

Sample Syllabus for Behavioral and Social Sciences FYE

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Course Schedule

Indicates topics that incorporate common FYE content

Indicates incorporation of six general education goals

Topic	In Class Activities	Assignments	Online Content
1 - intro to course: Overview of liberal arts tradition Gen-ed structure Define BSS and very brief intro to disciplines	Large group: lecture with embedded discussion (2-4 students)	Review relevant WCU web content; bring one new fact learned from this process to share with larger group	information pertaining to university policies and campus life
2 - Evidence-based learning (Get SMART)	Large group and breakout groups: Get SMART exercises and a discussion of neuromyths	TBD by developers of common content	E-portfolio introduction
3 - factors influencing student success including transition to college expectations	Large group and breakout groups: TBD by developers of common content	TBD by developers of common content	
4 - More in-depth Intro to BSS and 6 disciplines	Large group and breakout groups: What kinds of questions do the BSS address? What counts as evidence? Talk about the fluid nature of disciplinary boundaries, and about the	TBD: A general reading on BSS; possibly bring an example from the news about an issue or problem that was or could be addressed by BSS	library orientation

	impact of BSS in informing our ability to respond thoughtfully to diversity	approaches	
5 - Paired disciplines 1 (ex: Psychology and Sociology)	Large group and breakout groups: Introductory material on the two disciplines	TBD: a reading exemplifying how each of these disciplines approaches a problem or question	
6 -Using quantitative methods to answer questions in BSS	Breakout groups: Experiential activity using quantitative methods based on one of the BSS disciplines	Short report of experiential activity from small groups	
7 - Hot topics in paired disciplines 1	Breakout group discussions of popular press article on hot topic, and a discussion of information literacy	Reflections in e-portfolio	
8 - Paired disciplines 2 (ex: geography and anthropology)	Large group and breakout groups: Introductory material	TBD: a reading exemplifying how each of these disciplines approaches a problem or question	
9 - Using qualitative methods to answer questions in BSS	Breakout groups: Experiential activity using qualitative methods based on one of the BSS disciplines	Short report of experiential activity from small groups	
10 - Hot topics in paired disciplines 2	Breakout group discussions of popular press article on hot topic, and a discussion of critical thinking	Reflections in e-portfolio	
11 - Paired disciplines 3 (ex: economics and political science)	Large group and breakout groups: Introductory material	TBD: a reading exemplifying how each of these disciplines approaches a problem or question	

12 - Making decisions informed by historical, cultural, and philosophical traditions	Breakout groups: Experiential activity using decision making informed by historical, cultural, and philosophical traditions	Short report of experiential activity from small groups	
13 - Hot topics in Paired disciplines 3	Breakout group discussions of popular press article on hot topic, and a discussion of constructive communication	Reflections in e-portfolio	
14 -Thinking across all the BSS disciplines	Large group and breakout groups: Interdisciplinary activity focused on a specific topic from all disciplinary perspectives	Short report of experiential activity from small groups	
15 Strengths-based alignment of professional goals	Large group and breakout groups: TBD by developers of common content	Reflections in e-portfolio on professional goals and how the gen ed and a BSS curriculum can help build skills to reach these goals	

Notes:

- Paired disciplines to be determined by faculty teaching that semester - experiences may cover both or only 1 of the disciplines
- Experiential activities for BSS - align with the two general education goals specific to BSS (3 and 6); each activity features one of the following related approaches: using quantitative methods, using qualitative methods, making decisions informed by historical, cultural, and philosophical traditions (i.e. applies the concepts/knowledge toward decisions/policies)

- Exposure to other four general education goals is embedded in the course schedule.
- Possible reflection questions (for e-portfolio):
 - What did you learn (both in terms of the topic/project and in terms of yourself)?
 - What factors (both cognitive & non-cognitive) influenced student success?
 - How did this experience fit with the discipline? What counted as evidence? How was the particular method applied? How was new knowledge produced?
 - How might the other discipline have approached this? What did you see as the strengths & weaknesses of this approach?

Sample Experiential Activity Using Quantitative Methods in Psychology

Topic: False memories

Large lecture content

- Introduce topic of memory as part of psychology (the study of mind and behavior)
- Talk about how quantitative methods are important for understanding abstract concepts like mental processing
- Do in class instructor led demonstration of the DRM false memory paradigm
- Talk about the class data and how to interpret them in the broader framework of the malleability of memory
- Discuss factors that may affect how we interpret this quantitative data (confounding and nuisance variables etc)
- Provide a copy of materials and instructions for the basic DRM false memory paradigm and have students administer the memory test to volunteers outside of class and collect data.

Breakout session content

- Break up class into small groups to share data and talk about their experience doing the memory testing
- Instructor demonstrates different ways to display data (graph, table etc)
- Small groups look at the original research article and identify what information is contained in the different sections
- Small groups generate a short report of their memory testing using the format of the original article (intro., methods, results, discussion)

Assignment

Small group brief reports of the false memory experiment

References

- Roediger, H.L., & McDermott, K. B. (1995). Creating false memories: Remembering words not presented in lists. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory and Cognition*, 24(4), 803-814.
- Deese, J. (1959). On the prediction of occurrence of particular verbal intrusions in immediate recall. *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 58, 17-22.

Sample Experiential Activity Using Qualitative Methods in Anthropology

Topic: Doing Ethnography on Campus

Large lecture content (Before the activity)

- Introduce the kinds of questions and focus typical of cultural anthropology
- Talk about how qualitative methods are important for understanding how people view the world and the meaning of cultural concepts
- Explain how ethnography is done (participant observation, interviewing)
- Do an instructor led demonstration of aspects of the ethnographic method
- Explain the importance of field notes and the process of recording them

- Provide a copy of materials and instructions for the basic ethnographic exercise to be done outside of class; students collect data and record field notes during a campus activity

Breakout session content (After the activity)

- In small groups, students share data and talk about their experience doing the ethnographic research
- Discuss the class data and how to interpret them in the broader framework of understanding culture and how people think
- Instructor demonstrates different ways to analyze and display data
- Small groups look at the original research article and identify what information is contained in the different sections
- Small groups generate a short report of their ethnographic experience using the format of the original article

Assignment

Small group brief reports of the experience of doing ethnography

References

TBD: a short ethnographic piece as an example of using this method in commonplace contexts

Possibly also: Erickson, F. 1981, 'Some approaches to inquiry in school-community ethnography', in H. Trueba, G. Guthrie & K. Au (eds.), *Culture and the Bilingual Classroom: Studies in Classroom Ethnography*, Newbury House Publishers, Rowley, Massachusetts, 17-35.