

FHSU General Education Committee

Minutes

Meeting Called by

Bradley Will, Chair

Date: Thursday March 11, 2021

Time: 3:30-5:00

Location: <https://fhsu.zoom.us/j/93003453531>

Members

Douglas Drabkin (AHSS)
Marcella Marez (AHSS)
Christina Glenn (BE)
David Schmidt (BE)
Sarah Broman Miller (Ed)
Phillip Olt (Ed)
Glen McNeil (HBS)
Denise Orth (HBS)
Joe Chretien (STM)
Lane Young (STM)
Robyn Hartman (Lib)
Helen Miles (Senate)
Isaiah Schindler (SGA)
Cheryl Duffy (Goss Engl)
Tanya Smith (Grad Sch)

3:30 (1 minute) All members were present with the exception of Miller and Schindler. Schmidt served as proxy for Miller. Determined that a quorum was met.

3:31 (1 minute) The minutes from last week's meeting were approved.

3:32 (40 minutes) The committee considered a proposal for **SOC 310: Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies** to satisfy the outcomes for two objectives: 1.4 (information literacy) and 2.1F (social scientific mode of inquiry). Discussion focused pretty much entirely on the proposal's handling of 2.1F. What made the discussion a little awkward was the similarity (near identity) between this proposal and one that we have already approved for the same two objectives, SOC 388: Sociology of the Family. Whereas we had been satisfied in the SOC 388 proposal by improvements made by the department that brought their assessments more in line with the outcomes, this time around it seemed to the committee that, while there is still alignment between assessment and outcomes, the outcomes are just not being assessed very thoroughly. Olt observed that the course appears to be limited to the very basics of surveying, just one kind of social scientific research. Young noted, about outcome one, that getting four questions right on a five question multiple choice exam when some of the options are plainly false seems like a weak way of assessing something as complex as when different explanatory frameworks in the social sciences are or are not applicable. It was also noted that, although the rubric specifies the number of multiple choice answers that need to be correct for the student to be said to be proficient, it fails to describe what the standard of proficiency *means*. One of the things that became clear during the discussion is that we as a committee have come to see as important that outcome proficiency be meaningfully described. In this respect, we have raised, or are in the process of raising, our standards. Glenn pointed out that, were we not to approve the proposal as is, then our decision would be inconsistent with our decision for SOC

388. This of course is true, and perhaps embarrassing. Nevertheless (*errare humanum est*) the committee voted 12 in favor, 1 against, to **table the proposal** and meet with the chair of sociology about what can be done to improve it. Drabkin and Chair will attend to this.

4:12 (2 minutes) Chair announced that we will be reviewing several courses for objective 2.1D (natural scientific mode of inquiry). We were warned that this is likely to be a lot of work, and are advised to study the files over Spring Break so that we can get feedback to the departments.

4:14 (17 minutes) The committee considered **COMM 350: Communication Research Methods**, which was also being proposed to satisfy the outcomes 1.4 (information literacy) and 2.1F (social scientific mode of inquiry). Problems here included: CORE outcomes needing to be on the syllabus, and apparent disconnect between the assessment and the outcome for 2.F3 ("compare and contrast human behavior among various cultures using social science concepts"), and several questions raised by the 1.4 faculty advisory panel. The committee decided to **table the proposal** until we hear back from the department. Chair will pass our concerns on to the chair of communication studies along with the 1.4 faculty advisory panel report.

4:31 (29 minutes) The committee turned next to **ECON 201: Principles of Microeconomics** which is being proposed to satisfy 2.1F (social scientific mode of inquiry), just the one objective. Here again there appeared to be a disconnect between assessment and outcome at 2.1F3. The assignment for 2.1F3 makes reference to "Americans" and "Mexicans" and hamburgers and tacos, but doesn't get into any serious consideration of cultural similarities and differences. The committee voted 11 in favor, 1 against, to **table the proposal** until we hear back from the department. Glenn will speak with the developer of the proposal about our concerns.

5:00 Meeting ended. Our next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 18.

Submitted by D. Drabkin, Recording Secretary

