

USU General Education in the Social Sciences

A general education in the social sciences will teach students to:

- Compare and contrast different ideas both within and between historical periods, cultures, and/or civilizations
- Identify questions and issues that cut across human history and culture
- Connect those questions and issues to their own experience
- Exercise their faculty of reason and develop their capacity for critical thought
- Evaluate interpretations and test arguments, including their own
- Understand the history, practice, and purpose of social science methods.

There are three levels of the curriculum: USU 1340: Social Systems and Issues; Breadth Social Sciences (BSS) courses, and Depth Social Sciences (DSS) courses.

USU 1340 introduces students to a variety of disciplines and covers a range of historical periods, cultures, and/or civilizations.

BSS courses, unlike USU 1340, emphasize a particular discipline, giving students a broad and balanced perspective of its subfields and its methods. BSS courses, however, still cover a range of ideas, historical periods, cultures, and/or civilizations.

DSS courses also emphasize a particular discipline; however, unlike BSS courses, they may focus more narrowly on a particular historical period and/or culture, or may confine themselves to ideas within a particular subfield.

Proposals for these courses will be evaluated according to the above criteria as well as the following rubric. The proposal memo should explain in detail—with reference to the syllabus—how the instructor intends to satisfy these criteria and achieve these outcomes. A DSS course will set a higher bar for achieving proficiency than a BSS course or USU 1340. In addition, to meet these goals, smaller courses may emphasize oral communication and information literacy skills more than larger courses.

Integrated Social Sciences Rubric			
<u>Criteria</u>	<u>Outcome 1</u>	<u>Outcome 2</u>	<u>Outcome 3</u>
Students will learn to:	The student who achieves proficiency will:	The student who approaches proficiency will:	The student who lacks proficiency will:
Demonstrate an understanding of similarities and differences among individuals at different life stages, between social groups within a society, between societies, and/or during different historical periods.	Compare, contrast, and apply diverse perspectives on human interaction and/or social phenomenon.	Identify characteristics of diverse perspectives on human interaction and/or social phenomenon.	Be unable to identify diverse perspectives on human interaction and/or social phenomenon.
Demonstrate how different disciplines in the social sciences use alternative approaches to the “Big Questions” facing societies and social groups.	Use empirical evidence to derive rational conclusions about big questions.	Identify the disciplinary frames and evidence necessary for understanding the differing perspectives within public debates.	Be unable to identify the disciplinary frames necessary for understanding the differing perspectives within public debates.
Gain a basic understanding of relevant social science methodologies and how they are used to understand or explain human interactions or human relations	Understand the limitations of different methodologies, both quantitative and qualitative, within the social sciences.	Demonstrate elementary understanding of the features and use of different methodologies, both quantitative and qualitative, in the social sciences.	Be unable to distinguish key characteristics of different methodologies in the social sciences.