

Notice of Change for BA in Sociology

Date:

A. PROGRAM INFORMATION

1. Name of institution

University of Rhode Island

2. Name of department, division, school or college

Department: SOCIOLOGY and ANTHROPOLOGY

College: ARTS & SCIENCES

3. Intended initiation date of program change. Include anticipated date for granting first degrees or certificates, if appropriate.

Initiation date: FALL 2016 OR SPRING 2017

First degree date: MAY 2020

4. Intended location of the program CHAFEE SOCIAL SCIENCE CENTER

5. Summary description of proposed program (not to exceed 2 pages). see below

If applicable, please include the existing URI catalog language and proposed catalog language changes that relate to your request.

6. Signature of the President

David M. Dooley

Notice of change for Sociology Major (BA)

5. Summary description of proposed program (not to exceed 2 pages).

Changes:

- adding a statistics requirement to the major
- changing the major requirement from two (2) to one (1) inequality course
- deleting courses that no longer are taught
- changing course numbering and level: SOC 301 becomes 440; SOC 401 becomes SOC 395

Add a quantitative methods requirement to the Sociology B.A. degree curriculum. This requirement can be fulfilled by taking a new course, SOC 460: Quantitative Methods in Sociology, or taking a similar course in another department. Possible options are STA 220, STA 308, STA 409, PSY 200 (Psychology double majors only), or PSC 310 (Political Science double majors only).

Currently students are required to take 1 methods course - SOC 301: Sociological Research, which is an overview of research methods used by social scientists. The purpose of adding a quantitative methods requirement is that statistics and data analysis skills are tangible and marketable skills that students can acquire when earning a sociology degree. Research skills are an important component of sociology as a 21st century major, and requiring two methods courses gives further opportunities to develop analytical skills that prepare them for meaningful careers and graduate studies. Greater understanding of statistics makes them better informed consumers of quantitative data (which is increasingly important in our data-driven world), and better prepares them to analyze that data. In addition, adding this course would strengthen our learning outcome: *Students can demonstrate the ability to interpret, locate, evaluate, generate and use sociologically relevant data to test hypotheses and draw evidence-based conclusions.* Furthermore, adding a statistics course was recommended by our external academic program review, conducted by Dr. Elizabeth J. Clifford of Towson University, in fall 2014.

This would mean that students are required to take 2 methods course for the degree. The first would be the existing course, SOC 301: Sociological Research, and the second would be a quantitative methods course offered through our department (SOC 460) or the statistics department.

Remove one of the two required social inequality courses to the Sociology B.A. curriculum. Currently, students must take two designated SOC inequality courses (240, 242, 336, 413, 428, and 452). However, faculty are in agreement that students are able to gain considerable knowledge of social inequalities in a number of sociology courses that are not designated as social inequality courses, such as Introduction to Sociology (SOC 100). Students also learn about social inequalities in their elective courses in Sociology and other departments. Therefore, we propose to require only one social inequality course for the B.A.

Delete courses that are no longer taught. This includes: SOC 214, 322, 326, 408, 444, SOC/PSC 505, SOC/EEC/MAF/PSC 595, SOC/PSY 610. (See attached list with rationale)

Change course numbers and levels.

We are proposing to change the numbering of two required SOC courses, SOC 301 *Sociological Research Methods*, and SOC 401 *History of Sociological Thought*.

Rationale: In order to understand and practice theoretically-based research methods, students need to have a background in theory before taking methods. We see empirically that students who have taken SOC 401 (Theory) before taking 301 (Methods) tend to do better in 301.

Now, the numbering of methods (301) and theory (401) communicates just the opposite order to students. Changing the levels of these two required courses makes it more clear to students that they should take theory first. We also think that creating entirely new numbers, rather than switching 301 and 401, will eliminate confusion for our current students. Thus, we are proposing that Theory (presently 401) becomes “395” and Methods (presently 301) becomes “440.”

The new Sociology B.A. Curriculum requirements will be as follows:

REQUIRED COURSES

- SOC 100: General Sociology
- SOC 395: History of Sociological Thought
- SOC 440: Sociological Research Methods
- SOC 460: Quantitative Methods in Sociology
 - STA 220, STA 308, STA 409, PSY 200 (Psychology double majors only), or PSC 310 (Political Science double majors only) may be substituted.
- SOC 495: Senior Seminar in Sociology

ELECTIVE COURSES

Students must take 15 credits of electives (5 courses). This must include

- 6 credits of upper division courses (300+)
- 1 designated inequality course (SOC 240, 242, 336, 410, 413, 428, 452)

If applicable, please include the existing URI catalog language and proposed catalog language changes that relate to your request.

Current Catalog Description

Sociology

The Department of Sociology and Anthropology offers the Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree and the Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree in sociology.

BACHELOR OF ARTS

Students selecting this curriculum must complete a minimum of 30 credits (maximum 45) in sociology, including SOC 100, 301, 401, 495 [capstone], and two courses selected from SOC 240, 242, 336, 413, 428, and 452. At least 18 of the 30 credits must be at the 300 level or above. No more than six credits in independent study and/or field experience courses may be used toward the 30 credits required for the major. SOC 495 is to be taken during the senior year. (See the description of the anthropology major.) A total of 120 credits is required for graduation. At least 42 of these must be in courses numbered 300 or above. In order to transfer into the sociology B.A. program from University College for Academic Success, a student must have completed at least 24 credits and have earned a minimum of a 2.00 GPA.

Proposed Catalog Description

BACHELOR OF ARTS

Students selecting this curriculum must complete a minimum of 30 credits (maximum 45) in sociology, including SOC 100, 395, 440, 460 (proposed), 495 [capstone]. SOC 460 may be substituted with another approved statistics course (STA 220, STA 308, STA 409, PSY 200 [Psychology double majors only], or PSC 310 [Political Science double majors only]). The remaining 15 credits (5 courses) of elective SOC courses need to include a minimum of 6 credits (2 courses) of upper division (300+) courses. One of these elective courses must be a designated inequality course in the sociology department (SOC 240, 242, 336, 413, 428, 452). An upper-level inequality course can also count towards the upper-level course requirement. Note that if a non-sociology course is used to fulfill the quantitative methods requirement, students will need an additional sociology elective to reach 30 credits. No more than six credits in independent study (SOC 498 and SOC 499) and/or field experience courses (SOC 497) may be used toward the 30 credits required for the major. SOC 495 (capstone) is to be taken during the senior year. Of the minimum 30 credits needed in the major, a minimum of 18 credits need to be at the 300 level or above.

A total of 120 credits is required for graduation. At least 42 of these credits must be taken in courses at the 300-level or above. In order to transfer into the sociology B.A. program from University College for Academic Success, a student must have completed at least 24 credits and have earned a minimum of a 2.00 GPA.

Proposed Deleted Courses

We would like to delete the following courses from the SOC curriculum and URI Catalog:

SOC 214—Urban Sociology

SOC 322—The Arts and Social Order

SOC 326—Madness and Society

SOC 408—Individual Life and Social Order

SOC 444—Sociology of Religion

SOC/PSC 505—Public Program Evaluation

SOC/EEC 595—Environment and Development Economics (also MAF, PSC)

SOC/PSY 610—Parsimony Methods (also STA cross-listed, and in PSY catalog courses, SOC isn't included. STA doesn't list this course in the catalog, so maybe it's a typo in the PSY listing)

For each course listed above, the deletion rationale is the same: instructors who taught these courses are no longer on the faculty. The department no longer includes the expertise needed for these courses.

Letters of support from relevant departments for deleting the SOC designation from cross-listed courses are attached.



Helen Mederer <hmederer@uri.edu>

PSY/SOC 610

Helen Mederer <hmederer@uri.edu>
To: ugpsych@aol.com

Wed, Oct 28, 2015 at 6:06 PM

Hi Su,

We are in the process of cleaning up and revising our SOC curriculum, and one of the courses in our course listing is PSY/SOC 610, Parsimony Methods. Here's the catalog listing in SOC:

SOC 610 Parsimony Methods (3 crs.)
Cross-listed as (PSY), STA 610. Multivariate procedures designed to reduce the dimensionality and help in the interpretation of complex data sets. Methods include principal components analysis, common factor analysis, and image analysis. Related methods: cluster analysis and multidimensional scaling. Applications involve the use of existing computer programs. (Lec. 3) Pre: PSY 533 or STA 541 or equivalent. In alternate years.

I don't know the history of this course, or why it's included in our catalog list of courses. As you can see, in our catalog listing, it's also listed as STA, but it's not listed in the STA catalog courses.

Here's PSY's course description of 610:

PSY 610 Parsimony Methods (3 crs.)
Cross-listed as (PSY), STA 610. Multivariate procedures designed to reduce the dimensionality and help in the interpretation of complex data sets. Methods include principal components analysis, common factor analysis, and image analysis. Related methods: cluster analysis and multidimensional scaling. Applications involve the use of existing computer programs. (Lec. 3) Pre: PSY 533 or STA 541 or equivalent. In alternate years.

And as you can see, PSY doesn't cross-list this course with SOC. And 610 doesn't appear in the STA catalog courses.

Confusing, right? So, if it's ok with your department, can we delete this course from our course listing? You also might want to check with STA to see if they think 610 is cross-listed with PSY.

This all may be a mistake from long ago--maybe the course never was cross-listed with SOC, but a typo was made. This is just a guess on my part.

If you want to talk about this, my phone number is 4-4144.

Thanks, Su.

Best wishes,
Helen

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Helen Mederer
Professor of Sociology and Labor Research
Schmidt Labor Research Center
36 Upper College Road
University of Rhode Island
Kingston, RI 02881



Helen Mederer <hmederer@uri.edu>

PSY/SOC 610

S <ugpsych@aol.com>

Fri, Oct 30, 2015 at 1:43 PM

To: Helen Mederer <hmederer@uri.edu>

All indicators suggest that this course should be dropped from the sociology course list. Good luck with your clean-up! su

Sent from my iPad

> On Oct 28, 2015, at 6:06 PM, Helen Mederer <hmederer@uri.edu> wrote:

>

[Quoted text hidden]



Helen Mederer <hmederer@uri.edu>

PSC/MAF/PSC/SOC 595

Helen Mederer <hmederer@uri.edu>

Fri, Oct 30, 2015 at 4:57 PM

To: rob@uri.edu, James Opaluch <jimopaluch@uri.edu>

Hi Rob and Jim,

The SOC department is in the process of cleaning up our curriculum, and I'm writing to ask you if you have any objections to dropping the SOC cross-listing from 595. We have not been involved in this course for many years.

If you agree, can you please respond to this email indicating your support of this change?

Thanks very much,
Helen

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Helen Mederer
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Helen Mederer <hmederer@uri.edu>

PSC/MAF/PSC/SOC 595

James Opaluch <jimopaluch@uri.edu>
To: Helen Mederer <hmederer@uri.edu>

Fri, Oct 30, 2015 at 5:11 PM

I have not objections. To tell you the truth, I didn't remember that SOC was cross listed.

I'll send a more formal email of support.

Jim

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Dr. James J. Opaluch, Professor &
Department Chair
Environmental & Resource Econ
207 Kingston Coastal Institute Bldg
University of Rhode Island
Kingston, RI 02881
[HTTP://WWW.URI.Edu/cels/enre/](http://WWW.URI.Edu/cels/enre/)

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[Quoted text hidden]



Helen Mederer <hmederer@uri.edu>

PSC/MAF/PSC/SOC 595

James Opaluch <jimopaluch@uri.edu>
To: Helen Mederer <hmederer@uri.edu>

Fri, Oct 30, 2015 at 5:16 PM

Helen,

As Department Chair of Environmental and Natural Resource Economics, I convey that ENRE supports Sociology's request to drop their cross listing in EEC 595.

Jim

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Dr. James J. Opaluch, Professor &
Department Chair
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[HTTP://WWW.URI.Edu/cels/enre/](http://WWW.URI.Edu/cels/enre/)

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e-mail: JimOpaluch@URI.Edu

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[Quoted text hidden]



Helen Mederer <hmederer@uri.edu>

PSC/MAF/PSC/SOC 595

Robert Thompson <rob@uri.edu>
To: Helen Mederer <hmederer@uri.edu>

Sat, Oct 31, 2015 at 8:24 AM

Hi Helen:

This is really ENRE's course, so I'm perfectly fine with the change particularly if Jim is.

Best,

Rob

Robert Thompson, J.D., Ph.D.
Department of Marine Affairs, Chair
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University of Rhode Island
Kingston, RI 02881

401.874.4485
rob@mail.uri.edu

[Quoted text hidden]



Helen Mederer <hmederer@uri.edu>

PSC/SOC 515 and SOC/EEC/MAF/PSC 595

Helen Mederer <hmederer@uri.edu>
To: Brian Krueger <bkrueger@uri.edu>

Wed, Oct 28, 2015 at 6:12 PM

Hi Brian,

We are in the process of curriculum revision and cleaning up our catalog listing of courses. The above courses appear in the SOC listing, and I'm writing to get your support to delete the SOC cross-listing from these two courses.

The rationale is that our students have not taken these courses in many years, and we think they are an artifact from a time long ago when SOC had a MA program.

If you support this curriculum change, can you please respond to this email for the record?

If you'd like to discuss these changes, my number is 4-4144.

Thanks, Brian.

Best wishes,
Helen

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Helen Mederer
Professor of Sociology and Labor Research
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