Topics in Social Science (1-4)**
                Courses not otherwise included in the catalog listing but for which there may be
                special needs. May be repeated for credit as often as permitted and as subject matter
                changes.

Impact: SSCI 300 facilitates *engaged* undergraduate social research. Students will cultivate their social science research skills and apply them to real-world community needs through meaningful, carefully guided projects with local organizations. Students are assigned to research teams on the basis of interest and skills. Key learning outcomes of the course include the cultivation of concrete methodological tools, as well as an understanding of how to apply these tools toward ethical collaboration with community partners, ranging from local to global. Guided by the instructor, students meet with community partners to clarify research needs, develop a research plan, and distribute the labor of research and writing among team members accordingly. Tasks may include reviewing relevant literature, locating and analyzing publicly available quantitative data, disseminating and/or analyzing original survey data, participating in focus groups, presenting results, and/or drafting portions of reports.

SSCI 300 will fulfill the cornerstone requirement for the Applied Social Science Research Certificate and may count toward any social science major or minor with department chair approval. It will be offered at least once per year – as it has been for the last several semesters– and range from 2 to 4 credits, depending

on the availability of instructors and projects. Currently, one faculty member in Sociology has been teaching the course as a 2-credit special topics course, but any social science faculty member with relevant interests could teach it. Two additional social science faculty (Megan Underhill and Peter Haschke) have indicated a desire to enter the rotation over the next 3-4 years. Enrollments are expected to increase when the class is offered at 4 credits, as it will be in Fall 2019. The addition of the course to the catalog is not anticipated to have a substantial impact on the ability of the Sociology and Anthropology Department to deliver its curriculum. The course would be added to the list of possible major electives in this department as well as other social science departments as desired.

Rationale: The addition of the "SSCI" prefix to the catalog will eliminate the need for cross-listing among multiple departments, enhance opportunities for collaboration within the social sciences, promote pedagogical innovation, and offer students greater interaction with their peers majoring in other social science disciplines. Should the SSCI prefix be introduced, one additional social science department – outside of Sociology and Anthropology – has already indicated their desire to use the prefix in the future for a course currently offered as a special topics elective. The proposed SSCI 300 course, Applied Social Research Workshop, is already being offered as a special topics course in Sociology and has run successfully for 3 out of the last 4 semesters as a 2-credit course. Student response has been consistently positive, and a number of students have indicated that they would be more likely to take it (again, or for the first time) if it were offered as a 4-credit course. Therefore, we propose it as a permanent addition to the catalog but with flexibility in credit hours.

Our interdisciplinary group, which includes faculty participants representing 8 departments, recognizes that the introduction of new prefixes should entail careful thought. We have critically reflected and deliberated together and ultimately believe the SSCI prefix is justified for the following reasons:

1) The Applied Social Research Workshop is currently housed in Sociology and Anthropology solely because the instructor who created it teaches in that department. The learning outcomes are relevant and beneficial to students in multiple disciplines, particularly in the social sciences. And while enrollments thus far have included students from departments such as Health and Wellness, Economics, and Political Science, non-Sociology/Anthropology majors have constituted a relatively small percentage of students taking the course. Creating a new prefix will more clearly signal to students that this course is *for* them.
2) Some have suggested simply using the IST prefix to account for the interdisciplinary nature of the course and other potential courses. However, while the ASR workshop is not distinctly or exclusively sociological, it *is* distinctly and exclusively a social science course. We believe the prefix for this course and potential future courses should reflect that.
3) There is precedent for creating a new prefix in this situation. The current catalog contains a number of prefixes for minors, major concentrations, etc. with few and in some cases no course offerings. Ethics and Social Institutions (ESI) has 2 courses listed, Human Rights Studies (HRST) has 1 course, U.S. Ethnic Studies (ETHN) has 1, and Legal Studies (LEGL) appears to have no course listed.
4) Based on conversations within our group, we foresee that at least 2 other social science departments may propose the use of this prefix in the coming years for courses currently being offered.
5) Finally, we believe the creation of the SSCI prefix will cultivate community and identity among faculty and students in the social sciences – as well as Math and Computer Science – by emphasizing our common methodological tools and our shared commitments to the application of those tools toward addressing social inequalities.